

Change for Chimpanzees

I was on the verge of tears when I finished your article about the continued use of chimpanzees in government research (“The Chimpanzee Challenge,”



May/June 2009). It is disappointing that this is still going on in 2009. For the first time, I wrote a letter to my member of Congress. As it happens, he is on the originating committee

for the bill that would phase out this research (Energy and Commerce). Thank you for bringing it to your readers’ attention.

— ROBERT P. FURR, CUMMING, GEORGIA

Oldies But Goodies

Thanks so much for introducing us to “Granny Annie” and her owner, May Lattanzio (“Taking a Chance on Granny Annie,” May/June 2009)! I read the article shortly after a volunteer shift at my local animal shelter, and the plight of older (not necessarily senior) animals is an issue near and dear to my heart. It’s so disheartening to see potential adopters’ obsessions with newborn puppies and kittens, and I cringe every time they obliviously rush by adult dogs and cats to swoon over the newborns (who are often not even available for adoption until a later date, while the adult animals have been stuck in their cages for weeks or months). The love that Granny Annie has received serves as inspiration to us all that there’s still hope for all animals who need homes.

— TONY REED, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

A Special Thanks

Sadly, we report that *Los Angeles Times* journalist and animal lover Annette Haddad died in April at age 46.



But we honor her memory. Haddad and her journalist husband Scott Doggett, just like other couples whose lives have been enriched by the enduring bond between humans

and animals, wrote their will so that most of their estate will benefit animal welfare programs of The HSUS. In this photo from a couple of years ago, Annette is shown with her cat, Tiger. The two were beloved friends for 17 years. Tiger remained curled up with Annette during her final days. “Animals were a wonderful part of Annette’s life her entire life, enriching it in ways nothing else could,” says Scott.

Shelter Pets: The Best Kind

I was very happy to see the article and tips on animal adoption (“New Voice for Shelter Animals,” May/June 2009), having just adopted a shelter dog myself for the first time. I think it is important for those interested in adopting to remember that dogs and cats in shelters can be depressed or stressed and at the very least are as bewildered as they look in the shelter photos. I adopted a dog who had been extremely neglected and was so depressed he was virtually lying in the same spot and in his own urine the entire time he was at the shelter. But under all his matted hair was a diamond in the rough. After a short adjustment period and a lot of love and patience, Rocky is unrecognizable as the dog who was in that shelter, and he has changed my life in ways I could never have imagined, particularly when I think about his resilience and the bleak future he almost certainly faced.

— JIMMY CANNON, SHERMAN OAKS, CALIFORNIA

Lost—and Found

I give credit to the person who started the search and rescue program for finding lost pets (“You Can Go Home Again,” May/June 2009). It is hard work even looking for your own dog. I have a 4-year-old



Boston terrier who ran away from my sister’s house while my husband and I were away. My mom, sister, and a friend did what they could until we got home—by making signs and calling police and

shelters. When I got home I posted more colorful signs with my dog’s picture attached and put them up by my sister’s house and by my house. My dog was spotted, and we were called at least once a week for the entire time she was gone. I’d sit in the woods after work every day for up to three hours, kind of like a hunter, quiet and also calling her name. We borrowed a humane trap, and one night later, when my brother-in-law was taking out the garbage, he looked at the trap, and there she was! Happy as a clam to see him, uninjured except for a spot on her ear. She was gone from July 23 to Sept. 10, 2007. I thank the Lord every day for bringing her back to me.

— JULIE BURROW, EUCLID, OHIO

Progress Breeds Hope

Thank you so much for all you do. For years, I felt hopeless about how animals are treated in commercial and research settings. Also, it was just shameful how many innocent animals in shelters were dying. I so love reading your magazine. Even though some of it is heartbreaking to read, I feel there are more successes, and people are much more informed. There is hope. I always pass along your magazine to a place where more people can read it and hopefully get involved.

— CHERLAINE WILCOX, APACHE JUNCTION, ARIZONA



We Asked; You Told Us!

What's in a word? That's the question we posed to our readers while reporting on an HSUS campaign to reduce dog and cat homelessness in the Gulf Coast ("Truth in Numbers," March/April 2009). After research revealed that the terms "put



down" and "put to sleep" resonated more with pet owners in the region than "euthanize" and "kill"—the words typically employed by the animal welfare community—

The HSUS incorporated the preferred language in TV advertisements, billboards, and other materials designed to encourage people in Louisiana and Mississippi to spay and neuter their pets. In response to our inquiry about what messaging inspires you most to join the fight to end pet overpopulation, you provided a wealth of thoughtful replies. To learn more about the campaign and to read the article, visit humanesociety.org/spayneutercampaign.

I have been working in animal welfare since the mid-1980s, with the majority of my work in animal control management. I feel we as individuals and as a whole have a moral obligation to assist homeless animals. After all, we domesticated them and now fail to accept total responsibility in a society that can often be very barbaric toward animals.

I have grieved over the out-of-sight/out-of-mind theory until it burdens my very dreams. The words "put to sleep" are not acceptable in my opinion. While I do not want to cause shock, I do want to be honest and sincere about the massive numbers of animals, one by one, who are euthanized. Euthanasia is putting to death, but in the most humane manner available to us, and it is only performed by caring and trained techs.

Perhaps the message should not be sent brutally, but with honest feedback. When we stop using publicly acceptable wording and tell the truth of the matter, we will provide better, truthful education.

People suggest that I must be a gift from God to be able to do this job. But I ask you: How can we do anything else until the killing stops? Euthanasia injections happen second by second. It's time to share the truth so that others may also learn and share in the moral burden to do the right thing. Spay and neuter; put us out of work.

— RITA CAVENAUGH, LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

I am deeply saddened by the statistics for the Gulf region; the numbers don't lie. I am ready to help get the spay/neuter message out to people in my area, and I do support as many local groups and shelters as financially possible. Sometimes it takes just the kinds of advertisements and PSAs used in the Gulf Coast to shock people into understanding what actually happens.

— MELINDA KIRK, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

My husband and I are 68 years old and have owned animals all of our lives, many of them strays or from shelters. He volunteered at our local humane society for several years. Our feeling is the word "kill" is not too harsh. Everyone understands what this word means. Many do not even know what the word "euthanize" means. I'm not even sure everyone hearing the phrase "put down" understands it either.

— DON & MARGIE SMITH, WESTFIELD, INDIANA

I agree that the terms "put down" or "put to sleep" are the best terms to use when there are too many animals in shelters. More advertising through television and billboards needs to be done and more news articles need to be written to bring awareness to everyone to get their pets—as well as the feral cats in their cities—altered. I've sterilized the feral cats in my neighborhood and am working on getting the ones behind my office sterilized as well.

— KATHY KEINATH, CHANDLER, ARIZONA

I think the "warm and fuzzy" avenues of communication need to change. I do believe there is a large and growing number of people becoming aware of their decisions, either to adopt versus buy or to neuter or not. I also believe their children are becoming a voice for the animals as well. The term "put to death" is a strong and visual statement that could reflect the reality of the action taking place.



SUEHACK/ISTOCK

— DARCY WILLIAMSON, ANNIE'S ORPHANS, DURANGO, COLORADO

To say an animal has been "put to sleep" is not true and lets people feel a bit better about ignoring the problem of too many abandoned animals. Our local newspaper now uses the word "euthanized" in their reporting of adoptions, reclaims, and killed animals. Originally the editors did not report the information of euthanized animals because they didn't want to upset people. People need to be upset. People need to solve this problem of "trashed" animals, and what is happening needs to be named as what it is.

— RUTH "WINDI" WHITE, SOCORRO, NEW MEXICO

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