

for 72 hours. After that time, LCARA may offer the dog for adoption or destroy it. Cats are not regulated by the Lane County Code, and LCARA is not required by law to maintain its approximately 30-cage cattery. The facility has approximately 30 dog kennels. That is not enough for a county that "is the [geographic] size of the state of Connecticut," Wellington said.

LCARA's mandate is to enforce the animal control code, maintain or "contract for maintenance a shelter or other place for all animals which are subject to impoundment" and collect the associated costs and fees. LCARA is paid for out of Lane County funds and some donations. Wellington said, "In all reality we are animal control and enforcement for all animals in the county and the city of Eugene."

LCARA is also contracted to provide services to cities like Springfield, Cottage Grove and Creswell, among others.

LCARA and Greenhill Humane Society, SPCA, are separate entities. Greenhill is a non-profit humane society. Like other Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCAs), it has its own policies and procedures. Through a "second chance" program, Greenhill receives several LCARA dogs four days a week, said Johnni Prince, executive director of Greenhill.

Eugene also has many animal rescues and resources, including SARA, Luv-A-Bull Pit-Bull Rescue and Pro-Bone-O as well as numerous private rescues and foster homes. Other groups, such as WAG (Willamette Animal Guild), work to develop resources such as low-cost spay and neuter.

However LCARA is the only government entity responsible for animal control in Eugene and Lane County.

Voices for Animals recently took out an advertisement in *The Register-Guard* alleging that LCARA is "woefully mismanaged" and that animals "are labeled vicious when they are actually deeply frightened."

The group further alleged that LCARA refuses "to let a true foster care program to take root," and does not "fully utilize an extensive volunteer base."

Shortly after the ad was placed, the Lane County Commissioners held a public hearing on the proposed no-kill resolution. Discussion and public comment lasted for more than three hours. The commissioners requested that public comment not involve personal attacks. Despite the caution, several people spoke critically of LCARA's management.

Katie Hull Anderson, on the other hand, praised the staff of LCARA for their handling of "the lost and unwanted animals their stupid owners don't know how to care for."

Almost 20 people spoke in favor of adopting a no-kill philosophy. Speakers included Flo Byrne, who said her research showed that going no kill was "revenue enhancing" because donations increase. Scott Bartlett, chair of the 2003 Animal Regulation Advisory Task Force, spoke against the killings. Bartlett asked the commissioners, "Have you no compassion? Can't we do better?"

What is No-Kill?

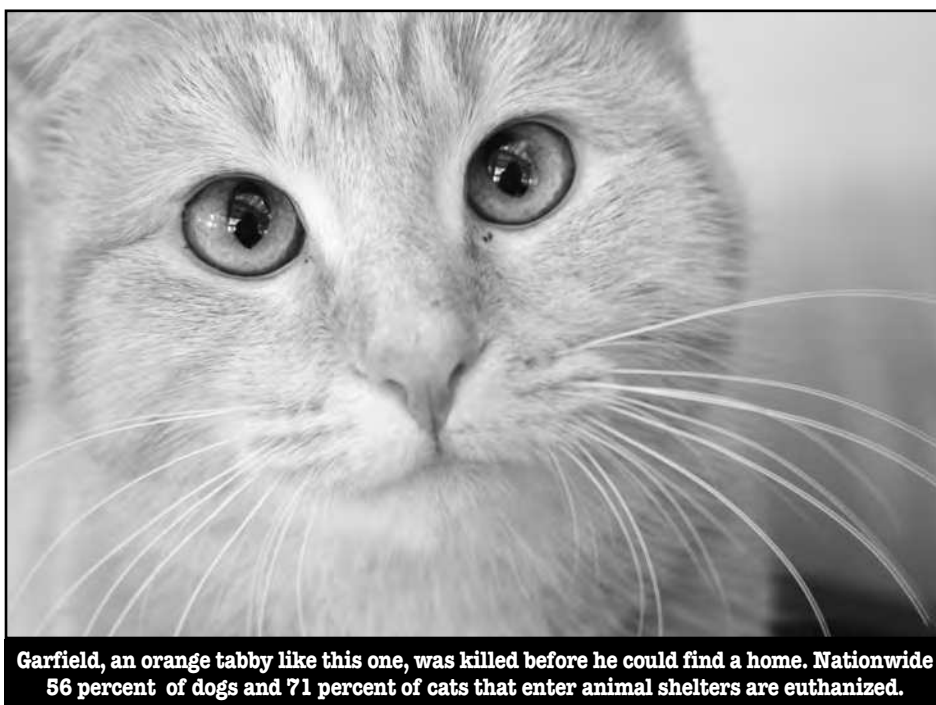
Much of the debate at the hearing centered on an understanding of just what "no-kill" is. Many find the phrase confusing. Greenhill director Prince said the shelter is "not at odds philosophically with the NKCC," but there is a "language problem." Greenhill identifies itself as a "low kill" shelter. Prince said Greenhill has not euthanized an animal for space in six years though the facility does euthanize for other reasons. Greenhill will start keeping and publicizing its euthanasia statistics in June of this year, Prince said.

However, she said unlike LCARA, Greenhill is not "required to accept all comers." Greenhill currently has an eight-week waiting list for people who wish to relinquish their cats.

'Have you no compassion? Can't we do better?' — Scott Bartlett, chair, Animal Regulation Advisory Task Force

Groups like Greenhill and Shelter Animal Resource Alliance (SARA) are growing anxious as "kitten season" begins and their kennels and resources become strained.

The no-kill concept stems from the work of Nathan Winograd, director of the nonprofit No Kill Advocacy Center in California. According a recent article in *Reader's Digest*, Winograd gave up a job as a corporate lawyer to become executive director of the Tompkins County, New York SPCA. While there he reduced the kill rate to only 1 in 10 and doubled



Garfield, an orange tabby like this one, was killed before he could find a home. Nationwide 56 percent of dogs and 71 percent of cats that enter animal shelters are euthanized.

'Garfield should not have been put down.' — LCARA manager Mike Wellington

the average donation. (Currently LCARA statistics show a 47 percent kill rate.) Winograd then moved on to San Francisco and became director of operations for the San Francisco SPCA, which is now a no-kill shelter, before forming his no-kill advocacy group.

The no-kill philosophy does not actually mean no animals will ever be killed. According to the NKCC, "the term 'no kill,' as popularized by Nathan Winograd, and as utilized by NKCC, means 'no killing of adoptable or medically/behaviorally treatable companion animals, or feral cats.'"

Many of the members of the NKCC came to the cause after eight cats were allegedly trapped and then shot in the head by Swanson's Pest Management in July 2005. Others joined after Nathan Winograd came to Eugene in July 2006 and spoke to a room of more than 200 people about becoming a no-kill community.

According to Wellington, there is "no government animal control that is no-kill." But the city of San Francisco claims to be no-kill, as does Tompkins County, and Maricopa County, Ariz. New York City has a goal of no-kill by 2008. Charlottesville, Virginia is going no-kill. Los Angeles Animal Services calls itself "on the road to no-kill" and provides low cost and free spay and neuter programs, including a "Customize Your Pit Bull" day in Watts, providing free vaccinations, microchipping and spay/neuter services.

How can these cities and counties claim they are not killing excess cats and dogs if they, like LCARA, are mandated to regulate and control animals? The city or county animal regulation teams up with no-kill animal shelters, rescues and foster homes, and these groups then take on the dogs and cats until they are adopted.

However, according to Winograd, sheltering, rescuing and fostering is only part of the solution. In order to become no-kill, Eugene needs affordable spay/neuter; better adoption programs; trapping, spaying/neutering and releasing feral cats; pet retention counseling (helping people with pets with behavioral problems keep them, rather than giving them up to a shelter); medical and behavior rehabilitation for impounded animals; and better public relations.

Public Image

LCARA's public image is not warm and fuzzy. Winograd's August 2006 report on LCARA alleged that "the shelter is being run as a quasi-police department." LCARA officers wear badges, "police type uniforms" and are issued bullet-proof vests. The newest LCARA purchase is a black Ford F150 pickup truck. Wellington referred to LCARA officers as "first responders."

Winograd's report on LCARA further alleged "misallocated resources" such as \$85,000 spent on a software management system. Winograd stated that such shelter management software is currently available for free.

The report references critics who claim that the shelter has "no systematic policy" with regard to euthanasia and that decisions "are often made capriciously." Winograd suggests that a decision as final and irrevocable as euthanasia should be subject to "standard written operating procedures."

The report also critiques the kennel operating hours, which are 10 am to 5:30 pm. It also closes from noon to 1 pm for lunch. This, according to the report, eliminates adopters and volunteers who work or have school-age children. In response to suggestions for increased kennel hours Wellington said, "I don't disagree with that. Ideally we'd be open seven days a week, including Sundays."

Jenny Johnson, a Springfield resident who drove to Berkeley, Calif., to adopt her pit bull, Martina, said LCARA's website is problematic in the age of the Internet. She said the pictures are not attractive and are difficult to find; there is little to no information about the dogs, and most of the animals are not listed on Petfinder.com, the widely used pet adoption site where Johnson found Martina. Moreover, she said, "What really sold me on Martina was her story."

Wellington said, "They all have a story." And said unfortunately LCARA "doesn't have the time and staff" to list animals on Petfinder with pictures and stories.

LCARA volunteers like Starly Pupke and Lesa Fisher have asked that LCARA become more "transparent" and keep public records of what happens to each animal. For example, animals that have been sent to Greenhill as part of the second chance program are not tracked once they leave LCARA. If the animal is euthanized at Greenhill instead of LCARA, no report is made to LCARA, nor is the euthanasia listed in LCARA's numbers.

Prince calls allegations that LCARA sends animals to Greenhill to be euthanized, thereby