

# THE CAPITAL AND VANCOUVER ISLAND

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ADRIAN LAM, TIMES COLONIST

Victoria SPCA general manager Penny Stone: "Thank goodness they were small."

## Ai, chihuahua! Woman drops off 43 at SPCA

About 30 remain and are looking for good homes

**DAVID KARP**  
Times Colonist

It's enough to give the most reluctant burrito consumers a Taco Bell craving — 43 chihuahuas were dropped off at the Victoria SPCA last week.

"To take in 43 dogs in that time period is kind of crazy," said Victoria SPCA general manager Penny Stone. "Thank goodness they were small."

Stone said she received a call Wednesday afternoon from a woman who wanted to give away 10 chihuahuas.

"When she came in, she kept taking more out of her car saying, 'Can you take more? Can you take more? Can you take more?'" said Stone. "Finally, we went out to her car. She had a Mustang convertible full of chihuahuas."

The woman dropped off 33 chihuahuas on Wednesday and nine more on Thursday morning. One of the chihuahuas gave birth to a puppy on Thursday, bringing the total to 43. All but six of the dogs are under the age of two.

"I think she was a very nice lady who was in way over her head," said Stone.

"She was probably in a situation where she started with one chihuahua and it had babies. People get attached to them and feel that nobody can do as good a job [caring for them], so they end up keeping them. Then other people find out she is the chihuahua lady — her boss died and gave her 12. Pretty soon, her babies are having babies and it's out of control."

The woman is a resident of Langford, where bylaws state that households can keep no more than four dogs older than four months. Don Brown, manager of bylaw and animal care services for the Capital Regional District, said the maximum penalty for breaking the bylaw is a \$2,000 fine. Two animal control officers were working on the case, Brown said, but no action will be taken now that the dogs have been handed over to the SPCA.

"We always try to get voluntary compliance from people," he said.

The unique situation is putting an unexpected strain on the SPCA's finances. All but two of the dogs need to be spayed and neutered, and about half of

the canines need extra medical treatment for non-life threatening issues, Stone said. One of them had to have its eye removed on Thursday, one had an infection in its uterus, and several needed dental work.

"We have lots of medical bills now that we certainly weren't counting on," she said.

About 10 chihuahuas were adopted over the weekend, while a few have been temporarily placed in foster homes. That means there are about 30 chihuahuas at the shelter. The SPCA is seeking people to adopt the dogs or make a donation to help with the medical bills.

"They are absolutely lovely," said Stone. "Some little dogs tend to be snappy, but these are really nice dogs. Some of them are scared, some of them are more social than others, but they are very nice chihuahuas."

People interested in donating or adopting can visit the Victoria SPCA at 3150 Napier Lane or call 250-388-7722. The shelter is open for adoption every day from noon to 5 p.m. [dkarp@tc.canwest.com](mailto:dkarp@tc.canwest.com)