The Keys to Good Photography

By Geoffrey L. Handy, in consultation with Frantz Dantzler, Director, HSUS North Central Regional Office

...easoned investigators will say it over and over again: a good photograph is often the key to a successful prosecution. What better way is there to convey to a courtroom, simply and honestly, the sad state of a starving and diseased cat that has been left to die? And what better way is there to show a judge or jury the neck of a horrendously neglected dog, whose collar is embedded deep in his flesh? Because the judge or the jury cannot witness animal cruelty firsthand, there is no better or more practical way. Only a photograph has the power to transcend space and time and preserve as...
photography is one of the most important skills of The HSUS North Central Regional Office. Because of that, a good photograph can be the difference between a cruelty case that is successful and one that is not. That’s why photography is one of the most important skills of the cruelty investigator to master. Fortunately, with today’s advanced technology, using a camera effectively is easier than ever.

What’s the Best Equipment? Investigators working under a tight budget shouldn’t fret that the equipment they can afford is not the best source for information on the various kinds of lenses and filters best suited for situations commonly faced by investigators. Depending on the accessories you want, plan on spending between $200 and $500.

What's the Best Kind of Film? Black-and-white film has some good advantages over color," says Dantzler. At an emotional level, black-and-white film best conveys the seriousness of animal cruelty. Although color film is better to use when flash wounds are involved, black-and-white film will generally be more effective in court. "Color film," says Dantzler, "often has the tendency to give the viewer the impression that things are not as bad as you had described."

It won’t help you in court, but don’t forget the “‘evidence’ of photos either. Because they make better halftones, black-and-white photos are better than color to reprint with the account of the cruelty case in the next society newsletter. Because we live in a color world, however, some prosecutors and judges may actually prefer color prints. It’s wise to check ahead of time with any court officials you regularly work with. Also, since black-and-white film is less popular than it used to be, it now costs more to process. However, many law enforcement agencies have labs that may be able to process black-and-white film for you at lower costs than others.

In court, prints are usually better to use than color slides. First of all, you must make advance arrangements to present slides in the courtroom, and showing them can be disruptive to the flow of testimony. Furthermore, slides can’t be passed around, held, and looked at repeatedly. When you’re trying to prosecute a case, photos are usually the best evidence you’ve got. Why limit the judge or jury to one or two quick showings?

The speed of the film is also something to consider. Dantzler recommends 400 ASA film as the best all-around choice, one that is effective in most applications. Keep in mind, however, that high speed films such as 400 ASA and higher will generally appear a little grainier than slower films when printed in large sizes such as 8 x 10s.

How Can I Take Good Pictures? There’s a maxim in photography that goes something like this: Take enough photographs, and one or two are bound to come out right. That saying applies no more accurately to any endeavor than it does to investigative photography. The blind squirrel has to get lucky sooner or later," says Frank Ribaudo, program coordinator for the HSUS New England Regional Office.

“When I first became involved in animal work,” he adds, “my first cruelty investigations involved taking a few photos for a single case. I wanted to save money for the society I worked for. After years of experience, I now realize it’s more effective, professional, and no more expensive to shoot an entire roll of film—from different angles, different distances, etc.

When you consider the investments in time, effort, and money to bring a case to prosecution, the monetary costs of buying and developing a roll of film are negligible relative to the potential rewards of just one dramatic photograph. Investigators shouldn’t err on the other side, either. “It’s detrimental to use too many pictures,” says Dantzler, “so you must pick only the best few.” He suggests that you obtain from the processor a “proof” sheet (or “contact” sheet), which displays the negatives for each roll of film on one sheet. Then, examine the negatives with a magnifying glass, choose the best ones—possibly even with the help of the prosecuting attorney—and have them printed in 8 x 10s. Those size prints are best viewed at arm’s length and afford the investigator more courtroom credibility than smaller sizes.

Learn Photographic Techniques There is, of course, much the investigator can do to improve his or her photographic success besides taking plenty of pictures and hoping for the best. Ribaudo, for one, suggests that cruelty investigators with limited photographic expertise invest in a local photography class. Such classes are frequently offered through community colleges...
and adult education programs. It may sound obvious, but investigators should above all else read the instruction manual that comes with the camera. HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals Phyllis Wright recommends that you familiarize yourself with all the objects. HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals Phyllis Wright recommends that you familiarize yourself with all the objects that come with the camera. Similarly, some cameras automatically select and focus on only things that attract you. The camera lens, in contrast, sees everything equally in its field of vision and does not automatically "select" certain objects.

In practical terms, this means that everything you see through the camera's viewfinder, including distracting elements, will show up in the photograph unless you take steps to eliminate them. Often, such as when you stand back to take a panoramic shot of an entire scene, nothing will be distracting because you'll want to show everything. For these instances, most of today's cameras have an "automatic exposure" setting that allows you to focus and shoot without worrying about making any other adjustments to the camera. However, some cameras automatically adjust to the speed of the film you're using.

As you try to improve your technique, remember first of all that your eye and the lens of a camera "see" things differently. Your eye, for example, automatically selects and focuses on only things that attract you. The camera lens, in contrast, sees everything equally in its field of vision and does not automatically "select" certain objects.

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Sometimes, though, you'll want to get rid of any distracting elements you see through the viewfinder. To eliminate these means to change the photograph's composition, something that with practice should become second nature. Moving closer to the subject, naturally, is the easiest way to eliminate those elements that distract from the subject of interest. But it can also change a photo's composition by varying any one of these other factors: the angle of the camera from the subject, the subject's position, the direction of the light source, and the depth of field.

Manipulating the depth of field is one of the more technical aspects of picture-taking with automatic cameras. A photograph's depth of field is the area of the photo that is in focus, including the subject itself and the areas in front of and behind the subject. The camera's aperture (lens opening, or stop), focal length (e.g., normal 50mm, wide-angle 35mm, or telephoto 100mm or above), and its distance from the subject all determine the depth of field.

One important rule to remember is that making the aperture smaller and moving away from the subject will increase the depth of field, which means that more area in front of and behind the subject will be in focus. Thus, to blur background distractions such as scenery, you would make the aperture larger. F-stop settings on the camera inversely determine the size of the aperture. For example, a setting of 2.0, according to Dantzler, would effectively blur the unwanted background of a subject near the camera; a setting of 16.0, according to Wright, would give sharp clarity to almost everything in the picture. Changing the focal length will also affect the depth of field; for example, a telephoto lens shortens it, while a wide-angle lens increases it. Be aware that how much you're able to manipulate the depth of field will also depend on the speed of the film and the amount of light. Again, many cameras can be set to automatically adjust to both the speed of the film you're using and the varying intensities of light. Other cameras have built-in light meters that allow you to provide the correct exposure.

How to Best Use Photos in Court

How much your photographs will help your case is often a function of how well the photos are documented. Many investigators will actually include a written card next to the animal—as part of the photograph—that has information on it such as the date, time, temperature, and exact location of the photo, the case (or animal) identification number, and the investigator's name. Some cameras are able to automatically print the date on one corner of each negative; you can also request that the main subject of interest or police lab that processes your photos include the processing date on the back of each print. A pre-made label or stamp, another option, can be applied to the back of each print and filled out.

Including your own face in at least one picture is a good way to document to the court that you were in fact at the scene. A camera with a timer can easily accomplish this. "A timer is of the utmost importance," says Ribaud, "especially since most ACOs often work alone."

Another tactic that can be helpful is including a size reference in certain close-up shots. For instance, holding a hand or ruler next to the wound of an abused animal will give the judge or jury a better idea of the scope of the abuse.

When presenting photos, it's also a good idea to make sure the court is aware of the overall layout of the property and areas the photos cover. A hand-drawn sketch or a photograph of the property taken from a distance can both accomplish this. With such a photo or sketch in hand, it's easy to demonstrate the location and direction of the camera at the time each picture was taken. In addition to the pictures of animals, their living conditions, and other evidential materials found on the premises, another type of photograph can be extremely useful. "Before and after" photos of animals who are held a period of time can be a dramatic way of showing the difference between the animal when first discovered and the animal after being properly cared for. If possible, both the "before" and "after" shots should be taken with the animal in the same position and lighting conditions.

Finally, don't ignore the "code of ethics" of legal, or forensic, photography. Tell the lab that processes your film that your negatives must remain unretouched; some shops will routinely provide a form for these instructions. Another no-no is excessive cropping, a procedure whereby you enlarge a small portion of the negative to make it appear to be the entire photograph. Later "re-creating" a cruelty scene is another deceptive practice that should be avoided.

Taking good photographs and presenting them to the court in an organized and documented fashion are the best ways to help your case. With a little practice, effective photography can become one of the constants in all your investigations.

Please see next month's issue of Shelter Sense for guidelines on the use of camcorders for cruelty investigations.

**Balloons Threaten Marine Life, Create Litter**

By Rhonda Lucas Donald

Alloon releases signify celebration and joy, and the sight of bright balloons floating into the sky is festive and lovely. But as the saying goes, what goes up must come down, and the result of a balloon release is not the pretty spectacle that lasts a few moments. The end result is ugly litter and a serious threat to marine animals who ingest the downed balloons.

What happens to helium balloons when they are released? In an experiment conducted during National Science & Technology Week, over 250,000 helium-filled balloons were released in St. Louis, Missouri, to investigate the directions winds blow. Each balloon had an identification tag enabling a person who finds it to report its location. One
Canada. Who knows what happened to the re-
had traveled from the release site all the way to 
month after the release, only five percent of the 
maining 95 percent of those test balloons? 
counted balloon refuse on beaches nationwide. In 
three-hour period.

As a leader for animal protection in your com-
pointed out a study in which small pieces of 
ballon were fed to sea turtles. The turtles re-
tained the latex in their systems for up to five 
months, after which time they eventually passed 
the material in large masses. The latex never 
break down, but instead clumped up in the 
entrance to the intestines. The whale had died of 
starvation.

Bob Schoelkopf, founding director of the center, 
acted to stop them. The cities of Baltimore, 
Maryland, and Louisville, Kentucky, have made it 
unlawful to release balloons into the atmosphere. 
The National Park Service has restricted the 
use of helium-filled balloons within the national 
park system. The states of Florida, Connecticut, 
and Tennessee have laws prohibiting balloon 
releases, and other states are considering similar 
laws.

As a leader for animal protection in your com-
pany, please educate individuals and groups about the undesirable effects of balloon releases on the environment and the animals. There are 
many alternatives to balloon releases that do no 
harm. The Center for Marine Conservation sug-
gests releasing balloons indoors in a large 
building, sponsoring a kite day, or planting trees 
or flowers.

The Center for Marine Conservation has re-
cently published a pamphlet on balloons and their 
threat to marine life. For information on ordering 
the pamphlet, contact the Center for Marine Con-
servation at 1725 DeSales St., NW, Washington, 
DC 20036.

Professional Ads Make an Impact, Get Results

By Rhonda Lucas Donald

one humane groups are lucky enough to get 
professional advertising agencies to do cam-
paigns for them pro bono. You may wonder how 
they do that. In many cases, they just ask.

That's what three of the four groups whose ads 
are shown here did, and with terrific results. One 
of the four groups didn't even have to approach 
an agency; a concerned advertiser sought them 
out to donate his award-winning, pro bono efforts.

The four ads featured here were done by dif-
ferent ad agencies for four different animal 
groups. In each case, the ad agency waived its fee, 
while the humane group paid the expenses of pro-
ducing the ad—the printing, photography, and 
mailing costs, which are not included in the 
agency's fee. In most cases, much of the cost for 
production was also either waived or significantly 
reduced. Three of the four ads have won awards 
for excellence in advertising competitions.

Ad agency spokesmen point out their willingness 
to work with humane groups. Ross Lerner of W.B. 
Domer in Detroit says their work is "a labor of love. 
We are all pet owners and animal lovers, and we 

David Brudon of Bailey, Klepinger, Medrich & 
Muhlberg Advertising, explains that these types of 
campaigns are good for the agency, too. He 
says they are "free advertising for the ad agency. 
It's a chance to showcase our work for everybody 
and help a great cause," Brudon says. "It's a real 
win-win situation."

A self-mailer, this fund appeal brought in over 
$51,000 at Christmas for the Humane Society of 
Huron Valley in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It was one 
of nine projects Bailey, Klepinger, Medrich & 
Muhlberg Advertising did for them that year.
Program Helps Pets of Soldiers
By Rhonda Lucas Donald

The mobilization at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, brought turmoil to the families of soldiers facing deployment. Major Fairchild, Chief of Psychology, was trying to help soldiers and their families cope with the separation and disruption. During one session, a soldier expressed unease at the thought of leaving her dogs and finding someone to care for them. This was a situation Fairchild had not considered before. When she brought the problem up to her wife, she volunteered to undertake the project of finding foster homes for the pets of soldiers sent to Saudi Arabia.

Having worked at the state quarantine kennels in Hawaii, where she also directed a service that offered care and companionship to quarantined pets, Sally Fairchild found herself on familiar ground. Her program became known as Adopt-A-Pet, and is administered through the Fort Bragg Veterinary Clinic, (919) 396-8930.

"After the deployment," Sally Fairchild explains, "MPs were finding stray dogs and cats all over the base." The veterinary clinic, which has limited animal control facilities, is only able to keep strays for three days before they are euthanized. Fairchild decided to work with the clinic to locate pet owners in need of fostering and volunteer foster families. "They act as my switchboard," Fairchild says. "I interview the foster families on the phone and match them with pets."

Foster families are responsible for the pets' care and veterinary treatment. Fairchild requires that pets be up-to-date on vaccinations and heartworm preventative and forwards the pets' veterinary records to the foster families. Fairchild also encourages owners to spay or neuter their pets. "I tell them that unaltered animals are much harder to place," she says.

Pet owners agree to send a specified amount of money each month to defray the cost of the pets' care. In addition, Fairchild asks the pet owners to make a list of the pets' likes and dislikes to help both the pets and their foster families adjust to their new situations. As of February 1991, Fairchild had placed over 50 pets.

Fostering Military Pets?

The HSUS is gathering information on individuals, shelters, and other groups who have set up foster care programs for the pets of military personnel deployed in the Gulf. If you or a group you work with is offering such a program, we’d love to hear about it. Just send us a note briefly describing your program, and please include a phone number where you can be reached. Send your letter by April 30 to Shelter Sense, 5430 Greenvale Lane, Suite 100, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Your cooperation could help other groups set up similar programs for use during war or peacetime. Thank you for your help.

This fund appeal sent out at Christmas brought the Michigan Humane Society the most money ever raised by the organization. Other ads W.B. Doner has done for them over the past five years have won awards, including the prestigious Clio.
Cat Collector Surrenders 102 Cats to Humane Society

By Geoffrey L. Handy

Last August, a 78-year-old woman called the Animal Welfare Society of Allegany County (AWS, P.O. Box 123, Cumberland, MD 21502) to ask if someone could come and pick up some of her cats. She said she thought she had too many, and felt she could no longer care for them.

When ACOs Diane Delaney and Don Miller arrived at the woman’s second-floor apartment to pick up the cats, she refused to let them inside. Instead, she loaded up the animal carrier herself and gave the officers a truckload full of cats. Practically all the cats were wild and either diseased or in poor health. The officers also smelled a strong urine odor outside the apartment. After they had returned to the shelter with a second truckload of cats, AWS President Donna Squires knew she had a serious animal collector on her hands.

She promptly called Tom Butler of Adult Protection Services, a county social service agency, and asked him to check on the woman. Butler and a health department nurse went down to visit the woman’s apartment that afternoon. After she agreed to let them enter her home, they could hardly believe their eyes.

“You cannot imagine the state of her apartment!” said Squires, who later went down to help rescue still more cats from the place. “When you walked in, there were cats everywhere. The floor was soaked with cat urine and there were feces in every corner, on the chairs. You couldn’t tell the color of the living room furniture because it was so covered with cat hair.”

By the end of the next day, AWS had impounded 102 cats, all of whom had to be euthanized. AWS didn’t need to use animal cruelty or public health as the legal basis for removing the animals. Instead, Squires and the officers used what she called “tender loving care.” They were able to persuade the woman to surrender every cat—and her one 14-year-old dog—voluntarily.

The odor was so bad, had failed to report the situation to officials. They apparently liked the woman enough to disregard the smell.

“The shame of all this,” Squires said, “is that this had been going on for so many years and nobody did anything about it. And finally this lady put her hand out and said, ‘I need help.’

In addition to calling in social services and the health department, Squires also contacted two other agencies. The local housing authority declared the building unfit for habitation, and the department of natural resources took the woman’s turtle and snake, animals that AWS does not handle. “My theory is that when you have a problem, said Squires, ‘the more agencies you get involved, the better your chance of succeeding.”

According to Squires, the woman had been accumulating cats for at least 30 years. She even had a standing order at a local grocery store for nine cases of cat food, among other things, to be delivered each week.

Especially perplexing was the lack of complaints from the elderly woman’s neighbors. “The stench from that one apartment could be smelled for half a block,” said Squires. But even the woman’s immediate neighbors, who reportedly could never use the second floor of their own house because the woman, at last check, had been placed with a foster family in a nearby town.

Local PSAs Get Nationwide Airplay

Humane organizations that are able to produce television public service announcements (PSAs) often send copies of the videotapes to a limited number of stations. The PSAs get some amount of local airplay, but that’s usually where the exposure ends. Until now, getting more exposure for those video messages was usually a prohibitively expensive task.

But thanks to the PSA Channel, a free satellite transmission service, those PSAs can now reach audiences nationwide. Since February 1990, hundreds of organizations have transmitted their video spots to stations across the country.

Here’s how it works: The PSA Channel, which is sponsored by Potomac Television/Communications as a community service, strings together one tape a number of video PSAs submitted by associations, government agencies, or other nonprofit organizations. On the third Tuesday of each month, the channel then sends a satellite transmission of the tape, or “feed,” to some 900 public service directors at television stations across the country.

The public service directors are notified of the feed in advance so that they can prepare to receive it. They can then review the material at their convenience, and incorporate the spots into their programming schedules. Having a variety of spots on one tape can also allow directors to avoid the hassle of loading and unloading machines to review the many PSAs submitted to them.

Each nonprofit association or government agency may schedule one 60-second PSA timeslot per month. All entries for the PSA Channel must be received by the 2nd Tuesday of each month to be included in the satellite transmission. PSAs must be on either 3/4” or Betacam format, and include a slate clearly identifying the PSA sponsor and a contact person at the organization. To enhance chances of airplay, it is recommended that TV spots provide for localization at the end.

Plan for Animal Care Expo ’92

The HSUS is pleased to present Animal Care Expo ’92, February 2-5, 1992, at Bally’s Resort, Las Vegas, Nevada. (See article in Shelter Sense, February 1991.)

The Expo is the first international showcase of the latest equipment, products, technology, and services for animal shelter and control programs. Featuring numerous educational seminars, Animal Care Expo ’92 will focus on up-to-the-minute developments in energy efficient and environmentally safe products and their applications.

Mark your calendar now and write or call for more details: Animal Care Expo ’92, P.O. Box 3304, Crestline, CA 92325; (800) 248-EXPO (national) or (714) 338-1192 (international).

And finally someone said, ‘Okay,’ and took the initiative to help her. “When you have these people who are collectors, sometimes that’s what it takes. They just get themselves into a situation they can’t get out of.”
where people could bring dogs and cats to sell. In exchange, the fair received a percentage from each sale. And each September, when the fair was held, the Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS, ACOW would face a barrage of complaints. “Many of the animals were sickly,” says Rutland ACO Craig Petrie. “Anybody could bring pets for sale.” RCHS Executive Director Tom Browe attested that many of the pets later ended up at the shelter, reliniquished as a result of impulse buying at the fair.

As public sentiment against the pet building grew, officials at the fair association began looking for alternatives. “We’ve worked with the fair association for years,” says Browe. “It was their decision to stop the sale. They were just looking for a way out.”

The way out came from the cooperation between the humane community and fair officials and was pushed along by the recently passed state pet law, which makes sellers of pets responsible should an animal become ill or die after purchase. “The fair did accept some responsibility for sick animals after last year’s event, and they wanted this to end,” says Browe.

When the fair approached Petrie about an alternative to the sale, he consulted with Browe, and the humane society proposed a humane education display with ongoing demonstrations on pet care and training, as well as pictures of adoptable animals at the shelter. “Our proposal was just what they were looking for,” says Browe.

This whole success story is a lesson in what a strong and cooperative animal control department and humane society can do. Petrie attributes the public response to the pet building to ongoing humane education efforts. “People are more aware of humane treatment of animals and reacted to this situation,” he says. Browe adds that the working relationship with fair officials “wasn’t confrontational.” All parties worked together to arrive at a solution. “The state fair was able to set a positive precedent,” says Browe.

Pound Seizure is Out in SD

Recently, the South Dakota Council of Humane Societies met in Pierre, South Dakota, to establish policies for the new statewide council formed last fall. Member organizations represented were from the cities of Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Watertown, Aberdeen, Pierre, and Lead. The Council was established to promote the humane care of animals within the state through education, legislation, and enforcement of existing laws. And it didn’t wait long to get involved and help overturn the state’s mandatory pound seizure law.

Work on this measure began, explains council member Ronnette Fish, when “farm groups drew up new animal welfare laws that would take away the authority South Dakota humane societies had to investigate abuse calls.” As a reaction to animal rights activities in the farm industry, the agricultural community sought to pass laws to protect themselves. Despite the power of the farm lobby, the Council was able to reach a compromise in which humane societies would retain the ability to investigate small-animal abuse cases. In exchange for relinquishing the authority to investigate livestock cases, however, the Council demanded that the state’s mandatory pound seizure law be repealed. “We were sorry to lose the livestock—especially horses,” Fish says, “but we achieved the best we could under the circumstances.” The Council hopes that humane societies will eventually regain responsibility for handling livestock abuse. Effective July 1, 1991, pound seizure will no longer be mandatory. Each local animal control agency will be able to decide the disposition of its unwanted animals.

The Council hopes to continue their cooperative efforts statewide and to foster a better understanding of the functions of humane societies. It also wishes to encourage the establishment of other humane societies within the state. For more information on the Council, its goals, or membership, please write to P.O. Box 2027, Rapid City, SD 57702.

Pound Seizure Packet Available

South Dakota humane societies can raise funds and provide an alternative to painful snap, poison, or glue traps by selling the Smart Mouse Trap. First introduced six years ago by Seabright Laboratories, the trap catches mice alive and unharmed, enabling them to be released back into the wild. The Smart Mouse Trap not only protects mice, but is also safe for children and pets. Use of the trap by parents will teach children a real life lesson in compassion.

Made of plastic, the trap looks like a miniature see-through house and operates on the same principle as a humane cat trap. The user simply places a cracker into a slot at one end of the house, then pushes open the spring door at the opposite end. The spring door closes behind it. The mouse can be released outside the next day through the “freedom door,” which enables the captor to avoid contact with the trapped mouse. The mouse gains access to the cracker only after the freedom door is lifted; it must then gnaw through the cracker to escape back to freedom.

According to Seabright, the trap works with or without bait and is sensitive enough to catch even the smallest mouse. It can also be used to recap­ture hamsters and pet mice.

The Smart Mouse Trap retails for $10, but humane groups can order cartons of 24 at $5 each for sale to the public as fund-raisers. Send $120 check or money order, along with your order on agency letterhead, to Seabright Enterprises Ltd., 4026 Harlan St., Emeryville, CA 94608. Prepaid orders include shipping and handling.

Mouse Trap Offers Alternative

Pound Seizure Packet Available

A just about anyone in animal control can attest, taking dogs and cats from animal shelters for biomedical research and product testing is an anachronistic practice that erodes public trust in shelters and demoralizes shelter staff. From the perspective of The HSUS and virtually every other humane organization nationwide, pound seizure must be stopped.

That’s why The HSUS has created its new “Stop Pound Seizure” action kit. Designed to help...
local animal protection groups and individuals combat pound seizure at the state or local level, the kit includes a host of materials and guidelines to help mount a successful anti-pound seizure campaign.

The packet features two educational pieces aimed at the general public. A comprehensive fact sheet, presented in question-and-answer format, describes pound seizure and addresses the ethical arguments that surround it. A separate brochure, presented in question-and-answer format, focuses on how the practice of pound seizure seriously undermines the proper role of animal control facilities.

Three other publications round out the packet. “Scientific Points,” a 15-page booklet, effectively refutes virtually every scientific argument put forth by researchers on the value of using shelter animals for experimentation. A separate brochure describes pound seizure and addresses the ethical arguments that surround it. A separate brochure, aimed at the general public, focuses on how the practice of pound seizure seriously undermines the proper role of animal control facilities.

Finally, the “Media Guide Book” provides guidelines on using the media to influence and mobilize public opinion to your advantage during a legislative campaign. The complete “Stop Pound Seizure” Packet, which includes one copy of each item and an order form, is available for $5 from The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

Balloons floating up into the sky look pretty, but...

What goes up must come down. You’ve probably heard that before. But when it comes to balloons, that fact is important to remember.

Don’t participate in balloon releases and ask your parents and teachers not to have these events. Just imagine, if hundreds of balloons filled with helium go up, they must later come down to the ground as hundreds of pieces of trash.

But if they come down in rivers, streams, or the ocean, balloons can also hurt wildlife and marine animals who may think that a floating piece of balloon is food. Animals who eat balloons can get sick or even die.

Do your part to keep the earth clean and protect animals from balloons. Don’t participate in balloon releases and ask your parents and teachers not to have these events.

There are many other things you can do instead that are safe and fun! Try having a kite day or planting trees and flowers to celebrate special events.

Remember: What goes up must come down.

(Art by Beverly Armstrong)

Next month: How to protect wildlife near where you live.

REPRODUCIBLE

This message can be clipped out and reproduced in quantity by your local printer for distribution at schools, shopping centers, libraries, and other locations. You can also purchase advertising space for it in your local newspaper or use it in your organization’s newsletter. Please copy the Reproducible in its entirety.
Sunny

By Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals

We have all shared our lives with special animals. And I know when the day comes that the veterinarian says, “There is nothing more I can do,” and we make the final decision to relieve our companion from pain and suffering, none of us is ever prepared.

I faced that moment on February 17th, and nothing in my 31 years of working with animals has helped the pain and grief.

Sunny was the most handsome Palomino I had ever seen. He was two years old then and still a stallion, but already an outstanding companion who loved to be with people and do his tricks, not for sugar or carrots, but just for the fun of it and to please me. When he didn't want to do something, he'd stretch out his neck, lay his head on my shoulder, close his eyes, and give me a nuzzle. After that, it didn't matter what I had wanted him to do.

He was also an excellent horse to ride, responding to voice commands as easily as shifting gears from walk to trot to canter.

We spent 27 years getting to know each other—our habits, our voice tones, the way we walked and the way we felt. For 27 years, my morning and evening routines were scheduled around Sunny: he had breakfast by eight and dinner by six. He knew I liked to sleep in on weekends, and I knew he liked breakfast BY EIGHT O'CLOCK.

When I did sleep in, I'd always know he'd be standing there waiting, with one foot on the gate, rattling it as if it would wake me. Maybe it did.

On cold nights, he got extra grain and hay. Never much of a stall horse, he'd stand out in the pasture on the coldest of nights, seeming more content than ever to be under the stars and near the trees. Keen to the sounds in the woods, Sunny would let us know that fox or deer were near. I never knew whether he thought of himself as horse or human, or whether to him I was human or horse. He seemed equally at home with humans or other animals. In Waterford, Virginia, at The HSUS Humane Education Center, Sunny was a main attraction for kids who would gather all around him as he stood patiently and with a gentleness I had rarely seen before.

For 27 years, I looked forward to the evening drive up the road where he would always be. Getting out of the car, heading into the house, I was reminded by his whinny not to dally, but to change clothes and bring him dinner and news of the day. And always, there were those wonderful nuzzles that only a horse can give, welcoming me back to the quiet of home and family.

It is good that spirits remain. I know his will—out under the stars on a cold winter’s night and down at the gate at suppertime.

On Sunday, we buried Sunny in the pasture just up from the barn. As I left, I closed the gate and put on the snap as usual, as if he might still try to open it with that ever-nimble mouth. Perhaps he will.

I miss him.