Several Facebook fans responded to our post about the recent tragedy involving the exotic animals who were released from an Ohio facility and later killed by authorities. Michelle G. offered the most positive smart advice for anyone who’s ever wanted to own a big cat: Adopt a cat whose personality is a big as a tiger’s! I did.

We also heard from those who saw our offer of free back issues of Animal Sheltering, including a note that made our day from Ferrell S. of the Colony Cats Adoption Center in Columbus, Ohio: Our cat adoption center would really appreciate any issues you have on dealing with cats in the shelter environment. Especially if they relate to group housing/cage-free cat adoption centers/shelters. We love to have your magazine available for our volunteers to read at the shelter; it opens the doors for great discussions and problem solving. (Thanks, Ferrell! Other readers who want back issues can drop us a line at asm@humanesociety.org.)

I was delighted to see James Hettinger’s article about Pets for Life NYC in the September-October 2011 issue of Animal Sheltering. The surrender-prevention aspect of reducing shelter overpopulation has always been a priority matter, in my view. In my book The Pet Surplus: What Every Dog and Cat Owner Can Do to Help Reduce It, the last section on “Commitment” fills 44 percent of the 250-page manuscript. Acquisition choices and sterilization are of course given their due, but the importance of keeping pets is discussed at more length and in more detail than much of the humane literature usually devotes to it.

The situation has, of course, improved in the 10 years since The Pet Surplus was published, and many of its statistics and other details are now a bit out of date. (For example, the headline used to promote the book, “How We Can Save Five Million Lives a Year,” should properly now be corrected to “Four Million.”) But though facts and figures change over time, issues rarely do. And your Pets for Life programs are rightly stressing what may be the overriding need today for improving the shelter situation. Congratulations on your invaluable work!

— Susan M. Seidman
East Hampton, N.Y.