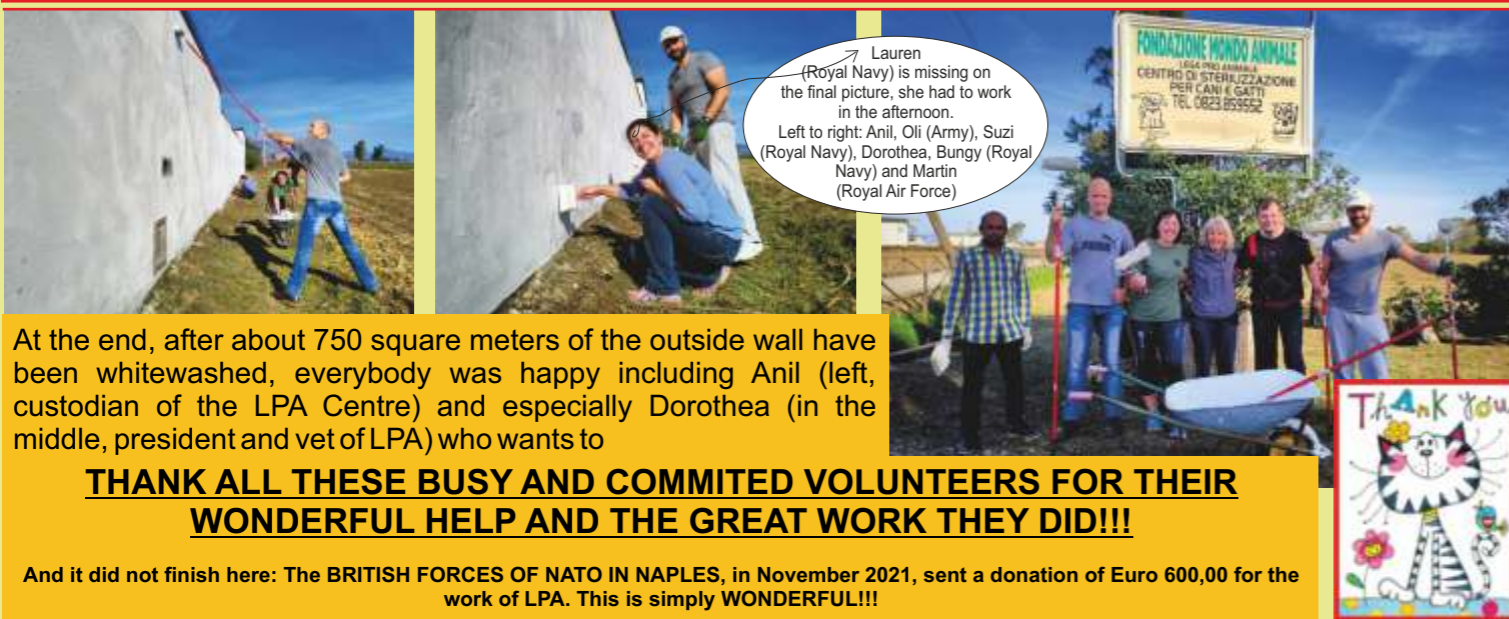


DANKE - GRAZIE - THANK YOU - DANKE - GRAZIE - THANK YOU

GREAT DAY - GREAT WORK - WONDERFUL HELP

A couple of years before a big storm damaged part of the outside wall of the LEGA PRO ANIMALE SPAY AND NEUTER CENTRE in Castel Volturno. About 50 meters fall simply over and like a miracle not even one animal (dogs, cats, chicken, ducks, geese, buffaloes, sheep and a goat) escaped. Thanks to wonderful people sending money from all over the world we could repair the damage very quickly. Further on the Fondazione Gazan in Switzerland helped with a big donation to check on the rest of the surrounding walls and to enforce them where it was necessary. The entire Centre looked like a construction site for many weeks and everything was done - but the final painting. And now, the long outside parts of the surrounding walls are shining brightly and this has been only possible thanks to a couple of volunteers of the British Delegation of Nato (Members of Royal Navy, Army and Royal Airforce). And here they are at work:



At the end, after about 750 square meters of the outside wall have been whitewashed, everybody was happy including Anil (left, custodian of the LPA Centre) and especially Dorothea (in the middle, president and vet of LPA) who wants to

THANK ALL THESE BUSY AND COMMITED VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR WONDERFUL HELP AND THE GREAT WORK THEY DID!!!

And it did not finish here: The BRITISH FORCES OF NATO IN NAPLES, in November 2021, sent a donation of Euro 600,00 for the work of LPA. This is simply WONDERFUL!!!

LEGA PRO ANIMALE "Mini Spay Day"



November 2021, during 3 "MINI SPAY DAYS" 95 cats neutered: 47 female + 48 male

Left to right: Pasqualina (President FATA), Carolin (vet), Nunzia (vet), Gigi (vet), Fernando (staff LPA), Annamaria (FATA), Marco (retired public vet), Teresa (Community Councillor of Bacoli), Dorothea (vet + President LPA). Claudi is missing in this final picture.

This "Mini Spay Day" and two more could only take place, because several public authorities and animal protection organizations worked together: The Municipal Council of Bacoli (Province of Naples), the organization FATA, the regional Veterinary Office and LEGA PRO ANIMALE with its team offering all surgeries free of charge. At this point a very big **THANK YOU AISPA** in the UK for taking over most of the expenses for this project. There are hundreds of stray cats living permanently in the streets of Bacoli. They proliferate very quickly because animal lovers are offering lots of good food several times a day. The Italian Animal Protection law prescribes that the Public Veterinary Services have to offer free spaying/neutering and free health care for stray cats having "the right" to live in their colonies in the streets. The situation of Bacoli you can find all over the south of Italy and the public vets are not able to spay/neuter all the cats in a short time. Another fact is that kittens in the age of 5 month can already be pregnant! Therefore, we did not hesitate to give a positive answer to the request of cooperation: now **95 cats are fixed, identified with a microchip and registered** and cannot proliferate and contribute anymore to the stray problem. Free roaming animals pose not only a risk for the animals themselves, but even for public health and safety and should be on the agenda of leaders of all public communities like Bacoli!

A BIG THANK YOU TO DEUTSCHER TIERSCHUTZBUND E.V. IN GERMANY FOR DECADES OF HELP FOR THE EFFORTS OF LEGA PRO ANIMALE AND THE FOUNDATION MONDO ANIMALE

GREAT THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT FROM THE SWISS JACQUES-EN-DOLLY-GAZAN FOUNDATION FOR SPAYING/NEUTERING SO MANY STRAY ANIMALS AND ESPECIALLY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE BUILDINGS OF OUR CENTRE, MOST OF THEM SPONSORED MANY YEARS BEFORE BY MR. GAZAN!

SPECIAL THANKS GOES TO AISPA IN LONDON THAT SUPPORTED OUR WORK TO HELP ANIMALS SINCE NEARLY 40 YEARS!

A THOUSAND THANKS TO ALL SPONSORS ALL OVER THE WORLD WHO HELP,

- THAT ALL OUR ANIMALS WILL HAVE ALWAYS GOOD FOOD AND ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE!
- THAT WE CAN WORK TOWARDS THE MOMENT THAT ONLY "WANTED" PUPPIES AND KITTENS WILL BE BORN!
- THAT OUR INFORMATION AND EDUCATION EFFORTS WILL CHANGE STILL MORE THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ANIMALS IN THE AREA!
- THAT WE CAN REACH OUR GOAL: ALL DOGS AND CATS HAVE A CARING OWNER! NO MORE PETS HAVE TO LIVE PERMANENTLY ON THE STREETS OR IN OVERCROWDED SHELTERS!

LEGA PRO ANIMALE



NEWSLETTER 2021



Dear Animal Lovers and Benefactors of our Work in Southern Italy,

I hope you are all in the best of health and have arrived safely in 2022. It's just unbelievable how fast time goes by. Exactly 40 years ago I arrived in Italy - not to protect animals. It was just too cold for me in Germany and my dream of working as a large animal practitioner was scotched with the intensive management of farm animals, which became increasingly popular in the 1980s. I just couldn't support that. So, we emigrated: my boyfriend, our dog Lola and I. I had a job at a small animal clinic in the Centre of Naples.

Already in the first week we had an addition to the family: a tiny kitten in a box on a chair in the waiting room was "left over". My boss wanted to kill it. I was horrified! Oskar has accompanied our lives for many years. At that time, we did not know how many animals would enrich our "family". In Naples I then experienced something every day that I had never seen in my life: animals on the street! Dogs that confidently moved from one side of the street to the other in the densest and hectic traffic of the inner city. My heart almost stopped the first time, but no other person took notice of this event, which was absolutely exciting for me. Cats I only saw at night. They had their meal together with dogs and big rats in the huge mountains of rubbish on the sidewalks in the city center - without growling, hissing or beeping. There was enough of all delicacies available.

Of course, not all animals survived the traffic unscathed, especially not the newly abandoned family pets, which first had to learn that cars are dangerous. We had a lot to do in the veterinary practice. An English woman brought injured animals almost every day. It was she who brought me to an animal "shelter" of an animal "protection" association in Castel Volturno. 650 very sick animals, almost all without fur, scratching themselves constantly, many blind and bleeding from the skin. I was in tears. That was the moment when I decided that such "shelters" had to be closed. Not only because of the health of the animals, especially because there was no time for human interaction. This is far crueler than anything else....

We moved into this animal "shelter" and first cleaned the kennels and dipped the dogs. There was no microscope and I assumed that there was a mange problem. I had never heard of the Mediterranean disease leishmaniasis at university. I wanted to change the food. 30 kg of pasta were cooked with 5 kg of slaughterhouse waste every day and mixed with moldy bread. Dog food did not yet exist in Italy at that time. With ready-made pig food, the nutrition would have been more balanced and healthier in any case. But the president and board members of the association were against it. I wanted certain medicines, mainly against ticks, fleas and worms, but they said there was no money. At least I wanted to castrate the males, but they were strictly against it. However, I had to watch several times how a bitch had to give birth to her cubs in a large pack and the other dogs ate them immediately.... We then found out that there are such "shelters" all over Italy. The animal rights activists "saved" dogs from death, because by 1991, tens of thousands of dogs were being caught on the streets, kept in city shelters for three days, and then killed if no one got them out.....

We rented an old farm, "swiped" 30 dogs and tried to build an alternative. There was no internet at that time. I wrote my fingers sore on an old small portable typewriter to ask for help for the 650 dogs. Few have replied, many of them being affected, but they can't do anything in a foreign country.

Only the Anglo-Italian Society for the Protection of Animals, the Deutsche Tierschutzbund e.V. in Bonn, the animal shelters in Munich and Starnberg, the Neue Tierhilfe Zürich and the Elisabeth Rentschler Foundation in Switzerland have helped to get a little closer the objective we had set within the years:

TO LET ONLY SO MANY DOGS AND CATS BE BORN THAT OWNERS ARE ALREADY WAITING FOR = BIRTH CONTROL

Then you don't need such large kennels anymore. Animal shelters are necessary, but only as a temporary solution with a small number of animals. For example, if the mistress or master dies and none of the family can take over the animal, the dog must be temporarily housed in an animal shelter, willy-nilly, until it can be passed on to another family. In this time, which is very sad for the animal, it should receive as much human affection as possible, a balanced diet, lots of exercise and, above all, veterinary care - like in Germany or other northern European countries.

We rolled up our sleeves and tackled the problem. We set up the farm as an animal shelter with a small simple surgery. We mainly started with neutering. Since I had no idea about shelter management, I visited as many of them as possible in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, but also in Italy (North and South) and learned how to run one. I have visited veterinarians who already neutered (at least cats).

I sometimes felt like trying to clean the desert with a vacuum cleaner.....

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But someone had to start. In 1986, thanks to a German sponsor from Lake Constance in Germany, we were able to buy one hectare of farmland and, thanks to a Swiss sponsor, we were able to build our center: a 200 square meter veterinary clinic, an animal shelter with 24 quarantine boxes. The opening took place in 1989.

In the meantime, it was clear: the placement of shelter dogs was hardly possible in the region, since the people knew that the animals from these establishments were all sick. Re-homing all placeable dogs to Switzerland and Germany? We were already doing this on a small scale (about 50 animals per year), but it was like a drop in the ocean and took up almost all of our financial resources and time.

During this period I had heard from American customers (hundreds of soldiers lived in Castel Volturno with their relatives and were responsible for supplying the American fleet which was stationed in the Mediterranean Sea) of the "trap+spay/neuter+release" method and thought this was the solution. I contacted Italian animal rights activists and discussed with, especially about the draft of the new animal welfare law, which was passed in 1991. I was even invited to a meeting in the Senate in Rome and was allowed to present my ideas.

Our center should not be a camp for collecting dogs, but a station that keeps dogs for a few days after neutering in order to control them. After this time, the animals were brought back to the streets. In 1995 we were able to convince the new Mayor of Castel Volturno of this method and we worked like this for 9 years. Over 3000 dogs passed through our hands thanks to sponsors all over the world who supported this project financially. We always asked the citizens at the trapping point if they wanted the animals back. If they had caused any problems, for example chasing children on bicycles, we kept them for re-homing. At this time I already had a hunch that the dogs running around the street weren't really ownerless dogs at all. People were a little "too caring"! That hunch became a certainty over the years and then proved with data. For this reason, we have also stopped catching dogs for neutering and releasing them back on the streets.

Neutering is significantly cheaper than housing as we tested all dogs for leishmaniasis, treated them for external and internal parasites and of course the kennels had to be disinfected. As an alternative, we offered the project "adozione strada" (adoption of animals directly from the street).

During all these years we have literally "shown" the public that neutering dogs (and cats) is a good thing. With this project, people came to us with "their" dog, declared that they "found" it (we never asked where and when!) and we neutered, microchipped and registered the animal free of charge. The animal was brought in the morning and picked up again the same day and the postoperative phase was controlled by the owner himself. Of course, we also informed these owners about illnesses, diet, dog keeping and handling, etc.....

The 1991 Act with all the regional and municipal follow-up laws is perfect, but unfortunately, as is often the case in (southern) Italy, there is no control. Today, almost 17,000 dogs, just in the Campania region, sit for life in municipal or commercial animal "shelters." There are 2 square meters per dog, they have to go outside for a few minutes every day, but there is no time for that and who is going to control it?

The 1991 Act also requires identification with following registration of all dogs (this is also from America and I have proposed this in the Senate). Obviously, that doesn't work either, otherwise the almost 17,000 dogs wouldn't be stuck in animal "shelters" only in the Campania region today, over 30 years after the Act from 1991 came into force!

In the first years we worked together with the responsible authorities, and in addition to private Italian veterinarians we even trained public veterinarians (they have to neuter free of charge the so many street cats and the dogs that are caught here!). I have been invited to speak at congresses, to educate and train participants in courses on how to solve a stray animal problem. In the meantime, there was internet, I went to various international animal welfare congresses, first to learn and then also to tell others how "I did it", because everything seems so perfect in Italy in comparison to some other countries over the world.

But somehow it didn't go any further. The "dog business" has probably gained the upper hand. Even animal people were afraid that if all dogs were neutered and registered, they would lose their jobs.

Our center was doing great. If I was insulted and life threatened in the early years **because** we made animals infertile, today we are insulted and threatened **for neutering too few animals!** Something has definitely changed. And it's not just us who work on birth control. Almost all veterinarians in my region work diligently in their surgeries. Many have been trained by me or have passed on what they learned from me to younger colleagues.

Since 2018 I have been in total stress. Isabella, our longtime secretary, has resigned. She bought a buffalo farm with her husband and now works with him. I've tried desperately to find a replacement - without success. Inevitably, I also did Isabella's work "by the way". I've been looking for veterinarians to work with us for tens of years. Not only in Italy, also in Germany and England - without success. Many only want to come to us for "a few weeks" to learn our neutering method. Our vet team has gotten old, I've been retired for 7 years now, but I work more than ever. Our African vet retired after a serious illness.

The requirements (because of the Covid19 pandemic, but also because of the Italian bureaucracy) are becoming increasingly difficult to follow. Personnel costs increase immeasurably. The Italian tax office demands that we completely separate the paid treatments and surgeries from the free ones and I wonder how that is supposed to work. They do not accept the system of a "low-cost/no-cost" clinic. That's how we have always worked and the minimal financial income from the clinic and the boarding facility naturally flowed back into the association's cash.

We would have to have all medicines in duplicate, double accounts of consumption, double financial accounts, double waste management, two refrigerators..... a nightmare! The alternative would be to offer all veterinary services for money or do everything for free. But if we do everything for free (vaccinations, treatments, even the holiday pets should be accommodated for free!), then that has no educational value at all. And everything against payment? What kind of animal protection would that be?

I threw in the towel. I'm just not in a position to rebuild everything and work still more.

But the sterilizations continue! I don't give up easily and when I'm forbidden to do something, I become stubborn! After weeks of sleepless nights, the idea came to me! We give grants for neutering of dogs and cats with owners, carried out by other colleagues who have their own surgeries and a contract with us. The animals must all be identified with a microchip and registered in the regional database. The veterinarians give us an invoice for the subsidy. I started this in November with the agreement of the Veterinary Association of the Province of Caserta and the demand from owners and veterinarians is increasing.

CLOSE THE FAUCET IS THE MOTTO!

You sure remember our booklet "Too many Dogs and Cats? If you don't, please get in contact with me and I will mail it to you! When a faucet is dripping, are you going to put a bucket under it or dry the floor every day? Certainly not, you will close or repair it. Comparing this problem with too many dogs and cats "dripping on the floor", the bucket (in this case shelters) is not going to help a lot, especially if the flow is getting stronger and stronger. We need to stop it and not at the end of the pipe, but at the beginning! It's actually clear: If it's the non-identified/registered and non-neutered dogs and cats and/or their offspring that are abandoned by their irresponsible owners and that create the problem of street animals, this is where we have to start. If you wait until the animals are on the street, it becomes more difficult and expensive to get the problem under control. Especially a few generations later, when the surviving animals can no longer be caught, because they were not socialized.

Of course, I will continue to look after our center with our animals with Anil, our Indian caretaker. We only closed the clinics on December 31, 2021. Our German vet Carolin takes over on her own the small surgery in Rocca D'Evandro. I already have interested parties who want to rent the large clinic in Castel Volturno. I'm still in the process of clearing everything out from the LEGA PRO ANIMALE and moving it to other buildings. The power supply has to be cut off and there are still a few things to do, especially painting the ceilings and walls. Of course, our "tenants" will also be able to benefit from our subsidy - in other words: our "adozione strada" project continues: anyone who finds a dog or cat on the street and wants to keep the animal they found will receive a voucher from LEGA PRO ANIMALE for neutering, for identification with a microchip and for registration.

The fight goes on, but it's manageable and is to be accomplished by a single person. I've often thought about what will happen when I'm no longer around and I think I've found a solution now.

I just hope that the Covid19 pandemic gets under control, because then I will certainly have time to go back to the schools and ask the children what a dog (or a cat) needs to live.....

I very much hope that you will continue to support our birth control projects and educational work that is so important.

A thousand thanks and best wishes from Castel Volturno/Southern Italy

40 YEARS OF WORK.....



1. Training of Italian private and public vets. 2. Interactive educational programmes in schools with awards for solved tasks. 3. Help in emergency areas like 2009 in L'Aquila after the Earthquake. 4. Spay/neuter of cats and dogs on Islands, Campsites, always together with the Authorities and wherever they ask for our help! In the picture Eduardo Stoppa, a famous journalist from the Italian television "Canale 5", who went with us to film a cat project on the Tremiti Islands.