

# Friends of GAWT News Update

April 2008  
[www.gawt.org](http://www.gawt.org)



## Our new Shelter is opened

After a few set-backs we opened our new Animal Care Centre and Boarding Kennels in November in Curchorem. The Centre is located at the Old Police Station (close to Ambedkar Circle) in Bansai, Cacora, Curchorem.

We are continuing to run our Shelter at Sansoddo and to carry out sterilisations there, as well as small operations. One of our two vans works from here collecting stray dogs from beaches and surrounding areas and bringing them in for operations, injections, and some much needed TLC.

We are also conducting an aggressive programme of sterilization and vaccination of stray dogs in Curchorem, where we have a veterinary surgeon on site. There are fully-trained staff also in residence here.

Also at Curchorem, following many requests for us to expand our services to private owners, we are now offering a full range of veterinary services, as well as anti-rabies vaccinations, and adoptions of puppies and adults.

In addition, our new "Home and Away" Kennels provide individual units and short and long-term stays for family pets. Again, over the years we have had to turn down many requests for this service, but now we are in premises where we can decide our own policies without restrictions. Already we are now seeing more and more dogs (and cats) in short-term residence, while their owners take a break.

Over the next six months we will be implementing plans to provide a mobile Dispensary Unit to visit outlying villages on a regular basis, to provide medical help, vaccinations and medicines to people who have no veterinary services in their area. Our anti-rabies camps, already held in over 40 villages through Margao, Chandor and Cuncolim, will be extended to Curchorem and the surrounding villages.

Our anti-rabies programme is proving very successful with usually well over 100 dogs and pups being vaccinated at our Sunday camps. They are so successful in fact that we often hold two or three simultaneously. More on this on the website.

**We have  
revamped  
our website**

We have revamped and redesigned our website to make it more user-friendly. Our thanks to Graeme Cree, our webmaster, for undertaking this, and to Linda Cree for helping out with design ideas. Although based now in Portugal they both still volunteer their time and considerable skills to GAWT and we are grateful to them.

Last year we set up PayPal to make it easier for friends to make donations, but we were never sure how successful it would be. However we are delighted that it has worked so well, bringing in funds that we might otherwise not have received. Another benefit of the web has been the increased number of overseas volunteers who want to come and donate their services to us.

## Animal cruelty masquerading as art.

In 2007, Costa Rican artist Guillermo Vargas (aka Habacuc), took a sick, starving dog, from the streets, tied it up to a short rope attached to a wall in an art gallery, and left it there for hours without food or water. The visitors to the gallery were impassive witnesses of the animal's torture. The gallery owner refuses to deny or confirm it died in the pursuit of 'art'. But the story doesn't end here: the prestigious Biennale Centroamericana of Art has decided that the cruelty committed by Habacuc *is* art, and have invited him to repeat it at the 2008 Biennale Centroamericana which will be held in Honduras.

If you would like to sign a petition expressing your dismay at this intolerable cruelty please click on the link <http://www.petitiononline.com/13031953/petition.html> <<http://www.petitiononline.com/13031953/petition.html>> Alternatively you can go to [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guillermo\\_Vargas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guillermo_Vargas) for a more detailed report.

Whether the dog escaped or died in situ, is almost immaterial to this story. It is the assumption that to exploit the suffering of a vulnerable animal, in the throes of starvation, presumably to gain 'artistic' notoriety, that is so repugnant. Let us know what you feel about it. We will continue the story on our website [www.gawt.org](http://www.gawt.org)

## When Norman met Henry

It all began late last year. One morning a young boy and his elderly grandfather arrived at the Shelter accompanied by the most enormous dog, (the size of a small pony) who was quite thin, sad-looking but otherwise in reasonable shape. 'This is Henry' said the man, sadly. "He's lived with us for five years since he was a pup, but now he is too big and too expensive for us to feed. He needs two kilos of food a day, and a lot more if he is to be properly fed and maintain good health".

Henry settled in well at the Shelter, although his arrival created a *frisson* of astonishment among the other dogs. He brought a new order to the social structure, there. The *coup* was bloodless and very civilized. Henry was now the unelected top-dog and no-one questioned this assumption. Peace reigned. But Henry still looked sad. Exercising him was a torment, as his default 'walk' was to pull his lead so hard that it was difficult to keep up with him. The other dogs showed him nothing but respect, but weren't that keen to play with him.

One day, shortly after Henry had arrived, the Shelter was visited by Norman Steen, who was a long-time supporter of GAWT. Norman and his wife Carol already have four or five dogs (depending on which one has gone walkabout that day) and four cats with attitude at their home, the wondrous *Casa Susegad* in Lutolim. So Norman wasn't looking for another dog, but was making a social call. Strolling around he suddenly found himself eyeball to sad eyeball with Henry. Norman smiled and said hello. Henry put his ears forward and wagged his tail - a first since he arrived. Norman took Henry for a walk and they both agreed very quickly that Henry should stop dragging Norman along, and walk beside him. As a treat, Norman promised to take him for another walk soon.

For many weeks Henry and Norman went for long walks, and Henry proved responsive to training. He started to look healthy, optimistic even, and his coat was turning glossy. He was completely smitten with Norman, and Norman was weakening by the day. Returning him to good health was quite a drain on the Shelter's funds as he needed a lot of expensive treatments. Norman and Carol generously funded this.

The day came when talk at the Shelter turned to having Henry re-homed. Who had a house big enough for him? The decision took shape imperceptibly. And one day, instead of returning to the Shelter after his walk, Henry went home with Norman and Carol to live happily ever after. If you want to see him there go to: [www.gawt.org](http://www.gawt.org) or [casasusegadgoa.com](http://casasusegadgoa.com)

## News from the Shelters

### 100+ Winners 2008

#### March

324 Jost Frank	Rs/-300
144 Clionda Holmes	Rs/-500
750 Colin Levy	Rs/-750

#### April

117 Jenny Viegas	Rs/-300
326 Jilli Gray	Rs/-500
289 Eileen Nichol	Rs/-750

The *St Patrick's Night* event was a huge success again this year, and the final one of our fundraising season. As last year it was held at Casa Susegad in Lutolim, and all agreed that the food and music were excellent. Thanks to Carol and Norman for all their hard work on our behalf.

Many of you will not know yet that it is now illegal to feed dogs in public places (including beaches) and results in prosecution if found doing so. This of course is very hard on the dogs, particularly in the monsoon season when our local volunteers used to feed the beach dogs several times a week just to alleviate their hardship and suffering. For the full Bombay Court decision please go to [www.gawt.org](http://www.gawt.org) and click on News.

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Obviously the great majority of money raised goes to looking after the dogs, food, medicine, operations, vaccines etc. but since January we have been able to invest in some new and much-needed equipment using money raised by the 100+ club, Friends of GAWT and the Fundraising Committee; new full-length reinforced gloves for the van staff who carry out collections of stray, sick and injured dogs, and who frequently have to attend to rabid dogs often at great risk of being bitten. They really are our unsung heroes. Extra cages - we need still more but they cost Rs/- 4,400 each (just over £50). We've upgraded the operating theatres and water system (to beat the constant water shortages). Two new phone systems have been installed to keep both shelters in touch, and some heavy-duty fans for both shelters, as well as office furniture for the new Curchorem centre.

*No space for photos in this Update, but plenty of new ones on our website!*

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