

Euthanasia

Let's work to stem the tide of unwanted pets

"Euthanasia on rise at animal shelter" was the disturbing headline in the Sentinel recently.

It's simple math, really. Thousands of animals come into the Nacogdoches Animal Services and Adoption Center and a fraction of that number is adopted.

It's not the fault of the animal shelter, tasked with the job of taking in the county's unwanted pets. The responsibility for pet overpopulation lies squarely on the shoulders of irresponsible pet owners.

This newspaper has done numerous stories over the years about the overpopulation of cats and dogs in the county, and the extraordinary efforts the shelter, O'Malley Alley Cat volunteers, the Humane Society and other rescue groups, have gone to to educate the public and save animals' lives.

The shelter works with participating veterinarians to offer discounted spaying or neutering to residents who qualify. O'Malley Alley Cats has launched O'Malley Alley PET, or Preventing Euthanasia Together, with a clinic that offers spaying and neutering for both dogs and cats. O'Malley's also captures feral and abandoned cats, has them fixed, and returns them to the same area. Adopt-a-thons have been held regularly.

These groups cannot do it alone.

When residents feed strays that wander up to their houses and then continue to let them roam, they are perpetuating the problem. When someone who thinks it would be fun to have a puppy or kitten, realizes how much work it really is and then abandons it on a country road, they are perpetuating the problem. Not having a pet spayed or neutered is perpetuating the problem.

We can help by donating to or volunteering with groups like O'Malley Alley PET. Call them at 936-556-2754. As a community, we can help the shelter in finding good homes for some of these animals.

We should encourage our friends and families to have their pets spayed or neutered — anything we can do — so the local shelter can get some relief from the grim task of euthanizing innocent animals.

If you are going to have a pet, provide it a safe home, care for its health, and for Pete's sake, have it spayed or neutered.