Between the Atlantic Ocean and the beautiful, warm waters of the Caribbean Sea lies the island of Puerto Rico, a commonwealth of the United States, subject to U.S. laws and regulations. Behind its tropical beauty lies an ugly side of life that concerns some of the island's residents and has caused them to unite to effect change.

In addition to widespread human poverty, there are dogs, cats, horses, and other animals on the island that generally live in ownerless conditions of starvation and abuse, with little knowledge of a happy, healthy existence, even when impounded. Now, with the dedication of eight small island humane societies, there is hope that animal welfare will improve in the near future. Some improvement already has been accomplished with the help of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), and others.

Animals in Puerto Rico have been legally protected from cruelty since the mid-1970s. Nevertheless, they continue to suffer.
Federal funds have not been channeled to support animal care and control efforts. To combat this problem, Puerto Rico has a federation of humane societies, the Federacion de Proteccion de Animales de Puerto Rico, incorporated in 1982, with eight members (including a society from the U.S. Virgin Islands). The Federation has actively brought before the media the island's animal problems and has worked to change this tragedy through legislative reform.

This relatively small band of people, embracing the concept of "strength through unity," serves as an exceptional example of what can be done to improve animals' lives despite a lack of funds, official support, or previous organization. It would be nearly impossible to list all of the people who have worked diligently to improve life for the animals. Among them are Sister Isolina Pérez, Audrey Steiner, Jean Manheimer, Sue Pederson, and Dr. Delma S. Fleming.

Phyllis Wright, HSUS vice president, visited Puerto Rico in February and September 1984 to advise the Federation about ways to institute change educationally and legislatively. "I only wish I could wave a magic wand and help those poor, miserable animals now, " she wrote to one island resident. "I really wish it could be done, but realistically it is impossible hard it is for each of you to know day in and day out the misery they must endure." Wright's visits were the result of a year-long effort by phone and letter to improve conditions on the island. As part of the September visit, a humane education workshop was held in which she participated.

Wright now corresponds with Polly Rios, the new Federation president, to continue the Federation's momentum. Rios is in a position to positively affect animal welfare through her experience working in the Ponce animal shelter and because her husband is Puerto Rico Senator Mariano Rios.

One problem area is Mayaguez, where the Protectores de Animales de Mayaguez, the local humane society, is struggling to improve conditions at the municipal pound and has pressed the local government to develop a humane animal-control program. Conditions at the pound are reportedly bad: Dogs are not separated by sex or size; kennel floors have been observed to be wet; outside runs are too close together; there is lack of sufficient drinking water; feeding times are irregular; sick animals are not separated from healthy animals; animals are not removed from cages during cleaning; and handling during euthanasia is of questionable humaneness. In addition, there are no programs for animal rescue or humane education.

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Many people are worried and angry about neighborhood cats that attack wild birds as they feed or nest in yards. As a result, some people dislike cats and may harm them. Cats should be kept indoors for their own protection as well as for that of wild birds. Responsible cat owners care about the harm cats can cause birds.

Cat owners who refuse to confine their pets can still help by keeping them indoors during the early morning and at dusk -- the times of day when birds are most likely to visit feeders and are, therefore, most vulnerable to attack.

Several tactics can help to prevent domestic cats from preying upon wild birds. If a bird feeder or house is mounted on a post, a galvanized metal guard in the shape of an inverted cone (a metal garbage can lid will do), nailed or bolted to the post, will prevent cats from reaching birds.

As an alternative, cat owners can adjust their pets' feeding schedules so that felines are otherwise occupied during the hours when birds are at the greatest risk of attack. Regularly feeding cats at dawn and at dusk will keep them home during times when birds visit feeders. A cat with a full stomach will most likely be more interested in napping than in chasing birds. For this tactic to be successful, however, cat owners must remove uneaten food promptly so as to train cats to be on time for meals.

A cat owner can further protect birds by providing a collar and a bell for his or her pet. A bell serves as an early warning and alerts birds to a cat's presence, in time to flee.

It is possible to frighten cats away from a bird feeder or to condition them to avoid a yard. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has registered 30 compounds as cat-repellent substances found in cat repellents. Garden supply stores often stock or can order commercial cat-repellent products. Consumers have reported mixed results with such products. Most repellents smell bad to cats. A repellent's effectiveness will deteriorate with age, however, and it usually washes away and must be reapplied after each rain.

A sprinkler can be frighteningly effective without harmful devices such as a water sprinkler, turned on at the time of day when cats usually stalk birds. The water only temporarily will disturb birds. In fact, they may welcome the opportunity to bathe, but most cats do not enjoy getting wet and will likely avoid a yard with a sprinkler.

If these remedies fail to provide relief, people should be encouraged to discuss problem cats with their community animal-control agency or humane society. People have a right to enjoy their property and to feed wild birds. Since most communities do not require that domestic cats be restrained, a cat owner has a social obligation to properly control his or her pet and to prevent it from being a nuisance to others.

Cats that repeatedly trespass may be caught, unharmed, in cage traps. Shelters should be notified of problems so that they can humanely trap such animals. Signs or flyers should alert neighborhood residents that trapping is taking place. If a neighborhood resident traps a cat, it should be returned promptly to its owner with an admonition to keep the animal away from the neighbor's yard. There is also the option of taking the cat to...
Local Tattoo System Is Successful

A local animal-control department, believing that use of a national pet tattoo registry would be time consuming and unsuccessful, developed a local tattoo system.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough (P.O. Box 1267, Fairbanks, AK 99707) developed the local system after its officer, Steve Bottasso, learned of a similar system used in Vancouver, British Columbia. Now, a Fairbanks ordinance requires that all dogs released from the shelter be marked with a tattoo. Local citizens also can have their pets tattooed, without charge. The new system became effective July 1983, and to date, the organization has tattooed over 2,700 dogs and has expanded its program to include cats -- approximately 400 tattooed to date, according to Robert E. Spencer, director of Animal Control.

Animals are marked with a tattoo plier for the ear or an electric pen for the belly. Belly tattoos, while optional, are discouraged because they can be difficult to read. Dog tattoos consist of two letters and two numbers, rotated in an alphanumeric system. Cats receive two letters followed by one number to differentiate breeds and because their ears are too small for more digits. Tattoos are maintained on a list, including an owner's name, address, and phone number; animal's description; and more.

Shelter workers routinely check for a tattoo on each animal that enters the shelter. So far, they have notified numerous owners that lost pets have been found. Although tattoos are mandatory for animal adoptions or redemptions, there has been little public opposition to the system (unlike its opposition to a pet licensing requirement), and many owners request tattoos for their pets.

Owners can request to use personal numbers for the tattoos, but the department's numbers also must be used. Spencer said the tattoos are fairly easy to administer. An animal's ear is cleaned with alcohol and swabbed with roll-on tattoo ink. Spencer said green ink works best, but white ink is used for black-eared animals. After the correct number/letter is placed in the pliers, the animal's ear is pinched. Although some animals must be muzzled, and each cat is tattooed while in a veterinary cat bag, most animals say "ouch" only once, Spencer said. Owners are asked to hold their pets to calm them during belly tattoos. An animal's midline is shaved, if necessary, and the area is cleaned with alcohol. Green ink is rolled on the belly, and the tattooist quickly prints the tattoo with an electric pen. If necessary, tranquilizers will be administered, but Spencer emphasized that only one dog out of the 2,700 has had to be tranquilized.

Spencer said there are some minor problems with the new system. For example, some tattoos don't "take." Sometimes only part of a number/letter combination is visible on an animal. Occasionally, owners move and don't provide the department with their new addresses or telephone numbers, which can make it difficult to

Continued on next page
Humane Mouse Trap
Minimizes Suffering

Trace lost pets. It is also easy for staff members to forget to rotate a letter/number combination for the next animal, so a verbal check is made in the shelter office to verify that the animal is receiving the correct tattoo.

"Overall, the tattoo system is working better than expected, with very little expense involved," said Spencer. The organization plans to file the system on computer, enabling staff members to update the list of tattoos and to receive a fresh printout when needed. It also may extend the tattoo system to include livestock, which commonly escapes barnyards and fields.

Tattoo ink is available from the "NASCO Farm and Ranch Catalog," a five-volume collection. Residents of Western states should write NASCO West, 1524 Princeton Ave., Modesto, CA 95352. Those in the East should write NASCO, 901 Janesville Ave., Port Atkinson, WI 53538.

A new mouse trap provides a humane alternative to painful snap traps, poison, or glue traps, and humane societies should encourage families to use it, release mice outdoors, then seal openings in houses where the rodents may enter.

The Smart Mouse Trap, a polished plastic and stainless-steel trap that looks like a small, see-through house, is effective with or without bait because it relies on the natural curiosity of mice. Once a mouse enters the trap, it is shut in until released or until it escapes through the optional "freedom door." Concerned people who may be away from home when a mouse is caught can use the "freedom door," which, when lifted, allows a mouse to gnaw through a cracker, providing a delayed but certain escape. The traps come in red or green.

Besides presenting a less traumatic experience for mice, Smart Mouse Trap can't harm children or pets, and it is more sanitary than other traps because there is no carcass or dying mouse to dispose of.

Although the 7" x 3" x 2-1/2" trap normally retails for $10, Seabright Enterprises LTD, the manufacturer, is offering cartons of 24 traps each to local animal groups for only $5 per trap, including shipping and handling. Organizations can re-sell the traps for whatever price they choose. To order a carton, send a $120 check or money order to Seabright Enterprises LTD, 4026 Harlan St., Emeryville, CA 94608. Specify the color "ruby" or "emerald."
software you intend to use. Most offices that use computers for handling records and mailing lists will need reasonably sophisticated software that requires at least 128K. If your primary use is going to be word processing and simple data storage and retrieval, a 64K machine may suffice.

Mass Storage - This refers to the amount of information that can be accessed on the disk drives. Less expensive systems usually have a single disk drive that can hold about 150K-360K (about 60-150 double-spaced pages of text) on a diskette. More expensive packages offer faster access to more information by using either additional or hard disks that can hold 10-70 million bytes (28,000 pages of text). The right combination for you will depend on how much information you need to keep close at hand.

Display - The price of a system will be affected by the kind of video display you select. Many machines can be connected to your TV, but such a display is usually inadequate for word processing or for other uses that will display more than 40 letters on one line. Monochrome monitors (with characters displayed in green or amber) are relatively inexpensive ($100-$200). Composite color monitors offer color and good resolution or clarity ($300-$400), and RGB color monitors (which have a separate red, green, and blue circuitry) offer sharper resolution ($400-$700). You usually won't need a color display for most applications, but it can make many programs easier to use.

Software - Many computer systems come with "bundled" software, which is either built into the machine or supplied on diskette. This might include a word processor, a mailing list program, a programming language, and a database manager. If the programs are flexible enough, you might not need to buy additional software. However, if the programs are inadequate for your needs, you may pay extra for something you can't use. Find out in advance if the bundled programs can do all the things you want them to do. (An upcoming column will give you guidelines for evaluating software.)

Communications Capability - You may be considering more than one computer for your organization. Some systems are specifically designed to allow several machines to work together or to communicate with a larger "mainframe" computer. If you frequently will be sharing information with other computers, you should look for this added capability.

Expandability - Some computers (for example, the Apple IIe, IBM PC) have "open architecture," meaning that you can add circuits to expand and upgrade the machine as new products are developed. Others, like the Apple IIc and many portables are "closed," and what you buy is pretty much what you will have until you get your next computer. Open systems cost more but they are less likely to become obsolete.

These are the basic characteristics to consider. The next issue will present some specific examples of how you can estimate your computer needs and start on the road to making an intelligent purchase.

Dr. Randall Lockwood is director of Higher Education Programs for The Humane Society of the United States, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas animal workers can meet him, and hear more about the ways computers can make their jobs easier, at the March 15-16 HSUS Gulf States Regional Office workshop in Wichita Falls, Texas. For more information, call that office at (912) 854-3142.

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Using A Computer?

To better inform readers through "Computer Talk," we would like to know about your organization's present use of a computer or its plans to use one in the future. Please answer the following questions. Then, simply clip this page, fold it in thirds so that The HSUS' address shows on the front, tape the self-made envelope closed, affix a stamp, and mail it.

1. Does your organization presently have a computer system? (circle) YES NO (if NO, skip to Question 4)

2. If YES, indicate the type (for example, IBM-PC-256K), cost, and how long you have had it.

3. List the software most often used (for example, Wordstar, Dbase, or describe programs written especially for you).

4. Which computer applications are or would be important to you? (circle all that apply)
   A. WORD PROCESSING
   B. DATABASE MANAGEMENT (shelter records, membership lists)
   C. TELECOMMUNICATIONS
   D. PAYROLL/ACCOUNTING
   E. SPREADSHEET/PLANNING

5. How much computer expertise is available to your organization? (circle)
   A. We have regular access to computer professionals.
   B. Some staff members have programmed computers.
   C. Some staff members have operated computers.
   D. No one in our organization has much computer experience.

6. If you do not have a computer system, what are your organization's plans for acquiring one? (circle)
   A. No plans to acquire a computer
   B. Considering a computer, but have no specific plans
   C. Seriously considering purchasing a computer within the next two years
   D. Definitely expect to purchase a computer within two years

7. If you are considering purchasing a system, how much could your shelter or office afford to spend on hardware and software? (circle)
   A. Less than $2,000
   B. $2,000-$5,000
   C. $5,000-$10,000
   D. $10,000-$15,000
   E. Over $15,000

The HSUS may develop hardware and software packages for use in sheltered and unsheltered animal organizations. If your organization would be interested in using them, please fill in your name and address below:

Name __________________________ Address __________________________
City ______ State ______ ZIP code ________

March '85/SHELTER SENSE/9
Having someone with whom you can talk, someone who understands, someone who "has been there" just might be the greatest benefit to attending the special session for euthanasia technicians (E.T.s) that is part of each HSUS Animal Control Academy session. The session is conducted on a Friday afternoon and on Saturday as a separate workshop so that students who are unable to attend the entire two-week Academy course may participate.

This workshop is different from most other work-related courses you will attend. Participants examine their own attitudes and feelings about euthanasia. Since euthanasia is a very emotional topic, students are given this opportunity to explore all of their concerns in a tremendously supportive environment. It can be difficult for one to deal with a topic that involves so much pain, grief, frustration, and guilt and is so worthy of delicate treatment.

With that in mind, the E.T. session allows lots of time for discussion, guided by an instructor who has been involved actively in the euthanasia process for 14 years as a technician and as an instructor.

A primary objective of the session is to validate participants' legitimate concerns about euthanasia and to assist the coping process while attempting to point out which attitudes and feelings are destructive and, therefore, likely to interfere with that process. Due to the importance of these discussions and exercises, which usually last about eight hours in addition to a lunch break, one would not want to attend for only part of the day.

The E.T. session has been a very supportive exercise for many animal workers. You or someone you know may find this program helpful. For further information, contact The HSUS Animal Control Academy, 2606 Eighth Street, Suite 202, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401.

Hurt "Bill" Smith is director of The HSUS Animal Control Academy.

A collapsible wire dog cage caused a puppy to strangle after the animal pushed its head between one of the insecure corners of the cage's top and side. With help from a local humane group and television station, the dog's owner persuaded the manufacturer to warn consumers, distributors, and retailers about this danger. Animal organizations also should alert local retailers and consumers that this type of cage may be dangerous.

After Mary Bennett of Park City, Ill., discovered her eight-week-old Brittany spaniel was dead, its head trapped in the cage's corner, she wrote the manufacturer to complain about the cage's design. A representative wrote her back to say he would investigate the problem. Cages of this type are sold in many pet stores. They are made of thin metal rods and have four sides, a top, and a floor pan on the bottom. When unhooked, the cage folds inward from the sides. The top is permanently hooked to the back and can be secured to the front by two hooks near the middle, but the cage's corners cannot be secured.

Besides losing her beloved puppy, Bennett lost the $250 invested in the dog, and she experienced the horror of discovering that her pet had suffered and died. Assisted by The Anti-Cruelty Society...
Advice on ways to inform and influence featured the manufacturer's representative, who subsequently promised Bennett he would place a warning to consumers on all new cages. Bennett said, "It is wise to check all cages before using them."

This particular manufacturer may not be the only one that produces a wire animal cage with this defect, so it is wise to check all cages before using them.

Tell PBS About Pet Action Line!

Many local public broadcasting (PBS) stations are airing the popular "Pet Action Line" show, which is co-sponsored by the Humane Society of the United States. If your PBS station airs the program, please call or write to the station manager to say that you watch it and would like for the station to continue airing it. If the local PBS station doesn't show "Pet Action Line," ask them to do so.

When a new animal-protection bill is introduced in a legislature, it would be wonderful if a single telephone call automatically could be multiplied to reach hundreds of humanitarians to ask for their immediate support of it. In fact, this simple concept is exactly what a statewide legislative network is all about.

This is how it works. A state humane federation or other statewide humane group proposes new animal-welfare bills and finds sponsors. Once a bill is introduced, the group contacts legislators for support with the help of key predesignated people throughout the state. For example, assume that 20 key people are contacted by four group officers. These people, in turn, are responsible for contacting five additional designated people within their area of the state. Those people have to contact five more predesignated people within their immediate locality. In this example, 500 people already have been notified to contact their state representatives about the bill. Nevertheless, no individual has had to make more than five telephone calls!

The key to the success of this process is to select carefully groups of informed, committed people who will respond quickly to a legislative emergency. Above all, networkers must understand that their commitment to placing calls promptly and to contacting legislators is critical for achieving successful animal-welfare legislation.

Texas has one of the best examples of an effective statewide lobbying group: the Texas Humane Information Network (THIN). This group was organized several years ago in Dallas by Martha Cox, who is still its president, with guidance from the Gulf States Regional Office of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). After several years of carefully predesignating key participants, THIN is now reaping the benefits. It was instrumental in recently passing four important state laws: first was a bill setting humane standards for animal shelters throughout Texas; second, a bill legalizing the purchase and use of sodium pentobarbital by shelter staffs within the state, for animal euthanasia; third, a bill regulating roadside animal exhibits. In 1983, THIN's efforts pushed through a strong felony anti-dogfight bill.

Every state should begin immediately to organize a similar lobbying organization. If a state federation of humane societies already exists, the effort can begin there. If not, an organizational meeting should be held soon, including representatives from all humane societies throughout the state. It takes hard work and patience to locate and organize all the people needed for success, so wait no longer!

William R. Meade III is director of the Gulf States Regional Office of The Humane Society of the United States. Contact THIN for further information at 4207 Alice Ave., Dallas, TX 75205.

Come meet THIN President Martha Cox at the March 15-16 HSUS Gulf States Regional Office workshop in Wichita Falls, Texas. Call (512) 854-3142 for further information.

Shelter Manager for humane society. Must have shelter and management experience as well as euthanasia, some finance and personnel-administration, public-relations, and humane-education skills. Send resume to Art Shlinker, P.O. Box 1152, Cheyenne, WY 82003.

Shelter manager. Must be experienced with HSUS guidelines and animal welfare. Will manage operations, cruelty investigations, public relations, fund raising, and education. Must be bondable. County population, 270,000. Salary range, $18,000. A coastal resort and an agricultural/fishing-related county. Apply to Search Committee, P.O. Box 6712, Ft. Myers, FL 33911.

Shelter manager for humane society. Responsible for shelter operation, personnel supervision, fiscal management, investigations, public relations, education, and official liaison. Must have experience in all aspects of kennel management; animal welfare; and public-relations skills. Salary, $22,000 to $24,000 annually, depending on experience. Submit resume and references to Leon County Humane Society, P.O. Box 2033, Tallahassee, FL 32316.

Shelter manager for humane society located in New York City suburb. Must have experience in all aspects of kennel management; euthanasia; and animal welfare, control, and adoption programs. Private house available. Competitive salary. Send resume and references to Touye, Box 439, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011.

Shelter manager for Boston humane society. Must have a minimum of three years of experience in all aspects of kennel management. Send resume, salary requirements to Paul Leary, director of Personnel, Massachusetts SPCA, 450 Salem End Road, Framingham, MA 01701.
The HSUS feels strongly that animal sheltering and control is the responsibility of the local government, since animal problems affect the entire community," said Wright. Protectores de Animales was instrumental in establishing the small city pound, and members have supplied food for impounded animals, paid for training for some pound employees, and submitted a proposed animal-control ordinance to the municipal assembly that would provide revenues to operate a more adequate program. (Stray animal control in Puerto Rico is governed by a statute that places responsibility for animal control under the jurisdiction of municipalities. It requires that dogs be registered and given rabies vaccinations, and it specifies that municipal animal shelters be built and operated. Few municipalities comply.)

Sue Pederson, president of the humane society, actively worked with Phyllis Wright to organize the September 1984 education workshop. The organization has frequently relied upon the media to publicize animal problems and needs, and it has developed and distributed humane education materials to the general public and to local schools, spending precious funds to purchase HSUS educational materials.

To raise funds and public awareness, the group sponsors annual "sato" shows, which emphasize the value of mixed-breed dogs. The society recently aired the film "Annie" to local school children to teach them the importance of hope and of caring for an animal companion. The film brought the society approximately $700 which is being funneled back into the development and distribution of humane education materials. The film event was made possible with the support of various corporations such as Eli Lilly Industries Inc., Cooper Vision Pharmaceuticals Inc., and many others.

Wright has found another helpful individual to be Hilda Ramirez, president of Ciudadanos Pro Alberque de Animales Inc., in Mayaguez.

Delma S. Fleming, Ph.D., vice president of the Sociedad Protectora de Animales de Ponce, is a psychologist who believes that animal abuse is detrimental to mental health. To Phyllis Wright, she recently wrote, "If ever the quality of the lives of the animals in Puerto Rico is better, and, as a result, the quality of human life, too, we very much owe it to you, to your willingness to share your knowledge with us, to your generosity and your kindness." Although the society once operated Ponce's shelter, it no longer does so due to political differences with the city, but it continues its battle for better animal care as a member of the Federation.

The plight of Puerto Rico's animals is still very bad. Nevertheless, where individual humane groups previously were struggling alone in a sea of municipal animal problems, the island's humane effort now is united. As a result, objectives and goals are being formulated, and the humane message can be presented forthrightly and more professionally, which is bound to benefit the community and the animals.

"The cornerstone of Puerto Rico's developing humane movement lies in education and in the strength of the island's residents, who are most familiar with the island's unique cultural, economic, and political needs," said Phyllis Wright. "Knowledge and dedication will foster progress. A better life for humans and animals will be the result."
Another year has come and gone, and spring has arrived with its multitude of newborn puppies and kittens. You know you should be conducting your annual spring spay/neuter campaign, but have the year's endless animal problems caused you to not be as creative in other areas as you should be? Think about it.

"Be Kind to Animals Week" is in May. If you begin today, you'll have plenty of time to develop eye-catching and convincing educational and fund-raising messages. You could sponsor a well-planned shelter or society publicity event to focus on the message of this special week. Provide "giveaways" or reduce license fees or other fees for that week in order to bring people into the shelter to learn how they can become more responsible, caring pet owners. Talk to managers of local radio and television stations, billboard companies, graphics houses, or advertising agencies to convince them to help you advertise responsible animal care in attractive ways for little or no charge. If you don't ask, you won't receive!

Organize, plan, and act immediately to make "Be Kind to Animals" more than just a slogan. The animals are depending on you to do so.

Animal Control Academy Session Re-scheduled

The two-week HSUS Animal Control Academy session at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor has been re-scheduled from May 6-17 to May 13-24. This session includes the special workshop on euthanasia. Further information is available from Hurt "Bill" Smith, director, Animal Control Academy, 2606 Eighth Street, Suite 202, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401. Plan now to attend!