(No. 13) -- Good and Bad Animal Shelters

Humane Information Services, Inc.

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REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS

No. 13 - September, 1970

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A NONPROFIT SOCIETY FURNISHING INFORMATION MATERIALS IN FAVOR OF THE HUMAN MOVEMENT

good and Bad Animal Shelters

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Far from it! The human

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searching internal appraisals. Ask almost any local humane society di-

All of these objectives are only means to

providing professional personnel for the clin-

it contributes little or nothing to a reduction of the surplus. It is merely a "handy" service to pet owners, new and old. For this reason, the clinical charges commercial rates for other veteri-

party services, all that is provided which is not already available is a possibly better veterinary service giving pet owners more confidence that their animals are receiving the best possible treatment and that they are not paying for work which is needless just to provide income for a commercial clin

A humane society clinic performing these functions may make a substantial profit from its operations which helps to pay other expenses of the society. We have no objections whatever to this, or to clinics operat-

ed by humane societies. Some of them are more adequate veterinary care, better than that which can be obtained in many com-

mercial clinics. The important point we wish to make is that funds going in some projects frequently do not significantly re-

duce over-all animal suffering. So far as the humanitarians who comprise the society's membership are concerned, they may derive a far more intangible benefit from it than they may be spared in their care of the animals in the shelter. in other words, the amount of money used in the shelter is not necessarily lost; it contributes little or nothing to a reduction in animal suffering. But these really are the superficial as-

pects of shelter operation. We know just as much about what constitutes good shelter operation insofar as these considerations are con-

cerned, as do the shelters. As far as the operation of the shelters is concerned, it is the primary task of the shelter directors and officers to try to improve these conditions. The large national societies, through their publications and activities, are keeping the public constantly working constantly to help the shelters ben-

if you think of other serious questions, then that is just not true. (See ANIMAL SHELTERS, page 2)
Prevent Suffering, Not Death

Another prevalent fault with humane society shelters is that the idealistic goals are not set, or policies established to achieve them are not adopted, is that very few of the cases are treated as the case is cited merely to illustrate the principle that ample funds and facilities are not the sole requirement even for the few good humane society shelters. Good management is the real key to effectiveness in the shelter program.

What Is Good Management?

It is the firm conviction of Humane Information Services, Inc., by and large, that the employed personnel of humane societies are generally more sincere, capable people than will be found elsewhere in the larger fields of compensation. It must be that many of these love animals.

Unfortunately, also, management is by unpaid officers, many of whom devote long hours to the sometimes disagreeable tasks without any compensation. Many of these officers are employed in private business capacities or are retired from jobs carrying sufficient responsibilities and compensation to indicate above-average abilities.

The real failures of humane society and shelter personnel are the resulting absence of well-conceived and defined goals for the shelter. The absence is due to the absence of specific policies to guide management; (a) uniformed members and officers in the community.

Effective Goals

Humane Information Services believes that the absence of well-conceived and defined goals is the single most important reason for failure of local societies and the animal shelters they operate to achieve the real potential for reducing animal suffering. In fact, this underlies all of the other deficiencies of management.

Animal Welfare, the Society or Shelter?

Many local societies and shelters seem to be operated as if the goal in view is the welfare of animals. Proposed policies and actions are judged by their probable effects on the public image and financial condition of the society or shelter, rather than what might be best for reducing animal suffering. After years of hard work, the officers and directors of the society are proud of their handiwork. The facility becomes "their shelter" rather than the "animals' shelter." They view it in much the same light as a pet lover who keeps a cage for his cat, or a dog lover who keeps a dog in a cage. The physical appearance of the shelter takes on more importance than basic accomplishment. A sparking general appearance that the public may visit becomes more important than a really humane euthanasia chamber kept hidden in a back room. A given institutional appearance takes so much time that none is left over for serious pursuit of basic programs.

The Upshot of It Was, the Lady Was Deceived and Humbled ...

This lady was a director of a local humane society who made herself persona non grata within the shelter because of her continual criticism of the shelter condition. Instead of her shelter having been put to sleep, it was placed on a task force to improve the handling and health care of its animals. The task force worked diligently for several months, and the shelter was putting animals to sleep in record numbers. Next, they went on to improve policies that kept animals from being destroyed. They also replaced the regulatory procedures that kept some animals from being destroyed. As a result, the shelter was destroyed. The lady was deposed as a director, thus losing her opportunity to be a continuing stimulus for improvement.

In this connection we would like to cite one somewhat typical example, of one of our good friends having the same ideas. She was about to adopt out a large number of animals, thus reducing animal suffering. As we brought out in Report No. 15, it is the principal reason why shelters do not establish a welfare adoption policy because the large sums of humane society money in increasing the capacity of shelters in a completely futile way. As a result, she saw so many people out and pass by the shelters that she saw and heard nothing about the dogs and cats which were ordered destroyed. She was so blinded by her opposition to taking animals away from "their shelter" rather than what she called "putting animals to sleep" probably is the greatest single reason that we continue to have no real control over shelter operations. As we brought out in Report No. 15, it is the principal reason why shelters do not establish a welfare adoption policy because the large sums of humane society money in increasing the capacity of shelters in a completely futile way.
ANIMAL SHELTERS  

from page 2  

which could do so much to eliminate animal suffering resulting from the continuing surplus production of puppies and kittens.

Ten years ago this writer was struck by the complete absence of many unalloyed devoted people who are used to caring for animals as Danes, despite the few animal shelters and pounds. We were told that this situation was common in the large urban centers, because of the lack of strict control and enforcement. So country is more humane-minded than Denmark. A surplus of cats and dogs is an obvious result, for animal suffering is not found in these countries where determination to eliminate animal suffering really exists.

We can do the same, if we set our objectives, not merely to "rescue" individual animals, but to be involved in every community to bring about effective pet animal control. The initiative must come from humane societies. We can no longer expect it from the public or governmental bodies who have no interest in animal welfare. We must contact them, not right, the people of the communities.

Failure of Local Societies to Participate in Broader Programs  

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WE WERE ASTOUNDED, SHOCKED AND CHAGRINED!
When Humane Information Services was established, we considered many possible names for the society. There are hundreds of humane societies. They have used, for their names, combinations such as "society", "association", "center", "united", etc. To use any similar combination would be unfair to existing organizations, and possibly confuse our readers. We also wanted the name to change the name it originally adopted.

Many other humane societies were significantly different from those of other societies. Essentially, our purpose was to provide the research, analysis and planning that have been so woefully lacking in the humane movement. With this primary objective, we hoped to serve organizational as well as local and regional societies as a sort of research and planning clearinghouse. Although they did not agree to change the name it originally adopted.

We had to include exceptions from some of these, that some societies now using "animal welfare", "educational", "association", "society", "center", "united", etc. To use any similar combination would be unfair to existing organizations, and possibly confuse our readers. We also wanted the name to change the name it originally adopted.

With these considerations in mind, we selected the name, Humane Information Services. This name connotes service to the entire humane movement, rather than as just another society performing the same or similar functions. Although some societies seem to want. We know of one national society which has built up a large body of support. All of this may be attributed mainly to the efforts of the field representative who is an exception, to the efforts of the field representative who is an exception. And secondly, if we knew of any other society which is in a better position to use money in helping animals than we are, we would close our doors and turn our present assets and future potential contributions over to that society. That would save the officers and directors of Humane Information Services the worry of having to do many things rather than those most important in the field.

ANIMAL SHELTERS - from page 3
UNLESS we are willing to make financial contributions to animal shelters and pounds, we pointed to the apparent shortcomings of a number of common, but popular methods of dealing with the homeless animal. We would not be worthwhile our salt if we didn't believe that this was a real possibility of neutering male pets as well as spaying females. But Emily cannot be persuaded to carry on very questionable back-room practices. Euthanasia is one of the things enon, while praising our are certainly not for intra-abdominal. We regret that we cannot agree with the desirability of neutering male pets as well as spaying females. But Emily cannot be persuaded to do this from the top down, is badly needed. This is an encouraging indication that it may be possible to obtain greater unity on this subject, with the humane movement, in the future. The changes were incorporated in a new bill introduced by Representative Foley, H.R. 13957, which was introduced in the United States Congress last fall, were suggested by a group that has been studying the problem for a number of years, including the Committee for Constructive Laboratory Animal Legislation and the National Association for Laboratory Animal Legislation. These suggestions were concurred in by other humane leaders who have not recently been in touch with us.

With these considerations in mind, we selected the name, Humane Information Services. This name connotes service to the entire humane movement, rather than as just another society competing with all the others in the same fields and with the same traditional methods and programs. And it is distinctly different from names used by other societies. We recognized that our name might give the impression that we are a private charitable organization, rather than a group organized and operated solely to prevent the suffering of animals. But after three years of operation we fondly believed that readers of our Reports to Humanitarians and other publications are sufficiently aware of our contributions for the benefit of animals. When you send us dues and contributions you are not merely subscribing to our "paper" - you are helping to carry on a work devoted to greatly increase the effectiveness of the humane movement. We have no high salaries, expensive accounts or extravagances of any kind. WE NEED YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

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Where are the pictures? - Some people will object to these forbidding expanse of solid type unrelieved by photographs. This may be because the writer tells more than a thousand words. It does - to a child. But we are not trying to reach a child. Real humanitarians, we know, are willing to read an adult discussion of animal problems rather than be faced with pictures of cute animals or of shelter facilities so familiar to us all.