(No. 27) -- Pet Ownership Survey Yields Surprising Results

Humane Information Services, Inc.
HUMANE SOCIETY TRIES TO REFORM JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, PUBLIC POUND

by Stephen Byrd
Member, Board of Directors
Mississippi Animal Rescue League

Edston's Note:
Nobody knows how many dog pounds exist in the United States, or how many dogs and cats are destroyed in these pounds annually, sometimes in ways that are crude and cruel beyond belief. But there are thousands. A tremendous variation is found in the buildings, equipment, personnel, operating methods and treatment of the animals handled. The public pound described in the accompanying article falls somewhere between the extremely bad and good public pounds. Dr. Frederick I. Thomsen, president of the International Humane Society, and myself, visited this pound over a year ago, and his one-day observations agree entirely with those cited in this article.

In 1973, representatives of the Mississippi Animal Rescue League began visiting the Jackson city dog pound with the permission of Mayor Russell Davis. They had observed imitating the neglect the men at the pound improve conditions there. They had received many reports that the pound includederals were horrible and a discredit to the City of Jackson as well as inhume for the animals.

This report will describe what was found at the pound and what might be done to correct the deficiencies. Nothing in this report is hearsay evidence; all of the information is what was actually witnessed by the writer.

CONDITIONS AT THE POUND

The first thing in the morning the attendant in charge of the animals washed out all cages with a high pressure water hose. The animals were not removed from the other cages. Many sick dogs were left in the cages during this cleaning. After the animals were fed in the afternoon, the cages were again washed.

Each afternoon an attendant went to the City jail with a garbage can to get the "food" left over by the prisoners from their meal. These lunches consisted of rice, beans, peas, potato peels, lemon rinds, spinach, chicken bones, etc. When the League's representative first went to the pound, the animals were fed nothing but this slop, while there was stored in the storage room hundreds of pounds of commercial dog food.

Six cages were specified as the sick ward. These cages were not isolated from the other cages. Many sick dogs were kept in these cages for adoption, some with contagious disease. Animals were destroyed only on Tuesday mornings. This meant badly injured came in on Tuesday afternoon, it was made to wait until the next Tuesday to be given its ashes (if it lived). These sick and injured animals included dogs which were paralyzed, animals unable to eat, dogs and cats with distemper, animals with broken bones, animals in convulsions, etc.

Tuesday mornings each animal to be destroyed was taken from his cage by a means of a noose around his neck, the noose being attached to a pole. The animal was held up by his neck, often with all four legs in the air. His front legs were spread apart and the needle stabbed in the chest. The needle would frequently hit the heart, often hitting the rib bones and also often injecting into the lungs. The animals when not dead were propped up so they were in convulsions, retching, clawing, and exhibiting many signs of distress.

While still fully conscious, in many instances, the animals were then thrown into the back of a truck. The men assisting were afraid to hold the animal after it was injected for fear they would absorb the solution through their skin and die also! If the animal crawled a distance of five or six feet back onto the pile, often several times. Many times young puppies had to be injected two or three times before losing consciousness.

On Wednesday mornings a truck would back up to the door, and all dogs over 15 pounds were loaded into the truck and taken to the University Medical Center. This included taking mother dogs away from their newborn puppies (leaving her puppies to starve and her to grieve). On one occasion a dog was observed being taken to the Medical Center while in labor. Sick animals were taken to the Medical Center and cats with distemper; one cat observed was in convulsions.

While still alive, sick or frightened they didn't respond the way the attendant wished, they were kicked, or hit over the head or back with a steel pipe. The steel pipe has a lock on the end which is used to catch the animals.

About once a week (usually Tuesday or Wednesday) the animals were moved from their cages, and their cages were steam cleaned. Occasionally an animal was left in a cage when it was cleaned.

The employees at the pound frequently observed giving erroneous information to the public. They told the people coming to the pound or calling in that they didn't usually have to put any animals to sleep. They said they find homes for nearly all the animals, when actually only a small percent were adopted.

When dogs with collars and tags came into the pound, the driver would take the information from the tags and turn it in to the office. No apparent attempt was made to call the owners, although the public was told that they did. We know this to be true, because the League representative has taken this information from the tags and called the owners to see if they had been contacted by the pound.

Very poor records were kept. Often the office had no idea how long the dogs had been there. Frequently the attendant would tell a prospective customer that a dog had been there only a couple of days and then tell another customer a different story about the same dog.

A large part of the day. Dead dogs were picked up and hauled in the same truck with healthy dogs. Dead dogs full of maggots were carried in the same truck with healthy dogs. Most of the drivers' time was spent picking up stray dogs instead of picking up strays. This information was obtained from reports turned in by the drivers themselves.

The City in turn was picking up animals within the City of Jackson which was enacted by Mayor Davis and Commissioners Kelly and Cates was not being enforced. The writer refers specifically to the rabies control ordinance.

The part of the pound building which was built to be a veterinary treatment room is used to house a coke machine and water fountain and as a storeroom.

In short, the pound was in violation of just about every principle of humane operation known to experienced shelter operators. The staff lacked both technical information and incentive to use humane methods of operation.

IMPROVEMENTS ALREADY MADE

Improvements effected following these observations included with the permission of the manager.

Three cages were designated for use for housing cats and kittens, and complete control of the cats has been given to the Mississippi Animal Rescue League. These cages are cleaned daily. The cages are lined with newspaper, and litter boxes have been installed.

Cat food is now being bought by the City (except for the few cats in the care of the League). The cats and kittens have food and water before all day.

The dogs are now being fed a diet of about three-fourths slop and one-fourth dog food (mixed). Jackson veterinarians have volunteer­
ed their time to go to the pound on a rotating basis twice a week. They intend to spay and neuter the animals. They also will make recommendations regarding conditions needing improving.

CONDITIONS OBSTRUCTING ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Various problems were encountered while trying to make more improvements. (See PUBLIC POUND, page 2, column 1)

REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS

Number 27 — March, 1974

EDITORS:
Frederick L. Thomsen, Ph.D.
Miss Emily F. Gloecker

HUMANE INFORMATION SERVICES
Incorporated
A NON-PROFIT NATIONAL HUMANITY SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION OF ANIMAL SUFFERING

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St. Petersburg, Florida 33705

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PUBLIC POUND — FROM PAGE 1

These problems must be overcome if progress is to continue.

The biggest obstacle is the attitudes of those in charge of the pound. These people seem to resent the League’s offer to help, and the League’s action in going above their heads by contacting the Manager.

Management apparently does not want the help of the League, nor that of the veterinarians. When the League’s veterinarians, Mr. Jackson’s finest, came to the pound to assist in arranging for improvements, the head of the pound was insulting and hard to deal with. He repeatedly implied that the veterinarian did not know what he was doing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT

The first and foremost recommendation to be made by the League is the immediate removal from their authority over the pound of certain police officers standing in the way of progress of the Small Animal Control Department.

The League requests that one of the attendants be replaced by a more humanized and conscientious person having some knowledge of animal care.

It is recommended that the cages never be washed down with the animals still in them.

It is recommended that the dogs be fed a complete commercial dog food and that the feeding of slop from the Jail be discontinued. Puppies should be fed two to three times a day instead of once.

It is urged that all sick animals be isolated from the healthy ones.

The League wants its cooperating veterinarians to be able to visit the pound on Tuesdays and Fridays at their convenience to administer the injections of sodium pentobarbital. Any animal that comes into the pound badly injured or sick should be immediately euthanized.

It is recommended that permission be granted that one of the attendants secluding the wing of the pound where canines can be thinned by a vet, be allowed to administer the euthanasia to these injured animals.

(Continued top of column 2)

The League does not consider the man who now handles the euthanasia to be either competent or humane, and he should never be allowed to do it again.

The League requests that all female animals with puppies or kittens under the age of six weeks be immediately euthanized. Small, helpless animals are not candidates for a mother with litter.

All cages should be thoroughly cleaned daily, deep down, odor and disease. The cages should be disinfected at least twice a week.

The League requests that it be given a key to the pound so it would like to be able to get into the pound to check the animals on Sundays.

The public must be told the truth about the population problem. They now are not told that the animals are destroyed.

When dogs with tags come into the shelter, the owner should be called to tell him his animal is there. Drivers should patrol the City more frequently. No dead animals should be hauled with the healthy animals. Dead animals picked up should be hauled to the sanitation department. Better records need to be kept. Every animal that enters the shelter that will be no doubt as to how long any animal has been there. Adequate adoption regulations will be set up. These regulations should protect the public from the protection of the animal as a pet and the provision of humane slaughtering plants. This subject was rather thoroughly explored in our Report Humane Information Services, Inc., was set up expressly for the purpose of solving this problem. Dr. Frederick L. Tomson, president of Humane Information Services, is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Council, and has control of all information and advice.

The principal project of the Council to date has been an attempt to develop proved handling and slaughtering techniques for use in kosher slaughtering plants. This has been done by contracting with the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Connecticut, which has just submitted its progress report covering operations through December, 1973.

ENCOURAGING PROGRESS

We are impressed with the work which has been done to date, although this has consisted in gathering preliminary data needed and the drawing of plans and specifications for the proposed conveyors and other equipment for handling small animals: sheep, lambs and calves. A holding pen for large cattle, designed to position the animal for the ritual cut, would be the first milestone in efforts to make kosher slaughtering plants. This type, of course, will mark only the beginning of the work, and cooperation of state and federal humane slaughtering laws is essential.

The basis for such action would be constitutional grounds separating state and municipal law from federal law.

The smallest obstacle is the attitude of the community. The League does not consider the man who is in charge of the public pound, and who is in charge of animal affairs in this city, to be competent. He is insulting and hard to deal with. He repeatedly implied that the veterinarian did not know what he was doing.

PRE-SLAUGHTER HANDLING FOR RITUAL SLAUGHTER

Humane Information Services continues to receive letters asking what is being done to stop the terrible suffering of cattle, calves, sheep and lambs in kosher slaughtering plants. This subject was rather thoroughly explored in our Report Humane Information Services, Inc., was set up expressly for the purpose of solving this problem. Dr. Frederick L. Tomson, president of Humane Information Services, is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Council, and has control of all information and advice.

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A statistician has been defined as one who is adept at drawing a straight line from a preconceived notion to a foregone conclusion. And that applied to us all to some of the “facts” we in the humane movement have been using in trying to convince ourselves and others about what should be done to deal with the pet population explosion. We are inclined to treat as gospel any statistic quoted by anyone else, which suits our purposes.

The principal “facts” about the surplus of dogs and cats that have been available may be found in the little leaflets which have been circulating in the humane movement for some years, such as the one entitled “10,000 per hour”.

The origin of this mythical figure goes back many years. Nobody seems to know exactly how it was derived, and there is even some dispute over who originated the figure. It is of dubious accuracy, but back up by anything better, Humane Information Services has been using the figures on the telephone survey to estimate the number of dogs and cats and the numbers of puppies and kittens produced each year that are quoted in this leaflet, after making allowance for the movement of the local population since the estimates were made.

But even assuming that these estimates originally were reasonable on the many conditions under which pet ownership have changed greatly since these estimates were made. And these national estimates carry little meaning to the average person or council member. He has no idea of what 10,000 per hour for the country as a whole means in terms of the local community.

The only way to localize the pet population explosion has been to cite the number of dogs and cats bred, owned, and destroyed by the local shelters and pound. Yet even these simple statistics frequently are lacking. Many shelters, for example, do not keep a record, and consistent permanent records of receipts and disposition of animals. Some who do keep a record do not make it durable figures because of possible public misunderstanding and emotional attacks by animal lovers who do not believe in destroying strays. Humane Information Services is attempting to collect such information by counties, as a basis for national estimates, but it is a slow process.

SURVEYS NEEDED

A wide variety of data is needed for any adequate analysis of the pet population explosion and what should be done to cope with it. Without this information, it is not possible to make warranted conclusions, engage in wishful thinking, and come up with “solutions” of the surplus problem which will not get rid of 50 percent or more of the surplus.

Usually, action to deal with the surplus precedes the obtaining of information which would make the decisions. The local humane society or the city or county should make a pet ownership survey before making the decisions.

Humane societies usually have women’s auxiliary or other volunteer groups, the members of which don’t want to merely go through the motions of doing something constructive. The surveying for some work that is constructive and important. Surveys furnish an opportunity to obtain much-needed local information at very little cost of money, and with no unpleasant effort.

SURVEY OF PET OWNERSHIP

IN ST. PETERSBURG

Humane Information Services

largely for the purpose of finding out how much effort and expense is required, and how reliable the results might be.

We had neither the volunteer help nor the laboratory support to make a really adequate door-to-door survey, using what the statisticians call a “probability sample”, calling back to interview each 6th house in the sample, which we decided on a telephone survey, using a random sample of listings in the St. Petersburg telephone book, selected so that in the United States there are 118 million dogs and cats·

For what the personal phone interviewer had an adequate chance of including in the sample. But our sample was too small, and the follow-up of non-respondents too sketchy, to meet the rigid demands of a scientific survey. In fact, the 6 percent of the sample is too small to make differences between groups statistically significant. It is the case that the overall results of the survey are sufficiently reliable for the general purposes indicated in the following analysis.

PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS OWNING PETS AND NUMBER OWNED

Thirty-nine (39) percent of the households surveyed own a dog or cat, or both. This was about in line with expectations. Rather surprisingly, however, the proportions were not greatly different for the low, medium and high income areas of the City; 38, 42 and 34 percent respectively.

Also surprising to us, since St. Petersburg has somewhat more than its share of widows, who frequently have a preference for pets, is the proportion of households owning dogs (31 percent) was double the proportion owning cats (15 percent). Six (6) percent of the households own both a dog and a cat. The validity of the cat figures cited will be discussed later.

The average number of dogs per surveyed household is .392, of cats .238, and of pets (dogs and cats combined) .630, or .320 pets per household. For the households owning dogs, the average number per household is 1.28 and for cat owners 1.61 cats.

There are an estimated 113,880 households in St. Petersburg, 270,309 in the County of Pinellas, and 62,874,000 in the United States. The survey indicates that there are 35,303 dog and 17,082 cat-owning households in St. Petersburg. When allowance is made for duplication, households owning both a dog and a cat (6,833), they total 32,460 households owning dogs or cat or both is 45,552. They own a total of 72,690 dogs and cats, or 45,188 dogs and 27,502 cats.

In Pinellas County there are 83,796 dog and 40,546 cat-owning households. After making allowance for duplication, there are 34,265 dog and 17,591 cat-owning households. They own a total of 172,539 dogs and cats, consisting of 107,259 dogs and 65,280 cats.

EXTRAPOLATION TO UNITED STATES

Although extrapolation from such a sample to the United States obviously is extremely risky, it will be interesting to see what the St. Petersburg results might indicate to be the situation in the country as a whole. For what the projection may be worth, it indicates that in the United States there are 25,150,000 households owning a dog or cat or both, with a total of 74,988,000 pets.

THE PURINA SURVEY

The Purina Pet Care Center has conducted or utilized surveys made by others covering all areas of the country, to arrive at a current estimate of the pet population which are partially comparable with the projections for the United States from our St. Petersburg survey.

DOG ESTIMATES

The Purina survey estimated that 42 percent of U. S. households own dogs, as compared with 39 percent for the City of St. Petersburg. Part of this difference may be accounted for by the fact that Purina found that dog ownership is a percentage of total households varied from one area to another, with communities under 2,500 population to 36 percent for larger cities. St. Petersburg is a medium-size city, and probably is more representative in these respects of the Northeastern section of the country than of the South. But St. Petersburg has somewhat more than its share of retired people, and the Purina survey found that for the households of persons 70 and over, the evidence of dog ownership was much less, only 27 percent. This may well account for the difference in our percentages.

Projecting the St. Petersburg survey to the U. S., an estimate of 25 million owned dogs is obtained. This is remarkably similar to the Purina estimate, which admitted a possible error than their estimate of the number of households owning dogs, because apparently they found difficulty in satisfactorily estimating the number of dogs per household. The St. Petersburg survey included this information in detail from the sample, and was able to estimate from 27 million total dogs in the U. S., and our completely independent projection from the St. Petersburg survey is 25 million! This is an allowance for strays which may have been made by Purina.

CAT ESTIMATES

For cats, however, we find a very wide discrepancy. The Purina survey indicated that 24 percent of U. S. households own one or more cats, whereas our St. Petersburg survey shows only 15 percent. The household owning both a dog and a cat was 13 percent for the Purina survey, compared with only six (6) percent for St. Petersburg.

Projecting the St. Petersburg survey to the U. S. results in an estimate that the total of owned cats in the country is 15,041,000, or a Purina “rough estimate” that “there may be as high as 28 million cats, owned and strays”. Our St. Petersburg survey is considerably more conservative, and we believe this is an acceptable way of estimating the number of stray cats and do not know of any others who do. Taking this into account, there is perhaps too close difference between the two estimates.

COMPARISON WITH TRADITIONAL ESTIMATES

Both the St. Petersburg and the Purina studies are based on data commonly circulating in the humane movement, as exemplified by the leaflet “10,000 per hour”. The latter contains an estimate of total dogs and cats as the current pet population, and 85 million puppies and kittens born every year. These estimates apparently are derived at with the closest of 100 million dogs and cats in the U. S. If we add for the increase to 63 million households, even without allowing for more pets per household, we would supposedly have 118 million dogs and cats on hand, breeding 112 million puppies and kittens each year, or 12,795 per hour.
And still another factor responsible for coming home from cat orgies all chewed up. Moreover, the appearance of many females, more significant than nudity, even that of a poor little innocent girl who can't help it if she happens to be a female! (We have one of these female cats bottled up in the home during estrus, and hence from breeding.

If these indications of the success of our sterilization programs in St. Petersburg survey results seem to agree remarkably well with the actual experience in Seattle.

SECOND HINT AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR SPAYING

Our survey indicates that an amazing proportion of owners does consistently succeed in sterilizing their pets. This may be compared with the corresponding figures in the City of Seattle, Washington, which has a license fee differential for sterilized and unsterilized pets. Just 48.4 percent of the cats owned in the St. Petersburg survey results seem to agree remarkably well with the actual experience in Seattle.

Source of Unspayed Females

In the pet population originating in the pop bottle up in the home during estrus, and hence from breeding.

For cats it is again a differ-

ency. As would be expected, most of unspayed females moving into the pet pop-

We recommend that you send us the results of your survey. These could then be combined to furnish a better indi-

cations of conditions in the country as a whole.

NEED FOR OFFICIAL PET CENSUS

The difficulties involved in estimating even the total number of pets exist-

In any event, for most purposes local fig-

even the total number of pets exist-

The households surveyed were asked if they are concerned about animal welfare. The answers to this and associated questions were extremely encouraging, a

We invite criticism, even refutation. We seek only the truth.

5. Neutered and unsterilized pets. Just

in the pet population originate?

The commercial pet trade includ-

The little girl of the house looked

minimal controls in many parts of the country, or the mobility of the human population and the larger the proportion moving into apartments, the greater will be the numbers of unneutered females moving into shelters and pounds.

We recommend consideration by every city or county humane society of a pet ownership survey for its own community. This service can serve many purposes: local appeals for social governmental financial aid and getting general newspaper and other publicity about the need for surplus control measures.

percent of the male and female dogs and cats combined are sterilized (spayed or neutered). This may be compared with the corresponding figures in other cities.

Of the male dogs owned by these households, only 28 percent are neuter-

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In the many welcome letters we receive from members, one of the most frequently occurring themes is the frustration and helplessness which so many humanitarians feel about their inability to do anything about what seems to disturb them most. But even an adverse reply is no cause to give up. Even the comparatively few letters about the Gunter bill have brought a decided change in prospects for its passage. Several years ago when Dr. Frederick B. MacArthur, president of the National Association for Humane Legislation, first tried to obtain introduction of a bill requiring humane slaughter in federal laboratories, he thought that no one would support to this country, no member of the House Agriculture Committee would serve as sponsor. Even when, in 1973, Congress- man Gunter, of Florida, agreed to introduce the bill, it just reposed in Committee like the many other humane bills now decorating the filing cabinets of other committees. Mr. Gunter worked hard, but to no avail, to get the Committee to hold hearings on his bill. But there is something they can do. Before the bill, largely generated by the National Association for Humane Legislation, began to reach Congress, especially members of the agriculture committee. Mr. Gunter sent a letter to all members of Congress inviting co-sponsorship of his bill, and 17 responded. But still the Committee would not respond. The solution seemed to be persistent. Just blowing off mail generated by NAHL and a few other possible humanitarians in the State of Washington about the bill, and the extremely influential position with respect to the beagle experiment. Chairman Thomas S. Foley, chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock and Grains of the House Agriculture Committee. Once upon a time the Committee represents the nature and importance of the bill, Representative Foley assured Mr. Gunter that he would hold hearings on the bill as soon as possible in 1974. That is where the bill now stands. Congressman Gunter plans to issue a third appeal for additional co-sponsors, in order to take advantage of the interest received by potential co-sponsors since his previous bill was introduced. The bill, which is more modest in scope far, like most of the other humane bills now lying neglected in Congress, had not been for the considerable amount of mail received about the Gunter bill. Whether humane societies that have lent their support to the bill. Of course, successful hearings, movement through the Committee, and introduction of the bill, even mail. Once once upon by the House, the bill has a good chance for faster action in the Senate, NAHL informed us this is an example of the good effects of letter writing. If the letters are written by persons who are assigned with writing a reasonable chance of significant accomplishment, if they are directed at the right parties at the right times, they can have results. But everyone must also be persistent. Just blowing off steam in one big burst of indignation, as in the case of the beagle experiment, will accomplish nothing. The cost is the continuing pressure until some specific and important objective is accomplished. Of course, requirements of the Beagle Experiment Services, a tax-exempt humane society, does not participate in campaigns for legislation, but many of its members are humanitarians and have received the Humane Legislation Digest from that society giving the details about what letters are needed. NAHL tells us about one man from the Dc. of Drive South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33705.

**LETTER WRITING HARD WORK**

Letter writing involves a lot of work, if it is done effectively. Humanitarians who are assigned with writing a single letter to their own Congressmen should consider the following letter received by NAHL, which has passed it on to us. We can reproduce it here.

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**LETTER WRITING**

Most humanitarians at one time or another have written letters to Congressmen, newspaper editors or local officials about some humane problem. And there are scores who engage in regular letter writing as a routine humane activity. This does a great deal of good, but writing a letter is not as effective as it could accomplish much more. According to the many letters we receive, some have given up their letter writing in despair. Even if a few of the appeals they directed it could accomplish much more. Particularly discouraging to many of our correspondents is the apparent lack of response to their letters to Congressmen. After the second or third appeal for support of humane bills generally are disappointing. Even so, there are scores who engage in regular letter writing as a routine humane activity. This does a great deal of good, but it is not as effective as it could accomplish much more. According to the many welcome letters we receive from humanitarians, one of the most frequently occurring themes is the frustration and helplessness which so many humanitarians feel about their inability to do anything about what seems to disturb them most. But even an adverse reply is no cause to give up. Even the comparatively few letters about the Gunter bill have brought a decided change in prospects for its passage. Several years ago when Dr. Frederick B. MacArthur, president of the National Association for Humane Legislation, first tried to obtain introduction of a bill requiring humane slaughter in federal laboratories, he thought that no one would support to this country, no member of the House Agriculture Committee would serve as sponsor. Even when, in 1973, Congressman Gunter, of Florida, agreed to introduce the bill, it just reposed in Committee like the many other humane bills now decorating the filing cabinets of other committees. Mr. Gunter worked hard, but to no avail, to get the Committee to hold hearings on his bill. But there is something they can do. Before the bill, largely generated by the National Association for Humane Legislation, began to reach Congress, especially members of the agriculture committee. Mr. Gunter sent a letter to all members of Congress inviting co-sponsorship of his bill, and 17 responded. But still the Committee would not respond. The solution seemed to be persistent. Just blowing off mail generated by NAHL and a few other possible humanitarians in the State of Washington about the bill, and the extremely influential position with respect to the beagle experiment. Chairman Thomas S. Foley, chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock and Grains of the House Agriculture Committee. Once upon a time the Committee represents the nature and importance of the bill, Representative Foley assured Mr. Gunter that he would hold hearings on the bill as soon as possible in 1974. That is where the bill now stands. Congressman Gunter plans to issue a third appeal for additional co-sponsors, in order to take advantage of the interest received by potential co-sponsors since his previous bill was introduced. The bill, which is more modest in scope far, like most of the other humane bills now lying neglected in Congress, had not been for the considerable amount of mail received about the Gunter bill. Whether humane societies that have lent their support to the bill. Of course, successful hearings, movement through the Committee, and introduction of the bill, even mail. Once once upon by the House, the bill has a good chance for faster action in the Senate, NAHL informed us this is an example of the good effects of letter writing. If the letters are written by persons who are assigned with writing a reasonable chance of significant accomplishment, if they are directed at the right parties at the right times, they can have results. But everyone must also be persistent. Just blowing off steam in one big burst of indignation, as in the case of the beagle experiment, will accomplish nothing. The cost is the continuing pressure until some specific and important objective is accomplished. Of course, requirements of the Beagle Experiment Services, a tax-exempt humane society, does not participate in campaigns for legislation, but many of its members are humanitarians and have received the Humane Legislation Digest from that society giving the details about what letters are needed. NAHL tells us about one man from the Dc. of Drive South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33705.

**LETTER WRITING HARD WORK**

Letter writing involves a lot of work, if it is done effectively. Humanitarians who are assigned with writing a single letter to their own Congressmen should consider the following letter received by NAHL, which has passed it on to us. We can reproduce it here.

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Florida Legislature Starts Action to Outlaw Use of Live Rabbits in Training Greyhounds

As we go to press we have been notified by the National Association for Humane Legislation, our sister society, that the Florida Legislature has taken a first step to outlaw the very cruel use of live rabbits in training greyhound racing dogs.

A bill to accomplish this purpose, SB-118, was prefiled by Senator William M. Gillespie, of New Smyrna Beach, at the request made in 1973 of the National Association for Humane Legislation. NAL believes that despite a court injunction obtained last year, prohibiting such use of live rabbits, it is desirable that the Legislature formally outlawing the practice in Florida, since another court in South Florida refused to grant an injunction.

Senator Gillespie's bill was held February 25 in Tallahassee, by the Senate Commerce Committee. Evidence was presented to the Committee by a representative of the National Association for Humane Legislation, and which will go to all members of the Legislature when this reduced facsimile is shown on page 7.

After the hearing the NAL representative was busy interviewing members of the Legislature about other animal bills

LETTERS TO YOUR LETTERS
Especially frustrating to some humanitarians is the apparent lack of response to letters written to newspaper and magazine editors, television broadcasters, letter writers, or anyone else who might print your letter.

People do read your letters—nearly always. Some will reply with what is obviously a standard form letter. In this case, write on the margin, "How can the writers of such letters expect a sympathetic response from the Congress?

Every voice heard by Congress, the opinion of any government official, almost any newspaper editor becomes accustomed to these denunciatory tracts and becomes indifferent to the denunciatory statements. It is a wise writer of letters who learns to use his words. Use your own.

REPLIES TO YOUR LETTERS

Letters to a syndicated columnist receive no reply unless used in the column, of which there is only a small chance. The next best is a letter to the broadsheet每月, the daily newspaper, signed by the columnist. This can do more harm than good. It associates them with any correspondence.

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QUALITY OF LETTERS
Almost as important as the number of letters is their quality.

How many of you write letters to the editor of your local newspaper? The neighborhood youth with his new Christmas shotgun out to get a rabbit becomes a "sadistic killer" Indignant animal lovers who protest the bad experiment wrote to their Congressmen: "Don't use beach..."
HUMANITARIANS NOT RETARDED!

"The Report on puppy mills was really excellent. It seems incredible that so few individuals can put together so much excellent material...Tell it like it should be told."—Mrs. Niles E. Nickerson, President, Boothbay Region Humane Society, Boothbay Harbor, Maine.

REPLY:

Thank you for the compliment. One reason others do not offer for the thorough, factual analysis that we attempt to present is their lack of a conception of humanitarians' intelligence and attention span. We know that many humane society officers have the erroneous notion that "the little old ladies in tennis shoes"...or..."I know the report of...". The long-established animal groups have grown rich doing just that, because there are a good number of animal lovers who refuse to think, and must be spoon-fed to satisfy the emotions. Being a humane organization shows that there also are many humanitarians who are far beyond the baby food stage, and are quite capable of digesting material requiring intelligence and concentration.

REPORTS OR ATTACK ON STENOGRAPHERS!

"I received Report No. 26 and am disgusted with your attack on a stenographer....A top stenographer is as much needed in our society as a top surgeon or technician. Being a stenographer does not preclude her from having a brain and using it. I hope she will continue to tell it like it is, and I for one don't believe veterinarians belong as directors in any humane organization. They are not humane and certainly not veterinarians...Miss Helen L. Linn, Westfield, New Jersey.

REPLY:

Well, I think obviously an educated person—perhaps a stenographer—and might be expected to really read our Report before criticizing it. If you had, you would have seen that we did not attack stenographers. We have only the highest regard for these dedicated women who have devoted their lives to the veterinary service. In the United States they think they can pursue the laboratory problem independently, but the unexpected and great progress in human service has shown how many humanitarians who work vigorously with so many researchers on their board is a puzzle.—Mrs. Alice A. Grant, Los Angeles, California.

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RESPECTS OUR "ATTACK ON STENOGRAPHERS!"

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REPLY:

Perhaps a good test of our impartiality is that we receive letters which imply that we are unduly partial to, or overly critical of, the HSUS. It seems to depend on whether our agreement or disagreement with the HSUS is in accord with the letter writers' views. The spirit of cooperation between HSUS and HIS is sufficiently strong that we can differ with each on matters of policy without endangering our ability to work together for the welfare of the animals. Because of these good working relations, we are at HIS feel free to comment frankly on HSUS policies and programs under circumstances that would compel silence with reference to some other societies which book no differences in opinion and programs, except on paper. I think in all such comments, even if critical, we seek to help, not hurt, the HSUS. But not because we are an alumnus of its board!

CLERGY COULD HELP

"The humane cause could well use the potential power of church organizations in any State. If I could make a plea...I was shocked to learn that fox hunting is actually being promoted almost under my nose (by) a minister actually consenting to be photographed in the role of God's servant, blessing a cruel and one-sided contest."

—Dr. James L. Babcock, Summit, New Jersey.

"The only HIS viewpoint to which I have taken exception in various Reports is with regard to religious organizations, their leaders and (by implication) their members...Expression of any and all positions on fox hunting by alumni of the HSUS would be more and more constructive. To do otherwise is not only here, but in the State of Michigan.

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—Dr. James L. Babcock, Summit, New Jersey.

REPLY:

We agree fully that it is important to cultivate, not antagonize, the churches and the clergy. On the other hand, nobody will or can successfully do this unless they understand why the churches are indifferent to animal welfare and the activities are explored and used. It is one thing to discuss the problem among ourselves as humanitarians, and another to publicly denounced.
MORE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR . . .

LEONARD HEINZ

More Letters to the Editor . . .

We had to omit from our last issue all except one letter to the editor this time because you sent us too many

of very worthwhile comments from our readers. It pays to

know what other humanitarians are thinking about our mutual

problems.

READERS AGREE WITH OUR ANALYSIS OF
PET POPULATION CONTROL

"I am in complete agreement with all you say on the pet

population... Any society that adopts out unaltered animals is

defeating its purpose."

Mrs. Peter C. Marchbank, Gaines, Michigan.

"We heartily agree with you on how to prevent the pet

population explosion, and feel it is the only answer to the

problem. Merely finding homes for unwanted pets creates more

problems." Mrs. J. Girardi, Crows Nest Pass SPCA, Coleman,

Alberta, Canada.

REPLY:

What an entrancing name: "Crows Nest Pass". It has the

flavor of mountain dew, wildlife. Much better than "St.

Petersburg"! But if we can't come up with a better one

(we're a little shorter), we'll take our pelicans, and you can have your crows.

Not everyone agrees with these views on how to eliminate

the surplus, as shown by the next two letters.

COLD, CUNNING AND CALLOUS!

"In regards to your pet population article, your cold, cun-

ning and callous rhetoric will not be the answer to the

problem. There are those who are equally concerned about

guided save-a-life enthusiasts wouldn't be so callous as to

make a statement that 'a dead dog or cat does not contribute to

the surplus'. That is just one of so many cruel, offensive

remants you so aptly throw around... Heaven help us if you

were in charge of the human race! ... All God's creatures have

the right to live ... All life is precious." Mrs. Jackie Geyer,

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU WANT OUT!

"Take my name off list. Please discontinue Reports." Mrs.

Bertha Shoffner, Birmingham, Alabama.

REPLY:

We suspect there are some others on our mailing list who

feel the same way, but do not have the consideration to write

and tell us. Therefore, we are taking it upon ourselves to

thank you for doing so. We can't afford to waste even two cents postage. So

please let us know if you want out. We will not be offended.

BETTER THAN A SALARY!

"The information in your Reports is always invaluable when-

ever I'm in a hassle on humane issues. I can depend on get-

ting the clearest, most concise information from you. And

I've been in a good many hassles!" Mrs. Robert W. Kohloff,

Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

Miss Bernice Wallus, of Richmond, Virginia, writes: "Your

Reports could not be improved!"

And from Gay Paree, France, (Mrs. Norton Tabackman): "Just

a word to tell you how completely wonderful your latest Re-

port, again!"

REPLY:

We editor receives no pay except your encouraging com-

ments! Sorry you don't think we're doing a good enough job.

Many other equally sincere and complimentary remarks received

since our last Report. Your high approval is deeply appreci-

ated by all of us at Humane Information Services.

A CHALLENGE TO OUR READERS!

"In giving money to 'good causes' I always try to figure out

some way to make those dollars even more. I will consider

sends you $500 if you can figure out some way to put it to

work on a matched-fund basis. It wouldn't gain anything just
to set aside the first $500 of contributions after accepting

my proposal, but it would be very worthwhile if that money could

build two or more miles of road and the like. I would be

glad to get otherwise, say from new donors, or for some special purpose. Do you have

any ideas?" Mrs. (name withheld by request of donor), Massa-

chusetts.

REPLY:

Indeed we do! We think you have a great idea. Already, by

letter, we have found a regular contributor who is willing to

up her already generous annual contribution to match yours.

And we have a specific new use for additional matching dona-

tions: the continued employment of a director of field ser-

vices whom we have been able to obtain as a result of your

generous contribution and the matching one. He is very much

needed to conduct tests designed to evaluate alternative meth-

ods of euthanasia from an efficiency as well as humane stand-

point, and for other purposes. He will then demonstrate the

best methods to shelters and pounds. We wish you could see

his reports on some of the fiendish contraptions now being

used to kill the dogs and cats in some shelters and pounds that

seriously violate what he will do has never be done before by any humane society. It will prevent the suf-

fering of thousands of dogs and cats. However, even your g

erous gift and the matching donation already obtained will

never cover the necessary expenses of this new worker. We need other matching donations from readers

have never given before, and from members who have contrib-

ute but want to help additionally with this particular project. No humanitarians' gifts were ever used for a more worthwhile purpose and project. And thanks, dear friend, for your sug-

gestion. We hope it works.

WANTS TO IMPROVE EUTHANASIA

"As a volunteer in humane work for a number of years, I'

acquainted with most of the publications in this field. I

don't necessarily agree with all of what you have favorably impressed as 'good causes' to

Humanitarians. The organization with which I am affilia-
	ed, Pet Assistance Foundation, is a no-nonsense group that

gets things done without any of the frills—which might ex-

plain why your practical, down-to-earth approach has great

mean for me ... I would also appreciate extra copies of your

previous Report that deal with methods of euthanasia in so

detail. We would find these most helpful as we are trying
determine once and for all if (the decompression chamber) i

human way to destroy animals. As it is now used so univer-

sally, I think it's time conclusions are reached." Mrs. Robert

L. Laird, Newhall, California.

REPLY:

Thanks for your compliments. Interpretations of scientific
evidence differ regarding the humaneness of the decompression
chamber and other methods of euthanasia, and in many cases

seem biased by considerations of cost and convenience. The

work of a scientific committee sponsored by the Humane

Society of the United States is due for publication soon. It

is not intended for young animals and for many adult animals with respira-

tory ailments. But these devices continue to be sold in substan-

tial numbers to shelters and pounds. What is needed is an

temporary method that requires no more time and expense

and does not subject personnel to disagreeable personal contact

with death. All methods, in relation to each other, will be

described and evaluated in a forthcoming Report.

TWO SERIOUS QUESTIONS FROM ENGLAND

"Is it too late to say I like the quality of paper and

printing of your Report? Its contents are one of the few things

today that makes me think of the quality of the past. I'm

booming my heart out!" Please answer two questions in a future Report:

(1) Why are animals cruel? (2) Is it cruel to kill felines? These are

serious questions. We need a new definition of cruelty.


REPLY:

We take you seriously. In your query, you are extremely

pertinent to the question of what position humanitarians can

intelligently take on many problems relating to wildlife and

ecology. We will try to answer you in a later Report.

INTERNATIONAL USE OF REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS

"Your Report to Humanitarians fills a genuine need in the

U. S. as well as being equally valid internationally, should you

reach other countries." Mrs. Warren Rossony, San Diego, California.

REPLY:

Our Reports go to just over 500 humane societies and human

leaders in foreign countries. Our articles frequently are

produced in whole or in part in the publications of foreign

societies. Because communication and distribution is

inconvenient for some of those residing in other countries

(except Canada) to send small contributions, so our U. S. m-

bers must help to pay for the extra postage and envelopes re-

quired for mailings outside of it is worth the cost.

DIVIDED EFFORTS--AND CONTRIBUTIONS

"The divided and fragmentated members of humane societies

could join together in one cause and case make one

central contribution and feel it would be more effective." Mrs. Warren Rossony, San Diego, California.

REPLY:

Are you surprised to receive two replies to your letter? (We

agree about the desirable increase in the number of humani-

tarian societies, or having just one--provided the single organization

does not become complacent, hidebound and devoted to main-

taining the positions and salaries of employees rather than real

humanitarian work.) Mr. April (14 October 1970). Real competition is healthy. But you can help to

achieve more unified action by concentrating your support of

only one or a very few societies. If you do, we hope you'll

decide on one.

THE FLEAS ARE HEARD FROM AGAIN

We had thought that our reply, in Report No. 25, to addi-

tional letters about fleas would be our final word on the