



I Speak for Paws

CATS & DOGS

Tammy Wunsch | August 2018

About the Author

Tammy Wunsch currently resides in the Quiet Corner of Connecticut though she has also called both New York City and Los Angeles home. Formally educated in business, she has worked in a variety of industries and is both entrepreneurial and adventurous by nature. She is passionate about animals and loves to travel, cook, kayak, and read.

Her current role is as a Freelance Copywriter who promotes portable income opportunities (PIO), as well as living, product, and service options for current and future expatriates.

Visit her online at [Expat Writer](#) or follow I Speak for Paws on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Please peruse the [Expat Writer eBookstore](#) for more additional I Speak for Paws ebooks.

Remember to always use your voice to speak for those who have none.

I have a voice and I Speak For Paws!

The Circle of Life and Death

ispeakforpaws.com/the-circle-of-life-and-death

May 4, 2016



Looking back over the blogs I've posted, I think it's clear that I like cats. Big cats, little cats, and all the cats in between. I have been owned by a cat, or three, for most of my life. That's my gorgeous 14 year old feline getting ready to pounce in the photo above. I love their quiriness and abject independence. I love the fact that you can be petting a cat in harmony with the universe one minutes, and the next, you have to apply bandages because you didn't realize the cat was finished with your ministrations and now wanted to bite and scratch the heck out of your hand. In general, cats do not feel the need to shower their human pets with slavish devotion. They are who they are so accept their affection and spoil them rotten!

I think it's also clear that I have definite opinions about how cats should live their lives. It is my firm belief that if you adopt a domestic cat into your family, then this family member should be kept indoors for health and safety reasons. Never purchase or adopt a wild cat species to be your home pet. NEVER. Wild cats should live in their natural habitat, whether it's the jungles of South America, the plains of Africa, or the mountains of Nepal. They do not belong in zoos, circuses, on television, in the movies, backyard breeding farms, or medical research. If a wild cat was rescued from one of the above atrocities, then they should be rehomed in an accredited sanctuary where they can live out the rest of their lives as wild as possible without being bred. The End. It is black and white. No grey area here.

Black and white begins to fade to grey, however, when the circle of life intrudes on my defined view of cats. This past week, viewers of a live eagle webcam from Pittsburgh witnessed the adult eagle bringing a cat to dinner for its eaglets. I can't bring myself to watch the video, but the narrative accompanying the video hypothesizes that the cat was already deceased when brought to the nest. Now, I know that eagles are carnivorous and that they eat all types of animals, like squirrels, rabbits, and fish, however, it just seems so wrong for them to eat a cat. I know, I'm a hypocrite. Stronger stomachs than mine can read, and possibly watch, the story [here](#).

So I understand the Circle of Life, even if it doesn't always please me. The Circle of Death, however, can be truly evil when inflicted on innocents by inhumane human beings. I am sure you also read about the two beautiful little kittens who were rescued. These kittens were only about four weeks old and some sadistic reprobate had colored in their white areas with blue and green permanent marker, respectively. The rescue has taken to calling the two "Smurf" and "Shrek" based on their colorings.

To begin with, the marker used on the kittens could impact their lives permanently. It could affect their lungs and cause breathing difficulties. The rescue also has to be careful bathing the kittens so that none of the coloring runs into their eyes. Additionally, the dye in the markers could cause serious skin conditions, especially in a kitten so young.

Why in the world would anyone mistreat a beautiful, four week old kitten in such a manner? The answer lies in the world of dog fighting, which is another post in and of itself! Sick and twisted individuals have decided that it is profitable to train and watch dogs fight until death. They mistreat, abuse, and starve the animals until that is all they know how to do. One of the ways they train the poor dogs to kill is to use "live bait", a.k.a. kittens. Watching the dogs train with the live bait has also turned into a betting opportunity and the kittens are dyed different colors so that gamblers can bet on which color kitten is killed first.

Again, the criminal aspects and inhumanity of dog fighting is for a later post, however, I am flabbergasted, disgusted, and sickened that there are enough sadistic and inhumane people out there that can support a dog fighting industry. There are the dog trainers, the fight producers, the fight attendees who cheer for and bet on the death of an animal, and the bookies who take the bets and turn a tidy profit. Where do these people come from? How does anyone ever have the thought that attending, watching, cheering, and betting on the death of an innocent animal is a sporting event? The intense misery these animals endure is heartbreaking. The pain and fear they experience is beyond comprehension.

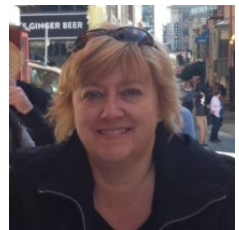
Those poor kittens were thankfully rescued and will receive veterinary care. What cost to their health will they endure? Dogs do what they are trained to do by their owners, whether they are thoughtful and loving owners or twisted and sick individuals. Anyone caught perpetuating this level of cruelty and inhumanity against any living animal deserves to be thrown into a dark hole and locked away forever. There is no recovery from that level of sick and perverted behavior. Read their story [here](#).

Laws need to be updated and punishments made severe. Too infrequently, these dog fighting rings are raided and the degenerates are arrested. Their punishments are not severe enough. There is no amount of rehabilitation that will change someone who thinks it is acceptable to train dogs to kill by using live, four week old kittens. The reality, though, is that the criminals generally receive light sentences and/or a fine and are right back to selling death and misery as soon as they are released.

We need to change society so that NOBODY believes it is acceptable to profit from the death of any sentient being. Our laws need to be stricter to enforce a no tolerance policy for propagating death and profiting off of misery. We need to use our voices to speak out against the injustice inflicted on our animals. They can't speak for us and need us to speak for them.

I have a voice and I Speak For Paws!

Tammy Wunsch



Dog Days of Summer

🐾 ispeakforpaws.com/dog-days-of-summer

May 31, 2016



Warning: graphic and disturbing content ahead...

Okay, so it's not quite summer yet. It has been hot though, and, for *Game of Thrones* fans, summer is coming. As the summer solstice approaches, preparations are being made for the Yulin Dog Meat Festival in China. The festival spans ten days and it is estimated that 10,000 – 15,000 dogs are consumed at the event.

I understand that there are cultural differences between China and much of the rest of the world with regard to our pets, but the barbarism is beyond inhumane and borders on the sociopathic. Festival organizers claim that the dogs are killed humanely, but this has been refuted by numerous pictures online. Chinese folklore claims that consuming dog meat stimulates internal heat and will bring good luck and health.

It is estimated that 10-20 million dogs are slaughtered for human consumption yearly in China. In Yulin, approximately 300 dogs and cats are butchered every day. During the festival, this number climbs into the thousands. The animals are crammed into cages – some still wearing collars. Dogs are paraded through the festival in crates and cages. They are skinned and boiled alive while other captive dogs look on in abject terror. Peter Li, Humane Society International's Chinese specialist, witnessed dogs being bludgeoned with metal rods before being dismembered and disemboweled in front of the other dogs. The killers slaughter the

dogs in front of other captive animals to induce fear and pain. This allegedly make the meat tastier. The barbaric butchers will also beat the dog to death in order to release blood into the meat.

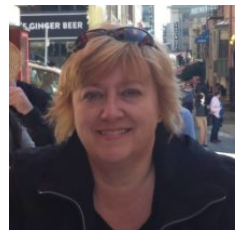
In addition to the callous and cruel brutality of the event, the dogs are kept in unsanitary conditions and may be hosts to any number of infectious diseases, such as cholera and rabies. If you are going to eat dog meat, however, I think you deserve any infectious disease you may contract from the butchered animal.

Even the Chinese government has been trying to distance itself from the “festival”. Activists both inside and outside of China have coordinate efforts to rescue some of the dogs bound for Yulin. There are numerous petitions calling to #StopYulin. Click any of the following links to sign a petition to stop the slaughter!

Use your voice to speak for those who have none. The dogs of Yulin certainly have no voice in their horrific future if this “festival” is allowed to continue.

I have a voice and I Speak For Paws.

Tammy Wunsch



Congratulations, Young Rescuers!

ispeakforpaws.com/congratulations-young-rescuers

March 29, 2016



In a heartwarming rescue story featured on Barkpost, four young boys rescued an underweight dog that was tied up with bungee cords. The boys untied the dog and brought her home. They then called a rescue, the Detroit Pit Crew Rescue, who fetched the dog and promised to bring her to a veterinarian for a check-up and treatment. The rescue will then place the dog up for adoption.

It is truly rewarding to read positive stories of our nation's youth, using their actions, and their voices, to help animals. Unfortunately, our newsfeeds are filled with too many heartbreaking stories of animal abuse, neglect, and abandonment. We read too many stories about callous adults, teens, and children inflicting harm on those with no voice.

These young boys must have terrific parents who raised them right. They obviously care about others, human and animal, and possessed the fortitude and strength of character to take action. I applaud you Kenny, Kenneth, Kevin, and Andrew and hope you know that your selfless act may have been small for you, but it changed the world for Sparkle. May you have bright futures and continue your journey to make the world a brighter place.

Kenny, Kenneth, Kevin, and Andrew used their voices to speak for paws. I hope this inspires others to do the same.

I have a voice and I Speak For Paws!

Photo credit: *Detroit Pit Crew Dog Rescue*

Tammy Wunsch



No Pets for Christmas

ispeakforpaws.com/no-pets-for-christmas

December 13, 2015



It's the holiday season and people everywhere are scurrying around, decorating trees, attending holiday parties, and trying to come up with the perfect present. So, deck the halls and shop, shop, shop, until someone suggests that it would just be easier to get a puppy or a kitten than the latest video game console or trendy present this year. I mean, who doesn't love a puppy or a kitten? They're cute, cuddly, and universally loved.

Fast forward a few weeks, months, or years and note all the pets dropped off at shelters, rescues, and veterinarians, or dumped in a field or farm somewhere. It is completely incomprehensible to me how people are able to abandon their family pet without thought or care as to what may happen to them. Shelters routinely post pictures and stories about pets being dropped off by families who no longer want them. The discarded animal is understandably sad and depressed. A dog or cat is unable to understand why they are no longer living with their humans.

A fortunate few find new, forever homes where they are cared for and receive the love they deserve. Most are not so lucky. The ASPCA estimates that nearly 7.6 million companion animals enter animal shelters every year. Of that number, approximately 1.2 million dogs and 1.4 million cats are euthanized annually.

For those of us who are pet lovers, it is incomprehensible and disgusting that anyone could give away their family pet. The American Humane Association reports that 29 percent of people relinquish their dogs because their residence does not allow pets, 10 percent due to divorce or death, and 10 percent due to behavior issues. For cats, they report 21 percent are not allowed in the residence and 11 percent due to allergies.

I was appalled to read an article posted on Facebook the other day where a family abandoned their dog at a shelter because they had redecorated and the dog didn't go with the new décor. Seriously? How about your kids? Do they match your new drapes?

Then there are those witless, obtuse individuals who ask their vets to euthanize their perfectly healthy pets because they don't want them anymore. The flip side of that coin are those pet owners who would rather euthanize their pets than pay for proper veterinary care associated with injured, aging, or ill pets.

It is really very simple. If you have a pet, don't move somewhere that won't allow pets. If your pet has behavior issues, search the internet for ways to retrain them and correct the behaviors. If you have allergies, get allergy shots. Veterinary costs are sometimes very expensive. Perhaps you could work out a payment plan with your veterinarian or maybe you could give up your \$5 daily coffees or dining out until your pet's care is paid off. That family who abandoned their pet for clashing with their décor are hopeless and we can all hope that karma is particularly unkind to them. They are obviously too dimwitted to be reasoned with and their dog will hopefully find a forever home that will treat him as he deserves. It is my fervent hope that there is a special hell for those monsters who abandon an unwanted, old, or sick pet at a shelter or veterinarian's office.

Years ago, I adopted a dog from a shelter. I loved this dog and she loved me. The dog, however, was sickly. After she had come to live with me for 2 weeks, she looked like she was on the verge of crossing the Rainbow Bridge. I took her back to the veterinarian at the shelter from which I had adopted her. The vet there was particularly callous and asked if I wanted to trade her in. As I stood there, stunned that someone could think that was an option, my roommate retorted that we would not be trading her in like a pair of shoes that didn't fit. The vet just shrugged and outlined the treatments that she would require. Now, at that time, I was working my first real job in New York City. I didn't make much money, but the thought of giving up a member of my family to most probably be euthanized was outrageous. She got through that illness and lived a happy 15 years, despite her sickly past. I paid a lot of money I didn't have for her care. I sacrificed luxuries so she could get well. It's what a responsible pet owner does.

Still thinking about getting a pet for the holidays? Are you sure you are ready to add a dog or cat into your family fold? Read through my checklists below to help you determine if you have what it takes to be a responsible pet owner.

Dog Preparedness Checklist:

1. Are you ready to provide care and a home to the dog for its whole lifespan? (Depending on the breed, average dog lifespans are 10-15 years.)
2. Is the breed size and temperament a good fit for your family? Research breed characteristics to determine which dogs are good with children or other animals.
3. Is there a place indoors where the dog will sleep? This can be anything from a dog bed, a crate, or the couch.
4. Is there a primary caregiver who will be responsible for the dog for its entire life?
5. Do you have outdoor space for exercise or are you prepared to take the dog for numerous walks throughout the day? Dogs need exercise and need to be brought outside so as not to mess in the house.
6. Do you have the time to include a dog into your busy schedule?
7. Do you plan on spaying or neutering your dog? There are far too many dogs in shelters that need to be adopted. Do not add to their numbers.
8. Do you have the financial resources to provide food, shelter, and proper veterinary care?
9. Is your family ready for a dog?
10. Do you know how to care for a dog?

Cat Preparedness Checklist:

1. Are you ready to provide care and a home to a cat for its whole lifespan? (Cats have average lifespans from 15-22 years.)
2. Do you have the financial resources to provide food, shelter, cat litter, and proper veterinary care?
3. Are you prepared to cat proof your home? Cats get into and play with everything, even things that are harmful or toxic to them.
4. Do you plan on keeping the cat indoors? Cats are vulnerable to predators and live far longer and healthier lives if kept inside.
5. Is there a primary caregiver to provide daily fresh food and water and a clean litterbox for the cat's entire life?
6. Do you promise not to declaw your cat? This is an intolerable operation equivalent to removing the ends of your fingers up to the first knuckle and usually causes great pain for the cat.
7. Are you willing to spay or neuter your cat? There are far too many cats in shelters that need to be adopted. Do not add to their numbers.
8. Do you have the time to provide attention and affection to your cat every day?
9. Is your family ready for a cat?
10. Do you know how to care for a cat?

Potential pet owners that are not able to answer "yes" to ALL these questions are not prepared to have a dog, cat, puppy, or kitten. The pet will probably not fit into your household and chances drastically increase that the pet will be abandoned or neglected.

Perhaps you did answer “yes” to all the relevant questions and you are now convinced that you want to add a pet into your family. What should you do? How do you obtain a pet? First of all, steer clear of pet stores, most of whom get their pets from puppy and kitten mills. If you absolutely have to have a pure breed, find a local, reputable breeder. Visit the breeder and be certain that the animals are well-cared for and loved. Check references from previous buyers and be certain there are no prevalent health care issues. Use the internet and conduct thorough research.

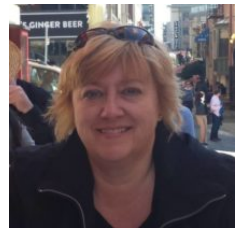
If, however, a pure breed dog or cat is not what you are looking for, remember the 7.6 million companion animals that enter shelters EVERY YEAR. They need homes. They want to be adopted and loved. They want to be a part of your family. Most local shelters have dogs and cats of all sizes, temperaments, and ages. Don’t discount the senior animals in the shelters. They can be a wonderful addition to your family. They too want to be loved and cared for and will provide your family with companionship, loyalty, and love.

Let’s start a movement to empty shelters across the nation, end puppy and kitten mills, and decrease or eliminate the euthanization of more than 3.6 million animals per year. It is outrageous that our country kills so many companion animals due to lack of available adopters.

Be a hero. Save a life. Adopt!

I have a voice and I Speak For Paws!

Tammy Wunsch



No Pet Left Behind

ispeakforpaws.com/no-pet-left-behind

August 31, 2017



Hurricane Harvey is a devastating and tragic event whose horrific effects will be felt for months, if not years. While nobody forecast that the event would be so destructive and overwhelming, people were aware that a strong hurricane was on its way to the area. We have all read stories about what people are able to bring to shelters from previous severe hurricanes (Katrina and Sandy), so it absolutely infuriates me that so many pets were abandoned and left to die. In some cases, dogs were left tied up outside.

What did their owners think would happen to them? There was a great deal of warning and a responsible pet owner should always try to plan ahead.

A few years ago, I lived in an apartment in Queens. One New Year's Day, the building – and my apartment – started filling up with smoke. At the time, I had three cats of various size and stature. I gathered all three of my cat carriers, scooped the cats up unceremoniously, stuffed them in the carriers, and carried all three down four flights of stairs. Fortunately, the fire was extinguished quickly and we were cleared to return to our apartments within an hour, but I cannot fathom a circumstance where I would have left any of my cats behind.



More recently, three weeks ago to be exact, my new house was infiltrated by a bat. Now, bats are cute in pictures and great for eating insects – as long as they remain outside of my house. When I look up the stairs and see a bat flying nonchalantly from bedroom to bedroom, I freaked out and left the house. I could not physically bring myself to go upstairs and attempt to catch the bat.



Fortunately, my uncle lives only a few miles away and I was able to pack my mother up and bring her there. Due to my uncle's allergies, I could not bring my cat with me. (Sadly, the other two have crossed the Rainbow Bridge.)

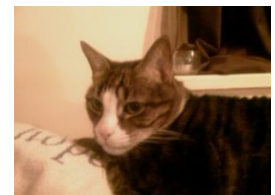


(Due to my fear of bats, I assume it would come for me with this exact demeanor.)

The first night, my cat chased the bat around then hid under the couch and would not come out. I tearfully left her behind with bowls full of food and water and returned first thing in the morning. My cat was fine, just lonely, and the bat was nowhere to be found. A local contractor came in and searched the house with his assistants. They could not find the bat either. They then located and sealed a few holes which we assumed was probably the bat's entry point. That damn bat came back again that night.



As I was unsure whether we had truly blocked the bat's entry into my house, I had set up a room where I could safely house my cat if I had to leave again. I had moved her litter box as well as her food and



water bowls into the room, and at first sight of the bat, I picked the cat up and closed her in the room. The contractor came back the next day and found a few more spaces where the bat could be entering the house and sealed those up. This literally went on for a week! The bat



Greater mouse-eared bat, *myotis myotis*, flight in the night

made one more appearance, and they found one small hole in the bottom of a closet behind some boxes. One of the assistants actually stayed at the house for a few hours one evening to ensure that it didn't make another surprise appearance.

I haven't seen that bat since, but I was prepared if it did make an appearance. More to the point, I was prepared for how to accommodate my cat if the bat did show itself again and not worry about her health and safety. It is a pet owner's responsibility – as much as it is a parent's responsibility – to plan for the safety and well-being of their pet. You cannot be expected to plan for everything, but if you live in an earthquake-prone area, you should have a plan for what to do if the “big one” hits. If you live in an area that occasionally floods, know what you are going to do in the event of a flood. Fire is not localized to any area, so be aware of what you will do in the event of a conflagration in your house or apartment. Tornadoes don't give much notice, but if you live in Tornado Alley, do you know how you will maintain your pets' well-being if a tornado roars through your area?



I understand that devastation and destruction can occur without notice. I only want people to be more aware of how they will rescue their pets should the unthinkable happen. At the very least, you should have a notice on your front door alerting first responders about pets that may be in your house. If meteorologists are forecasting a “once in a lifetime storm” or “storm of the century”, be sure to have a go bag packed for your pet with food, medicine, bowls, treats, wipes, bags, a leash, and a favorite toy. Scout out locations that will accept pets if you need to evacuate or relatives willing to care temporarily for your furry family members.

Your pets love you unconditionally. You are their world. Take the time to plan and ensure their health and safety in the event of a tragedy or destructive weather event. Be the person they already fervently believe you are.

For now, if you would like to donate to help animals in need in Houston, please visit the [Houston SPCA website](#). They also have set up an Animal Emergency Response Hotline at 713-861-3010.

A giant thank you and cheers of approval to those brave souls who have ventured back into the flood-ravaged waters to rescue other people's pets. You are true animal lovers!



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