Humor, Personal Courage, Lasting Impact
**Humor, Courage, Impact**

By Susan Bury Stauffer

Many Shelter Sense readers know Phyllis Wright personally, while others knew her by reputation or perhaps only through the pages of this publication.

As Wright prepares to step down as Vice President for Companion Animals this summer, though, there is no question that she has had a direct impact on every individual in animal sheltering and control. And because she has taught and encouraged so many people, millions of animals have led better lives.

“She’s there for the people who are struggling with day-to-day realities,” says Laura Lanza, director of the Calcasieu Parish (LA) Animal Control and Protection Department.

“Every shelter with high standards is indebted to Phyllis Wright,” observes Samantha Mullen, public affairs and programs administrator for the New York State Humane Association (NYSHA). “Her positive influence is present in many places where individual workers may not even recognize her name.”

**Building a Profession**

Since Wright became involved in animal sheltering in the 1960s, the field has undergone profound improvements, largely because of her efforts.

“Phyllis has been at the forefront of helping us professionalize ourselves,” says Laura Lanza. She adds, “For years, I saw enormous infighting where vets wouldn’t talk with humane societies, and humane societies wouldn’t talk to animal control, and no one would work together. Phyllis has helped pull those elements together.”

Diane Allevato, executive director of Martin (CA) Humane Society, recalls that in the 1970s, there weren’t many resources for people trying to improve animal control. “Phyllis and her office were it. But they did it well. Now, in the fondest form of flattery, there’s a proliferation of organizations and consultants.”

“Phyllis made a major contribution to making the field respectable,” notes Sandy Rowland, HSUS Great Lakes regional director. “She’s always said, ‘Don’t be afraid to talk about your profession. Get on TV and go into the schools and talk about it. Make your animal shelter part of the community.’”

Rowland adds that Wright was a pioneer in securing time on television to present animal issues, something many humane agencies now do regularly.

**Confronting Officials**

Rowland has worked closely with Wright to improve conditions at animal facilities. “I recall traveling with Phyllis in southern Ohio, where we looked at incredibly poorly run dog pounds. I recall her talking with county commissioners about these intolerable situations.

“Now I travel to those same counties and see brand new shelters with quality people working in them . . . . Nothing changed overnight for Phyllis, but once the change was made, it was a stable change.”

Did Wright pressure public officials? “Pressure is putting it mildly,” says Rowland. “We’ve joked about Phyllis coming into town and bulldozing shelters. When she was called in to make a presentation, we knew it wasn’t going to be meek and mild. She made officials very uncomfortable because they felt guilty over what they had allowed to happen.”

Nina Austenberg, director of the HSUS Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, recalls that, before a meeting with leading health and animal control officials in New Jersey, Wright examined the then poorly run Trenton pound. “Phyllis went to the meeting, got up in front of a couple of hundred people, and told them the Trenton pound was the worst pound in the whole United States.”

The state’s top health official was so taken aback, Austenberg recalls, that he mistakenly referred to Wright as the “president of New Jersey.” Austenberg reports that the same official ultimately became one of Wright’s friends, “because she has a way of telling it like it is and then not holding a grudge.” Today, the Trenton pound is a model facility. (Wright sometimes lists ‘president of New Jersey’ as her title on conference name tags.)

**Frequent Flyer (and Talker)**

Each year since Phyllis Wright became The HSUS’s chief liaison with animal shelters in 1975, she’s visited animal shelters and testified on behalf of humane animal control in numerous cities throughout the contiguous 48 states and Puerto Rico. In 1990 alone, she traveled 51,000 miles, inspecting shelters and conducting training.

Her staff estimates that, in the past 15 years, she’s answered a total of $5,000 telephone inquiries from municipal agencies, humane societies, and concerned individuals. about these intolerable situations.

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**Coach and Confidant**

Rick Collard, executive director of the Humane Society of Broward County (FL), was close to quitting animal work when he first heard Wright speak at The HSUS 1975 Annual Conference. Collard had taken his first shelter job only six months before and had been given the most emotionally difficult of shelter assignments: euthanasia.

“I remember that what she said was what I had felt for six months while I was in charge of euthanasia,” Collard says. “I wasn’t going to tell anybody that it was killing me. She brought out everything I had been feeling but wasn’t able
Old Friends Remember

D. Hylton, whose many roles at HSUS have included investigations and shelter consultation, suggested in 1987 that Phyllis Wright be hired as director of the national training center The HSUS then operated in Waterford, Virginia. Wright had served in executive posts with several humane agencies in the Washington area and had long and diverse experience in animal care and training.

Hylton recalls, "At that time, she had become acquainted with virtually every congressman's wife and their pets, and she just wanted to run her boarding kennel business. She agreed to come to work for The HSUS, but I suspect she has never forgiven me for nominating her to this task!"

Lois Preston, owner of Preston Country Club for Pets, was Wright's business partner at the time. "Phyllis had the ability, the knowledge, and the personal courage to pursue helping animals in shelters," Preston notes. "That became her commitment and her goal in life. She had a level head about her, and her broad experience made her able to see things from different angles."

Wright has also stood by those she's advised. Sandy Rowland says, "If she told you, for example, that you should have a one-day waiting period for adoptions, and you got into trouble over it with the press or your board of directors, she was there to fight for you."

The Wright Stuff

Those who know Wright personally know that her unique sensitivity is a valuable asset in a field as heartbreaking and frustrating as humane work. Laura Lanza says, "She has a wonderful, dry sense of humor, very candid and very quick. She can see the absurdity of an issue and make a bright point without being insulting."

The other side of Wright's humor is a determination to do what's best for animals, even when it means getting tough with people. Diane Allevato was a board member at the Humane Society of Huron Valley (MI) when Wright visited the shelter in 1977. "She was crusty and hard as nails," recalls Allevato, "and that was a good thing because the society needed to make some changes. Phyllis knew what buttons to push."

"She's not ego driven," says NYSHA's Samantha Mullen. "She's a very strong person, but ego never gets in the way of her work." Mullen notes with gratitude that Wright coordinated The HSUS's effort to assist NYSHA during the 1987 Animals' Farm Home case in Ulster County, New York.

Lasting Impact

While Wright's retirement is an immediate loss to the field, her beneficial influence will be felt for decades to come—in part because of such programs as the Animal Control Academy, but also because of the approach she brought to solving animal problems.

"I always like it when she says, 'Stop talking and do something,' " says Diane Allevato. "What people will remember and emulate about Phyllis will be, not so much specific programs, but her whole style."

Many more people than could be quoted in this article have fond memories of Phyllis Wright. If you have a special memory, write it down and send it to Shelter Sense. Phyllis will receive it as part of her retirement scrapbook.

Scholarship Established To Honor Phyllis Wright

To honor Phyllis Wright for her years of outstanding service to both The HSUS and to the field of animal care and control, The HSUS board of directors recently established The HSUS Animal Control Academy Scholarship Fund. With a $10,000 initial contribution from The HSUS, this fund will go a long way toward helping many needy and worthy participants attend the Animal Control Academy.

The HSUS invites other organizations to contribute to this fund in honor of Phyllis and enable even more deserving students to attend the Academy. This scholarship fund will be a perpetual tribute to Phyllis Wright and will help continue her work in preparing and training professional personnel to protect and care for animals. Contribution checks to the fund should be made payable to The HSUS and sent to the attention of HSUS President John A. Hoyt at the address below.

For more information about The HSUS Animal Control Academy Scholarship Fund, please write to The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

"Worst Pound in Nation" Turns Around

By Rhonda Lucas Donald

In 1979, the Gallia County dog pound in Ohio was dubbed the "worst in the nation" by HSUS officials who had been summoned to investigate by a neighboring county.

Sandy Rowland, director of The HSUS Great Lakes Regional Office, described the "pound" as a "three-sided aluminum lean-to, enclosed by fencing, that provided no adequate shelter." A feed trough served as food and water container, but there was no food or water available on the 90-plus-degree day the investigators were there. "All the dogs were in together. Some were dead, others had severe, maggot-infested gashes on their bodies." The dogs who survived the pound were sold to a buncher for resale to research labs. "When I went home that night," Rowland remembers, "I couldn't sleep for thinking about those dogs."

Around this time, the seeds of the Gallia County...
Another Update on Hartz Blockade

By Geoffrey L. Handy

In 1986, the new Gallia County Animal Control facility opened and has served the county well since.

Animal Welfare League (P.O. Box 216, Gallipolis, OH 45631) were being sown. Marilyn Smith, the league's president, says that they were the third humane society formed in the county, two previous groups having given up. The goals of the league were to improve the conditions at the pound and get the county to uphold the provisions of Ohio's animal welfare code.

The first action the league took was to persuade the pound to stop selling animals to the buncsher and to initiate humane euthanasia. “One of the county's three veterinarians, Dr. Allan Boster, agreed to help the league and began euthanizing unwanted or sick dogs once a week," Smith says. “He's been with us ever since, and he's superb.”

Once veterinary care and humane euthanasia had been established, the league set out to obtain better facilities for the animals. In 1986, when a new shelter opened.

In just 12 years, the League has done a remarkable job of overseeing the county-run shelter. Although they don't have a contract to provide animal control services to the county, they work with the commissioners and the shelter employees to see that the animals are cared for properly. But their access to directions have not been without a lot of perseverance and hard work.

“It was a group effort," Smith says. “At the first meetings with the commissioners, we would be sure to have a good-sized group in attendance to show support. One night, we were scheduled to meet with the commissioners at 7:00, but put us off and put us off. At 10:30, we were still waiting, and many of the group wanted to go home. But I knew that was just what the commission was hoping we’d do. I convinced everyone to stay and show that we weren’t going to give up. We didn’t get in until midnight, but they knew then that we weren’t going to quit and go away.”

Relations with the commission have been much better since those early meetings, and the efforts have certainly paid off. In a recent letter to the commissioners, Sandy Rowland congratulated them “for all the hard work put forth to provide a facility where animals can be safely housed until they are reunited with their owners, adopted, or humanely disposed of." She goes on to say that “the present shelter is well designed, well located, and suitable in size" for the locale. Rowland praises the League for the improvement. “They did the work,” she says. “They were stupendous and deserve all the credit. They did their homework, and were professional and persistent.”

Community support helped, Smith points out. “We made quite a few headlines early on. Now the attitude toward the shelter has changed. People now know it is a safe place to bring animals. Through a weekly newspaper column written by Sam, the shelter mascot, the league has also been able to educate people in the community.

Humane education is one area the league wants to bolster in the future, along with getting the county to require that all adopted animals be spayed or neutered. Smith says awareness of pet overpopulation is growing. “Each Christmas, we give away 20 certificates for free spay or neuter surgeries. This year, for the first time, we had many more requests than certificates.”

Play on Homeless Pets Benefits Humane Society

By Rhonda Lucas Donald

There was not a dry eye in the auditorium after the fifth graders at Pine Trail Elementary (Ormond Beach, FL) brought the curtain down on It’s Raining Cats and Dogs. The play, written and produced by teacher Courtney Ronca, told the plight of ten homeless pets who ended up at the animal shelter.

During the performance, viewers found out what happens to homeless animals. They watched an unleashed dog become injured and saw numerous pets waiting to be adopted or reclaimed at the shelter. They learned that the animal control of

Hartz Funds Toll-free Number

The National Animal Poison Control Center (NAPCC, formerly the Illinois Animal Poison Information Center) maintains a telephone line funded by Hartz and manned by veterinarians 24 hours a day to provide free, expert advice during animal poisoning emergencies attributed to Hartz Blockade.

The toll-free number, which does not appear on the product label, is 1 (800) 345-4735.

Regardless of the cause, an animal exhibiting symptoms of toxicity should be examined by a veterinarian immediately. Symptoms of toxic reactions include diarrhea, vomiting, salivation, difficulty in breathing, incoordination, muscle tremors, convulsions, weakness, apprehension, depression, and other abnormal behaviors. Early diagnosis and treatment could save the animal’s life.

resumed sales of the aerosol spray in early 1989. No change was made in the formulation of the product, but Hartz did add new, specific dosage instructions to a hang tag affixed to the bottle. According to Dr. William Buck, director of toxicology at the National Animal Poison Control Center, almost all the reports the center now receives about Blockade are the result of pet owners failing to follow directions on the hang tag. As with all pesticides, pet owners should never use Blockade too frequently, apply too much of the product, or use the spray in conjunction with other insecticides.
Society’s Heroic Efforts Save Tortured Dogs

By Geoffrey L. Handy

When Rescue Officer Angela Eslick left the Pulaski County Humane Society (P.O. Box 24283, Little Rock, AR 72221) last December 14 to drive to a veterinarian’s office, she decided to alter her normal driving route just to have a change.

Her decision was a lucky one for a 10-month-old male German shepherd and two 12-week-old shepherd-chow puppies. As Eslick drove by a wooded area about two miles from the shelter, she noticed one of the dogs out of the corner of her eye. What she saw after pulling over was frightening: The older dog had several layers of silver duct tape wrapped tightly around his muzzle, and his ears were taped back so that he couldn’t hear. He watched protectively over the puppies, whose muzzles were similarly taped. As it turned out, Eslick had arrived in the nick of time—the older dog, unable to pant, was just minutes away from death. She radioed the shelter and rushed the dogs to the clinic.

When found along with two puppies, Mercy was unable to pant and close to dying. The puppies’ muzzles were freed easily, and Mercy was moved to the clinic’s intensive care unit, where she received extensive care. Despite outstanding media coverage, an outcry of public support, and a standing $3,000 reward fund created by some 200 contributors, the society has had few leads toward finding the abuser. The case is especially bizarre, according to Bumpass, because all three dogs had evidently been well fed and cared for. The dogs were relatively free of dirt or fleas, and had no calluses on their paws. In addition, Bumpass noted, Mercy is a well-bred, well-socialized, purebred shepherd. “In my mind, it had to be a form of vindictiveness,” she said. “I don’t think this was just to get rid of them. It was too malicious and vicious an act.”

The case does have a happy ending, though: all three dogs have been placed in happy homes. After holding Mercy in the hope that their efforts to catch the perpetrator would prove fruitful, the society sent him home (neutered, of course) with a family on April 11.

When found along with two puppies, Mercy was unable to pant and close to dying.
Not Fit for a Dog

By Ronald D. White, a member of the editorial page staff of The Washington Post.
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A rumor is circulating in my neighborhood that I hate dogs. I emphatically deny this. In one of my favorite daydreams, I own a small farm and am walking my land on a cold day with two fine dogs. They are huskies or retrievers, and they are running, yards ahead or behind me. I have no quarrel with dogs. It's their owners I detest.

I hope to own those dogs someday, but out of compassion for such magnificent breeds, I'll wait until I have land on which they can roam. Now, I live at 17th and Willard streets in Northwest. It's a typical Washington neighborhood: densely populated, with no front lawns, a few tiny backyards, even fewer garages, and no driveways. There is little open space. I won't own such a dog under these circumstances. The poor beast would yearn for more.

Unfortunately, this hasn't stopped some of the more affluent folks in my neighborhood. I know of some of them. They live in one-bedroom or two-bedroom apartments and condos. Some have an entire floor of a row house. But they own huskies, labs, great danes, dalmatians, and all manner of retriever. One even owns a Newfoundland, which strongly resembles a small bear.

On many mornings, I have watched owners take these dogs on the briefest of excursions, sometimes not even the length of a block. Woe to the dog that lingers to sniff too many trees. To some owners, the dog's just wasting time, using up a few minutes they could use to prepare for that big meeting. And then the dogs are imprisoned inside those tiny domiciles. Maybe the owner comes home immediately after work, maybe not. Yes, a loyal friend is waiting for them, but it's just a dog, right? Some owners arrive at home very late. They finally get around to walking the dog, it's for the sole purpose of letting the animal relieve itself. There is a small park with trees and grass less than a block from our apartment, and a second, larger park across from the first. But the dog owners usually don't get that far. Too cold now, I guess, or too hot in summer. Too much crime, besides, the dog is the only one who suffers. My building, which faces 17th Street, runs back along Willard. The Willard Street owners have made this stretch their "dog run," and they don't even clean up after their pets.

The silliest owners don't carry leashes, although the streets are busy in every direction. And they expect the dogs, who have been locked up all day, to stay on the sidewalks. When the dogs disobey, they yell themselves hoarse. And how do the dogs feel about this? For an answer, consider the following excerpt from The Complete Dog Book: "Canine literature gives us stories of brave Newfoundlands, which have rescued men and women from watery graves, stories of shipwrecks made less terrible by dogs that carried lifelines to stricken vessels, and of dogs whose work was less spectacular but equally valuable as they helped their fishermen owners with heavy nets and performed other tasks necessary to their occupations."

Is that a dog for a one- or two-bedroom apartment? A dog that will be happy with a walk around the block, if it gets to go that far? I'm sure the dog owners I refer to defend themselves by saying that their pets receive the best foods and have health plans that rival those for humans. But there is more to being a compassionate owner than this, and that includes avoiding pets that do not fit your lifestyle or your surroundings. Some of these folks ought to stick to goldfish.

Yes, whenever I see an irritated owner yank on a leash or yell at their dog because it simply needs to run for awhile, I know that you don't have to beat or abandon a pet in order to be cruel to one.

Public Can Inspect IRS Forms

ince major tax law changes were passed in 1987, tax-exempt organizations have been required to make certain information available to the public. The HSUS reminds local humane societies that "it is not the need to comply with these provisions. According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), "any organization that files a Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, must make its return available for public inspection upon request within the 3-year period that begins with the due date of the return. All parts of the return and all required schedules and attachments other than the list of contributors to the organization must be made available."

In addition, a section 501(c) organization that submits an application for recognition of federal tax exemption must also make a copy of that application, along with any papers submitted in support of it, available to the public for inspection. The statute requires that inspection of these documents be made available to "any individual." A 501(c) organization may not screen an individual requesting such inspection for motive or purpose.

Copies of both annual returns and exemption applications must be made available for inspection during the organization's regular business hours. Individuals who inspect the documents are entitled to make photocopies of them. Local societies may find that simply providing carry-away copies for those who request inspection is preferable to having them stay at their offices during inspection. Penalties for violators of these public disclosure requirements are $10 for each day that inspection was not permitted. The maximum penalty for any single annual return is $5,000.

Other federal regulations apply to tax-exempt groups, including restrictions on political and legislative activities. For details, consult an attorney or other professional who is knowledgeable about regulations applicable to tax-exempt organizations.

GAO: Disinfectants May Not Work

n animal shelter that can't control germs is an animal shelter that's bound to have problems with disease control. That's why a recent report about disinfectants from the United States General Accounting Office (GAO) is so disturbing. GAO, the congressional agency charged with investigating how well the executive branch carries...
The invisible bacteria, viruses, and fungi they out federal laws, has concluded that up to 20 percent of disinfectants on the market may not kill the invisible bacteria, viruses, and fungi they claim to. The reason: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which under federal law must make sure disinfectants kill microorganisms as claimed before they can be sold, lacks sufficient assurance that disinfectants actually do work. According to GAO testimony, EPA does not independently test disinfectants, but instead relies on test data submitted by the disinfectant manufacturers themselves. Worse yet, the agency has trouble ensuring the quality and integrity of test programs. And GAO says those test programs are limited. Air fares to Las Vegas are among the lowest in the United States. Super saver fares, available for advance-purchase tickets, can make the trip even more affordable. A room at Bally's costs only $39.50 per person, double occupancy. For $5 more per person, the rooms can easily accommodate up to four people, bringing the cost per night to only $22.25. You won't spend a lot of money on food, either. Expo exhibitors will be sponsoring a number of breakfasts and lunches for participants. In addition, Bally's and many other large hotels in the city offer very inexpensive buffets. Whether that participants will be able to eat excellent food for under $15 a day. Even the cost of the registration fee ($25, or $18 if received before December 15, 1991) will most likely be made up in freebies and food.

Considering the educational experience the Expo offers, the money invested in the trip will be well spent. No where else will animal care workers be able to attend so many exhibits, seminars, and products that fit their needs perfectly, and all under one roof.

For more information, write Animal Care Expo '92, P.O. Box 3304, Crestline, CA 92325, or call (800) 248-EXPO (national) or (714) 338-1192 (international).
Animal Directory In Its 4th Edition

The Animal Organizations & Services Directory remains the most comprehensive directory of its kind. With the 1990-91 edition, its fourth and latest, the directory has been expanded to over 320 pages and includes Canadian organizations and services for the first time.

The directory contains useful information about pets and wildlife not found in any other single reference book. Listed are more than 550 national, state, and Canadian animal welfare, protection, and humane organizations. The directory includes everything from The HSUS to small, relatively unknown organizations such as The Digit Fund, a group started by Dian Fossey to protect the mountain gorillas from poachers in Africa. Some other interesting groups include The Culture and Animals Foundation, The Antarctica Project, and Earth Island Institute.

Also listed are professional and veterinary medical organizations, and pet transporting, pet insurance, and pet I.D. services. There are also categories of retail services, political action groups, and hot lines. The directory even includes regional listings of animal behaviorists and consultants, and hundreds of listings for clubs and magazines.

The directory sells for $24.95, but Shelter Sense readers can receive a 20 percent discount with their pre-paid order when they specify this article number, 990, on their order form. The shipping and handling charge is $2.25.

A free copy of the 1991 Band List is available to any humane society or animal control agency upon request. Write to Marie Rotondo, Secretary/Treasurer, International Federation of American Homing Pigeon Fanciers, 107 Jefferson St., Belmont Hills, PA 19004.

binder. Should any part of one of the manual’s seven sections need revising, it’s a simple matter of entering the agency’s word processing program, making the changes, printing out the revised pages, and adding them to the binder.

The manual has just undergone its fourth major overhaul, because the animal services division—which is jointly operated by the city and the Humane Society of the Ozarks—has moved into a new shelter.

The HSUS strongly recommends that every animal control program, regardless of size, have a policies and procedures manual. Fayetteville’s would be an excellent prototype. To obtain a copy, send a $15 check, made payable to Fayetteville Animal Services, to Lib Horn at the address above.

Band List Traces Birds to Owners

From time to time, individuals or shelters may come across a banded pigeon. These birds are usually racing pigeons who become lost or injured during a race. The band can be the bird’s ticket home—if the finder knows how to track the band code to the bird’s owner.

This task is easier with the help of the 1991 Band List, published by the International Federation of American Homing Pigeon Fanciers, Inc.

This list traces band codes to the owner directly or to a club to which the owner belongs. Addresses for owners and clubs are listed alphabetically by band code.

MUGGY OUT? THEN KEEP MUGSY IN.

We all know that heat is dangerous to dogs. That’s why leaving a dog in a parked car on a warm day can be fatal.

But just as important as the outside temperature is the relative humidity, as we know from human experience. The Federal Aviation Administration reports that dogs’ body temperatures can reach dangerous levels in temperatures as low as 85°F when the humidity is above 90%. In other words, as humidity goes up, dogs’ heat tolerance goes down.

On the other hand, a dog can withstand higher temperatures when the humidity is lower. The combination of heat and humidity can be life threatening if your dog must travel by plane in warm weather. You should check both the temperature and the relative humidity before you send your pet on his way. Also obtain the same information for landing locations in case the plane must sit on the runway for any length of time.

And the rule to follow in leaving your pet in a parked car is not to. A dog’s temperature can rise dangerously high in a matter of minutes. Your dog is much safer at home.

Remember, it’s not just the heat, it’s the humidity. Be aware of both to keep your pet safe.

(This space for your organization’s name and phone number.)

Provided by The Humane Society of the United States.
A Tribute to Phyllis

By John A. Hoyt, president of The Humane Society of the United States

In every generation there are a few persons whose vision and determination establish the agenda for the many. It is not always apparent who these persons are, for often their message and influence is only understood and appreciated in hindsight, frequently finding fulfillment in the words and actions of others.

It is, of course, not possible to avoid being impacted by Phyllis Wright if you are even remotely in the vicinity of her presence. But it is not always during that moment that the real impact of her character and passion is felt, but rather in its multiplication through those who, once her students, become now ambassadors of her caring concern and persistent determination.

No advocate for animals has been more dedicated or devoted to her calling than Phyllis Wright. And few will be her peers in the years ahead. She has inspired and motivated an army of persons who have joined the battle of those seeking to free animals from abuse and suffering and create a world in which cruelty is replaced by compassion.

We shall miss you, Phyllis. But your presence shall hardly escape us. Not only have you challenged our minds and inflamed our spirits; you have also imprinted our hearts so indelibly that you will be one with us always.