A NEW LOOK FOR SHELTER SENSE

Personal PERSPECTIVES

As you can see, Shelter Sense has gotten a facelift! We hope you will enjoy the new look and the new features you will see in upcoming issues.

These changes are partly a result of your input on the reader survey we included in last February’s issue. Thanks so much to those of you who took the time to provide us with your opinions.

The main intent of the survey was to determine how well Shelter Sense was meeting your needs. We’re pleased to report that the results were overwhelmingly favorable.

While many readers appreciated our emphasis on pet overpopulation and the sharing of materials and ideas that work (this will not change!), quite a few also expressed interest in seeing particular subjects covered in the future. Especially popular among these were shelter disease control, adoptions, ACO duties, volunteer programs, and fundraising/development.

As always, readers clamored for more Reproducibles. “We need more Reproducibles on cats,” said one. Another reader expressed interest in Reproducibles that could be understood by illiterates.

We’ll also take into account your ideas about the publication as a whole. Many of you demanded that Shelter Sense be printed on recycled paper (It already is). Many also suggested changes in visual format (Here it is!). Others simply didn’t want us to ruin what they perceived as a good thing. “Without Shelter Sense, I wouldn’t have lasted this long,” said one ACO. “I’m not sure that it is difficult to carry on a daily routine for weeks, possibly months, afterwards. Unfortunately, as many grieving pet owners have found, it is still not widely acceptable in today’s society to be devastated over an animal’s death. Those who have ‘sensed the loss of a pet in the past may have met with harsh criticism from others, or, even worse, complete indifference.

In recent months, the SPCA of Erie County has received calls from bereaved pet owners who are looking for ways of obtaining some support during this difficult time. Just about every caller expresses embarrassment over needing to make the call and wonders whether we’ve ever heard of such a problem.

That’s why every humane agency should be able to give support to those who’ve lost pets and let them know they aren’t alone in their struggles.

Stages of Grieving

Some pet owners are not quite sure what is expected of them after losing a pet. What many do not realize is that in addition to losing a beloved companion, they’ve lost a lifestyle as well—a lifestyle that may have revolved around caring for that pet. A pet provides companionship, comfort, security, love, and, for some, a reason for living. All this suddenly disappears when that pet dies, but many pet owners choose to struggle through this painful period alone. When an adjustment cannot be made within a few days, griever may feel suddenly becomes the main responsibility of the owner.”

In his book, When Your Pet Dies: How To Cope with Your Feelings, Jamie Quackenbush, MSW, compares a pet owner’s reactions to a pet’s death to those experienced after a human being’s death. With slight variation, the responses are almost identical: guilt, denial, anger, depression, and, finally, acceptance.

During the guilt stage, the pet owner knows he or she is totally responsible for the animal. Pets give their owners so much… they may be the most loving creatures their owners have ever been exposed to. Any pain a pet may feel suddenly becomes the full responsibility of the owner.”

Because pets lose unconditionally, the feelings pets have for them can be extremely intense. Consequently, the feeling of loss at a pet’s death can be equally strong.
Pleasure is found in nothing, and he begins to part of his life is gone and wonders owner realizes his grief is valid, he by finding someone or something to stage arrives, the pet owner may try but can't believe it and may put off preventing. He then may thinking about it. When the blame. The when a pet dies, the pet owner accept the pet's death. Depression becomes very intense. When they die, a part of you dies with them, their thoughts. "Animals are so accepting than most of the people you believe they feel this way. Once grievers are perfectly justified in belongings, and so on. They just can't longings or possessions rather than diminishing the pet/owner relationship. Many of these people we remember when dealing with insensitive listeners is to ignore these comments can be harmful to the griever. ''When the owner hears the owner is forced to find support from the people around him. Unfortunately, research shows that the owner's friends and family, or others who knew the pet. Counseling is another alternative. Grievers naturally turn to friends and family, or others who knew the pet. Whether the griever speaks with a consistent and understanding, and they keep telling him that he should be 'over it by now,' he'll hold all the weight of his feelings. If he tries to talk to others and they tell him that it was only a cat!'' are commonly heard from people, "It was only a dog," or "Get over it. It's just a sympathy. If he tries to talk to others and they tell him that it was only a cat!'' are commonly heard from people, "It was only a dog," or "Get over it. It's just a sympathy. If he tries to talk to others and they tell him that it was only a cat!'' are commonly heard from people, "It was only a dog," or "Get over it. It's just a sympathy. If he tries to talk to others and they tell him that it was only a cat!'' are commonly heard from people, "It was only a dog," or "Get over it. It's just a sympathy. If he tries to talk to others and they tell him that it was only a cat!'' are commonly heard from people, "It was only a dog," or "Get over it. It's just a symp..."
group, he has found someone who not only will listen, but who can offer educated suggestions for overcoming the grief. Ehlers adds, ‘It is essential to deal with every aspect of a pet owner’s grief, whether counseling one on one, or in a group. If one issue is left uncovered, the pet owner may try to hide it and forget about it, rather than deal with it. Just being there for him or her and listening is the most significant thing a counselor can do.’

A Brighter Horizon

Mourning the loss of a beloved pet is still not totally acceptable in today’s society. Thankfully, this trend is changing. As more and more grieving pet owners express a need for support, professionals (including many animal shelters and humane organizations), friends, and family are contributing to the grief for help.

RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP

The Delta Society has many resources to help people deal with pet loss and help others support them. They have a national directory of pet loss counselors to direct grievers to a professional in their area. In addition, they have lists of resources including books, pamphlets, articles, videos, and taped television programs on the subject. You may write to the Delta Society at P.O. Box 1080, Benton, WA 98025-1080.

Veterinary students trained in pet loss counseling at the University of California at Davis also maintain a hotline to help callers who’ve lost a pet. Their number is (916) 752-4200 and is in operation between 6:30 and 9:30 pm, PST, Monday through Friday.

See also the materials section for a series of videos that are designed not only to help the grieving pet owner, but to train workers in helping clients who lose a pet. Perhaps your organization could join the many other humane groups that offer pet loss sessions to the public.

FIVE SIMPLE TIPS FOR BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE

By Kathi Prevost

There is no mystery to providing customer service in any organization. It can only begin with you! The way you treat others will be reflected in the way they treat you. Try doing one thing on the following list every day. You’ll be surprised how much friendlier your customers are—and how much more open they will be to your message of responsible animal care.

1. Play the name game. Introduce yourself, either by wearing a name tag, telling them your first name, or both. Listen when they tell you their name. Write it down if you need to, but remember it. This is not only common courtesy, but more importantly, it sets the tone for the communication. You’ll be surprised how many people remember your name. Use their name preceding important information. People retain three times more of what you say when it is preceded by their names. (“Yes, Joan, you must have her spayed!”) Names are powerful tools—use them!

2. Let the sun shine in. Some shelters look like places of gloom and death, and the employees seem overwhelmed and depressed. No wonder many people don’t like to visit the shelter. Make sure your shelter hasn’t fallen into this trap. It doesn’t have to be fancy, just clean, bright, and welcoming. Everyone should dress in bright colors. You can clean up your desk, buy yourself flowers (or better yet, buy someone else flowers!), or hang a poster. A clean smelling, pleasant environment filled with happy, enthusiastic people can’t help but make a difference. Remember, if it looks like a dump, people will treat it like a dump.

3. Stamp their ticket. Validate the person’s concern. Find something—anything—you can agree with in their request. Make them understand that you care about them and their problem. (“I can understand why you feel that neutering may be cruel.”) If you don’t understand their concerns, ask them why. Maybe their childhood pet died while being neutered. Give them the benefit of the doubt.

4. Do the Can-Can. Tell people what you can do, not what you can’t. There should always be something you can do to help someone. If possible, give them options—two or more choices—and let them make the decision. Instead of, “We can’t pick up your cat unless you agree,” say, “We can pick up the cat if you are able to confine it,” or “We can lend you a humane trap.”

5. Be a natural resource. Provide a variety of learning experiences in the shelter environment, including posters, graphics, signs, videos, recorded messages, music, guided tours, counseling, hotlines, and intervention. Vary the tone and presentation of the messages, combining some “warm fuzzies” with dynamic graphics, in-depth explanations, and checklists. Every person learns differently. If you want people to get the message, deliver it in a form they can understand. Communication is not what you say, it’s what they hear. Make it easy for them to listen.

Kathi Prevost offers human resource development for humane organizations through her company Only Human, 915 S 281 St., Redondo Beach, WA 98054; (206) 940-2931.

Implementing any of the five tips mentioned here would be a positive step in improving public service.

VETERINARIANS HELP FOUR SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAMS

By Geoffrey L. Handy

Every humane agency in the country can tell a different story about its struggles to involve veterinarians in efforts to combat the nation’s horrible surplus of dogs and cats. Fortunately, humane groups and veterinarians are proving more and more that avenues of cooperation do exist, so long as each recognizes the needs and wishes of the other.

During the fourth annual “Prevent A Litter” Month last April, hundreds of individuals, humane societies, and animal control agencies continued to educate their communities about the surplus of dogs and cats and promote spaying and neutering. Veterinarian cooperation and participation were hallmarks of many of these effective programs. The four programs profiled here show that cooperation between vets...
The Fido Fund Saves Lives in WV

Pat Thomas, director of the Huntington-Cabell-Wayne Animal Control Shelter (1901 James River Rd., Huntington, WV 25704), always wanted to help adopters pay for the sterilization of their new pets. So when she began receiving donations to the rural public shelter a few years back, she decided to open up a special bank account.

Dubbed the Fido Fund, the account had grown to $52,000 by 1988, and Thomas managed to persuade one maverick local veterinarian to reduce his spay/neuter fees significantly for animals adopted from the facility. The veterinarian would be reimbursed for each surgery using money from the Fund.

That way, from the adopter's perspective, his or her new companion would be sterilized for free. The vets would be reimbursed $45 from the Fund for each dog or cat spayed, and $35 for each neuter.

As the program progressed, the entire Huntington Veterinary Association (HVA) decided to join the lone veterinarian and participate. The vets would be reimbursed $45 from the Fund for each dog or cat spayed, and $35 for each neuter. The association's eleven clinics had already been providing free veterinary exams for adopted animals.

Adopters began receiving free spays and neuters in July 1988, and well over 1,000 animals had been sterilized for free by the end of last year, when the Fund ran dry. Another $7,000 was raised through Christmas donations and the agency's "Pitch In For Pets" program, through which the shelter collects aluminum, glass, and plastic recyclables to sell to manufacturers of recycled products. Free surgeries using that money were again offered during May, and an additional 150 adopters benefited during the month.

Even when Thomas can't help adopters pay for the spay/neuter surgery, she makes sure they sign a special sterilization contract and does extensive follow-up. But she knows the value of the Fund in guaranteeing the sterilization of adopted pets, especially for low-income adopters. "The Fido Fund is really for people who don't even know what 'spay' means when they first come into the shelter," says Thomas. "It's for people who wouldn't spend their money on spaying and neutering even if they did have it."

Adopters Get Free Surgeries in Oregon

Adopters in Oregon's Marion and Polk Counties have a deal similar to their West Virginia counterparts. When they adopt a cat or dog from the Humane Society of the Willamette Valley (HSWV, P.O. Box 13005, Salem, OR 97309), a free spay or neuter is part of the package.

These new pet owners are the beneficiaries of a cooperative adoption program between the society and the Marion-Polk Veterinary Association (MPVA). "We wanted to increase our spay/neuter compliance rate as well as promote adoptions," says Marti Staprans, the society's community programs coordinator. "And what better way to do that than to make it more feasible for a person to come to us instead of a pet store and ensure that the pet will be altered."

Since February 1, the association's 28 clinics have accepted the spay/neuter certificate adopters receive at the time they adopt as full payment for a spay or neuter surgery. The humane society reimburses vets for only part of the cost—an amount that averages about 70 percent of the agency's adoption fee, which is $60 for dogs and $35 for cats. For the adoption fee, adopters also get free veterinary exam, vaccinations, a leash, collar, and ID tag, a car carrier (for adopters of cats), and pet care information.

One of six print PSAs, this ad was produced at cost for Forsyth County Animal Control by Horn & Strochnach, a Winston-Salem public relations firm. The agency also secured newspaper space for the ads.

Each ad consists of an attention-grabbing photograph and slogan, along with factual copy that highlights the animal shelter's role in resolving the problem of pet owners' irresponsibility. Three of the print ads have won regional awards for excellence from the advertising industry. "The posters emphasize what happens when pet owners fail to be responsible for their animals," says Jerry Canady, director of animal control.

Program Aids Pets Before Adoption

If a resident of Island County, Washington, adopts an animal from either of Whidbey Island's two animal shelters, their new pet is guaranteed not to produce a litter. "People don't have a choice now," says Dr. Robert Bishop, a local veterinarian. "If they want to adopt an animal in Island County, it's going to be neutered."

That's because every animal available for adoption on the island has already been surgically sterilized. Both the county shelter and the city of Oak Harbor shelter are cooperating in Stop the Unwanted Breeding by Stray (STUBBS), a pre-adoption sterilization program conceived by Dr. Bishop and implemented with the help of the underfunded Whidbey Island Animal Improvement Foundation (WAIF, 1254 W. Pioneer Way, Ste. 236, Oak Harbor, WA 98277).

Since last September, some 250 animals have been altered free-of-charge by Dr. Bishop or one of four other volunteer veterinarians on the island. At pre-arranged times each week, ACOs from the Oak Harbor city shelter and the county shelter...
Gretchen Young/Whidbey News

Island's other veterinarians Dr. Robert Bishop, shown here have since contributed to the cause.

Shelter personnel handle the post-delivery adoptable animals to the mature shelter animals, Bishop and sterilizing animals as young as eight operative procedures.

Originally begun by Bishop with -- screen animals so that only healthy, sterilization. The program has worked between impounded animals and re-refused to have their pets altered for behavioral sound animals.

A STRONG PROTOCOL HSUS RECOMMENDS

PET OWNERS SHOULD TALK SAFETY FOR CHEW AND TREATS

A STRICT PROTOCOL HSUS RECOMMENDS

PET OWNERS SHOULDN'T TAKE SAFETY FOR GRANTED

NEUTER PROGRAMS

A STRONG PROTOCOL FOR EVERY SAFETY FOR CHEW AND TREATS
**COCKFIGHTING'S "SUPERBOWL" BUSTED**

**S**andy Rowland and Robin Wei-zauch of The HSUS Great Lakes Regional Office (745 Haskins St., Bowling Green, OH 43402-1696), along with HSUS investigators Bob Baker and Jim Tiefed, joined the Ohio Department of Agriculture, four Ohio Sheriff's Departments, the Internal Revenue Service, and other federal and state officials on May 11 in a raid of cockfighting's "superbowl." The 16-month investigation and close to a thousand birds, currently a misdemeanor in Ohio, but as a result of this bust, legislators are considering making it a felony crime. Federal officials are seeking to file charges for gambling and nonpayment of income taxes. Sheriff's deputies were on hand to handle firearms violations, and Ohio liquor agents were present to enforce state liquor laws.

"The gambling, the drugs, the booze, and the guns at cockfights confirm that animal abuse isn't an isolated activity," says Rowland. "It's part of a cycle of violence. We're also concerned about the number of children present at cockfights. What kind of sick lessons are they learning by witnessing these events?"

The cockfighting was expected to generate thousands of dollars in wagering. In addition to the main arena, the organizers created two "drag" pits, where dying birds were thrown to continue their vain battles.

The United Gamefowl Breeders Association defends this 'sport' by saying that Washington and Jefferson were cockfighters, but there isn't a shred of evidence to support that claim," says Rowland. "Cockfighting is an embarrassing relic that doesn't belong in a civilized society." As a result of this raid, attention has been focused on upgrading the current Ohio cockfighting law from a misdemeanor to a felony. As long as cockfighting is only a misdemeanor, the events are likely to continue once the publicity dies down. Cockfights are money events. Fines imposed for a misdemeanor offense do little to hinder the continuation of the sport. Fighters, promoters, and spectators (who wager large sums) merely factor in such small fines as a cost of doing business. A felony law would mean stiffer penalties, increased law enforcement efforts, and a stronger deterrent to participants, who do not want to become felons.

If you live in Ohio, contact your state legislator at the State House, Columbus, OH 43215; (614) 466-2000.

Coerced animal sacrifice continues once the publicity dies down. Fines imposed for a misdemeanor offense do little to hinder the continuation of the sport. Fighters, promoters, and spectators (who wager large sums) merely factor in such small fines as a cost of doing business. A felony law would mean stiffer penalties, increased law enforcement efforts, and a stronger deterrent to participants, who do not want to become felons.

"We just didn't know how well they could be a lost boy's ticket home, too."
Videos Offer Help With Pet Loss, Counseling

A series of three videos produced by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) can help shelter staff and members of the public deal with pet loss.

One of the videos, The Loss of Your Pet, is directed to the pet owner. By showing various scenarios and interviewing people who’ve lost pets, the video helps the griever realize that he or she is going through a normal experience that is healthy, necessary, and very legitimate. Seeing the scenarios will help people who have lost a pet make some of the choices they will face. The video makes it clear that there are different ways of dealing with the death of a pet and that each person must do what is right for him or her. Accompanying the video are ten copies of a booklet to give to clients who experience pet loss. The booklet discusses the grieving process, covers decisions to be made, and lists resources for additional information.

The other two videos in the series are actually made for veterinarians and clinic staff. Understanding Client Pet Loss and Counseling Clients prepare staff to handle the grief, anger, and confusion of people who have lost their companions. Although designed for veterinarians and their staffs, the information provided would be very helpful for shelter staff who deal with members of the public trying to cope with euthanasia or accept the reality that their lost pet isn’t coming home.

Practical advice on how to support the griever, techniques to make the griever feel comfortable, and information on the manifestations of the grieving process will help staff members be comforting and helpful when a client loses a pet. A workbook accompanying each of these two videos reinforces the concepts presented.

Each video is approximately 45 minutes long and costs $35. The entire three-tape set costs $95. Additional workbooks may be purchased for $7.50 each, and ten additional client booklets are available for $8.

To place an order or to get more information, call AAHA toll-free at (800) 252-2242 (USA only) or (303) 279-2500 (International calls—toll charged). Ask for their member service center.

Investigator’s Video Available

With the help of a new video, beginning investigators can benefit from the experience of several of The HSUS’s seasoned field investigators.

Produced by The HSUS, An Introduction to Animal Cruelty Investigation gives an overview of how to deal with people in the field, how to collect evidence, what tools an investigator needs, and how to best help the animals who are victims of neglect and abuse. One of the main thrusts of the video is that education is the primary responsibility of the investigator and that prosecution should generally be a last resort. In addition to general information, the video provides advice on when to Mirandize a suspect, tips on testifying in court, and suggestions for using photographs as evidence.

This 25-minute, 1/2" VHS video costs $20 and can be ordered from The HSUS, 2000 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

Job Announcements

Advertisements are free and limited to job openings in humane organizations or animal control departments. Ads must be submitted on your organization’s letterhead no later than five weeks before the month of the issue in which you want your ad to appear. Please limit announcements to 50 words (including address). Sorry, Shelter Sense cannot print “position wanted” ads.

Executive Director—For humane society in Florida that handles 12,000 animals yearly, has a staff of 16, and has a $550,000 budget. Will supervise all phases of operations. Strong fundraising ability and management skills required. Salary negotiable. Send resume to Search Committee, Humane Society of Tampa Bay, 5607 N. Armenia Ave., Tampa, FL 33607.

Field Supervisor—Will supervise and coordinate animal control and investigations department for humane agency. Three to five years animal control and management experience, completion of California State Humane Academy preferred. Send resume, references to Operations Manager, Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA, 561 S. Raymond Ave., Pasadena, CA 91105.
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The Humane Society of the United States
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Bethesda, MD 20814

Address Correction Requested