

Halloween Parade Steps Off on Oct. 23

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Costumed children and their parents march along Maple Avenue in the 2012 Vienna Halloween Parade.

Denim Do-gooders Help Put Zip on Homelessness

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“Sheltering Animals & Families Together”

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Allie Phillips (center) spoke to the Vienna Woman's Club on her initiative to promote pet-friendly domestic violence shelters throughout the U.S. With Phillips are VWC President Diane Abel (left) and Education Committee Co-Chair Jo-Lynn Westlund.



PHOTOS BY
DONNA MANZ/
THE CONNECTION

“Sheltering Animals & Families Together”

Initiative promotes domestic violence shelters that accept pets.

BY DONNA MANZ
THE CONNECTION

Did you know that approximately 2.3 million people, primarily women, are victims of partner violence? Did you know that over 62 percent of the American households have, at least, one pet? Approximately 48 percent of abused women do not leave an abusive situation because they will not leave their pets behind.

Pets are likely to be victimized by the household abuser. The abuser's animal cruelty is used to force compliance from the victims. “What I do to the dog is what I can do to you” is the message the abuser sends, according to Allie Phillips, founder of Sheltering Animals & Families Together [SAFT].

“As a prosecutor in Michigan, I saw women who stayed with their abusers to protect their pets,” said Phillips. “If they leave, the abuser will turn his anger on the pet. The pet usually is the primary target used to control the victim.”

“I created the safety program to help get these women out of their abusive homes.”

For other abused women, family pets are unconditional love, security and “home.” And here's the tragedy: most domestic violence shelters do not allow pets. But people like Allie Phillips, whose goal is to get abused women and their pets out of abusive homes, are trying to change that. Phillips' goal: to have in-place at least one shelter in each state and the District of Columbia. As of now, the only domestic violence shelter serving the Commonwealth of Virginia and Washington, D.C. that allows victims' pets is one in Arlington that opened in 2009.



Allie Phillips, founder, Sheltering Animals & Families Together [SAFT], said that approximately 48 percent of abused women do not leave an abusive situation because they will not leave their pets to the hands of the abuser.

CREATING A PET-FRIENDLY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER

- ❖ Partner with an animal rescue organization for guidance on building structures and care of pets. The Arlington family/pet shelter partners with the Animal Welfare League of Arlington.
- ❖ Have a veterinarian on-call to provide treatment and wellness exams. Many animal hospitals will donate their services or offer them at reduced rates.
- ❖ Let families care for their own pets. It gives the families a sense of usefulness and normalcy.

Phillips spoke at the Oct. 16 meeting of the Vienna Woman's Club, a community organization which has supported homeless female veterans, veterans and first-responders and the role of pets in PTSD therapy, and homeless teens, all of whom have ties to Fairfax County. More than 30 VWC members turned out to hear Phillips speak and to make donations to the shelter.

The Vienna Woman's Club collected much-needed items for the Arlington domestic violence/pet shelter, including pet supplies, and made a monetary contribution to the shelter. The unidentified Ar-

lington shelter is in the process of weatherizing its outdoor pet facility.

When still a prosecuting attorney, Phillips founded Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAFT) in the mid-1990s, the first and only global initiative helping domestic violence shelters to welcome families with pets. She is the director of the National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse and deputy director with the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse, programs of the National District Attorneys Association. Phillips lives in Alexandria.

In 2008, Phillips published the first set of guidelines when there were only four known shelters in the U.S. accepting pets. Now there are approximately 80 shel-

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A pirate family views the Vienna Halloween Parade in 2012.

PHOTO BY
DONNA MANZ/
THE CONNECTION

Halloween Parade Steps Off on Oct. 23

Pre-parade entertainment on Town Green new in 2013.

Vienna's longest-running and most-anticipated annual event—the 67th Vienna Halloween parade—steps off at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 23. One hundred-plus groups, clubs, bands and floats take over Maple Avenue between Berry and Center streets.

With a theme of “Celebrating Music and Theatre Through the Decades,” the parade is led by Grand Marshal Vienna Mayor M. Jane Seeman. The parade was originally founded to give Vienna children an opportunity to dress in costume and march through the town. The tradition holds fast today.

Costumed children are invited to walk in the parade in their Halloween costumes. No registration is required. Costumed marchers meet at 6:30 p.m. in the parking lot of Virginia Commerce Bank, 374 Maple Ave. E. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

“This is one of the top Vienna events,” said VBA logistics liaison and Artful Gift Shop owner, Peggy James. “This is totally down-home local, a family tradition for everyone. It gives Vienna a small-town feel with big city appeal.”

The 2013 Vienna Halloween Parade is sponsored by the Vienna Business Association [VBA] and the Town of Vienna. Special guests, sponsored by local businesses, include the Redskins Marching Band and Slap Shot, mascot of the Washington Capitals. Kicking off the parade are dozens of emergency fire and rescue vehicles, with sirens blaring and police motorcycles.

New for 2013 is a pre-parade show on the stage of the Town Green presented by the Vienna

School of Rock. Musicians play from 5:45 to about 6:45 p.m., while Maple Avenue is still open to traffic. Maple Avenue closes down from East Street to Lawyers Road shortly before 7 p.m.

“It's a multi-generational event,” said James. “Many of the parents who come with their children came to the parade as children themselves. They're carrying on the tradition. It's not just Vienna people; people come from all over the area.”

The parade committee offered tips on Halloween parade placeholders along Maple Avenue. Spectators are asked not to place any items on Maple Avenue prior to noon on parade day. Avoid placing spaceholders in bus shelters; the shelters are there for bus riders. Keep items off the sidewalks and benches, maintaining clearance for pedestrians. Secure all items; weather conditions may cause them to blow into the roadway or sidewalks.

The official reviewing stand is at the Town Green. Freeman Store, with its jars of candy and Virginia-made products, is open until 9 p.m., and many restaurants on Maple Avenue and Church Street are appealing to families for pre-parade dinners.

Each year, the Town of Vienna recognizes parade winners at a Town Council meeting in November. Categories include Youth Band, Float with Music, Youth Performer, Antique/Classic Vehicle, Adult Band, Float without Music and Adult Performer. The public is invited to attend the awards presentation.

For more information on the parade, go to www.ViennaHalloweenParade.com.

—DONNA MANZ

NEWS

Saving Pets from Abuse

FROM PAGE 3

ters covering 33 U.S. states, Canada, and Australia. If the victim loved the pet enough not to leave it behind to the hands of the abuser, that pet deserves to be with its guardian. If an abused woman can safely leave the violent situation with her pet, she should do so even if it means the pet will have to be “fostered” off-site. There are approximately 900 domestic violence shelters in the U.S. that partner with animal rescue organizations that will foster a pet until the guardian can once again take control.

Phillips trains on this initiative throughout the country, promoting the value of family-and-pet shelters. When a young child witnesses pet abuse, that child is eight times more likely to become an offender himself. And consider, then, that 76 percent of kids in abusive households witness pet abuse.

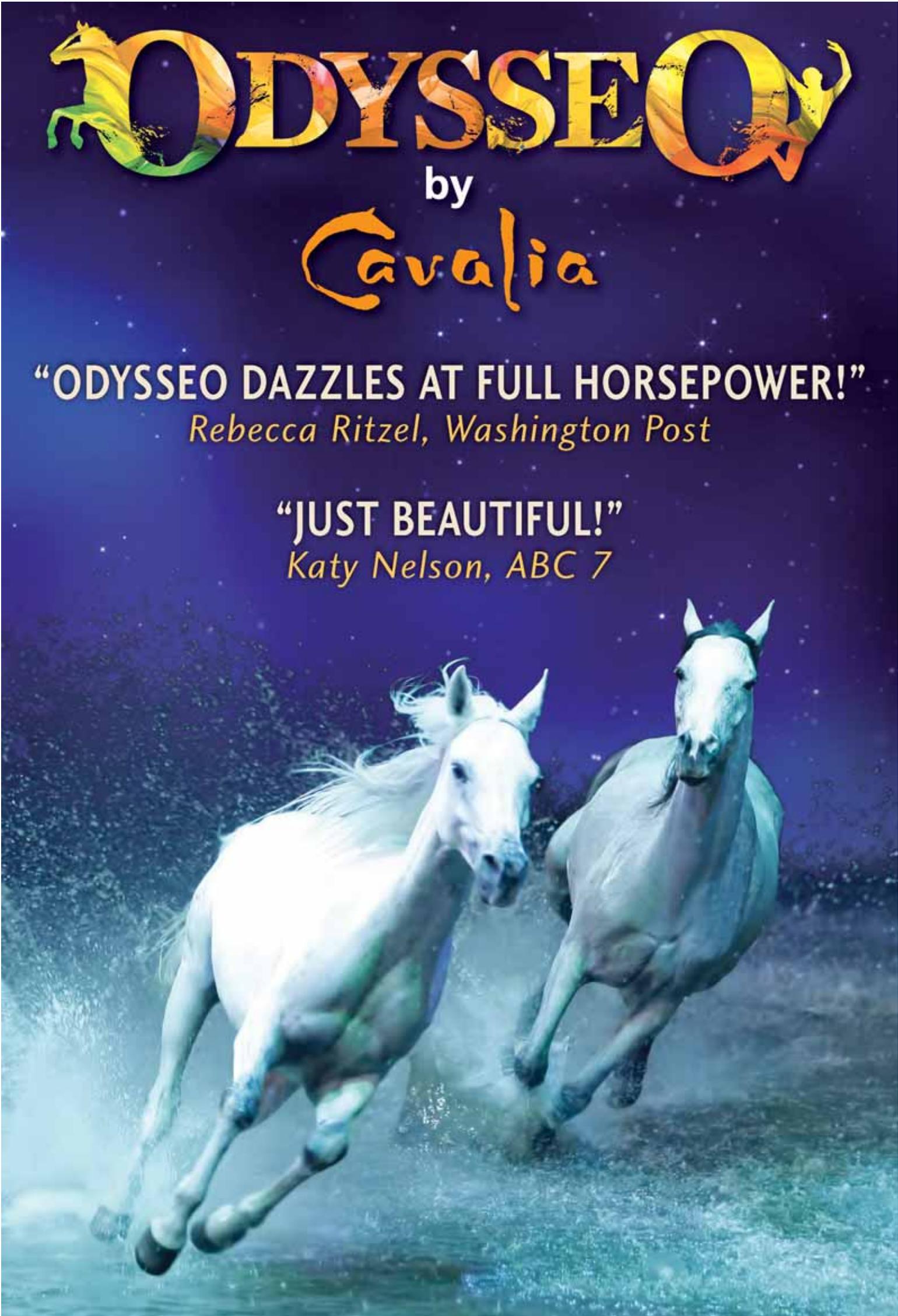
Phillips is licensed to practice law in Michigan and Maryland and has been training prosecutors and criminal justice professionals since 1997. As an assistant prosecutor in Michigan, Phillips handled domestic abuse cases, witnessing the relationships between the abused and family pets.

She was the vice president of Public Policy and then vice president of Human-Animal Strategic Initiatives for American Humane Association.

To learn more about creating a pet-welcomed/domestic violence shelter in your community, go to www.animalsandfamilies.org for more information. Talk with your local service club about sponsorships.

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—Allie Phillips, founder, Sheltering Animals & Families Together [SAFT]



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