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Personal PERSPECTIVES

EXPO ’92 FILLED A VOID

When we’re caught up in the routine, day-to-day tasks that fill our working lives, we sometimes fail to stop and examine what we’re doing, and evaluate how we’re doing. We may fail to seek out new tools, methods, and information to help us better accomplish old tasks. We may avoid taking the kind of break necessary to rejuvenate ourselves and make our time on the job more productive.

To help animal care, control, and sheltering professionals solve these problems, The HSUS sponsored its first-ever “Animal Care Expo” February 2-5 in Las Vegas.

Animal Care Expo ’92 was a new concept for us, one that reflected a change in our thinking. This new thinking sought to give those professionals who work to protect and care for animals the kind of national event that would best help them improve the way they work. In short, we wanted to provide a single forum for animal care professionals to gather together, share information and developments in an ever-changing field. Our hope was for them to return to work an educated, knowledgeable, and motivated—and often motivating—force.

Judging from the success of Animal Care Expo ’92, our new approach was right on the money. Over 1,000 professionals attended the trade show, making it the largest congregation of animal care and control professionals in HSUS history. (The number of attendants, in fact, actually put a strain on the facilities we had reserved.)

The participants learned about the products and services of more than 100 exhibitors, from kennel suppliers to direct mail marketing agencies. More than 40 workshops addressed issues ranging from “Bite Prevention Training for You and Your Community” to “Large Animal Rescue Methods.”

Animal Care Expo ’92 set a new standard of achievement for a national event geared toward the animal care professional. And when an event is as huge as this one was, you want to do it again. That’s why we’re pleased to announce Animal Care Expo ’93. It’s scheduled to take place early next year in Orlando, Florida. With the experience of one Expo under our belts, the event promises to be even bigger and better.

We hope you’ll decide to join us next year. It will be another ideal opportunity for you to take a break, learn, become motivated, and improve the way you work. As always, details will be forthcoming in Shelter Sense.

—Marc Paulhus, HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals

WITH TEARS IN THEIR EYES”: REFLECTIONS OF AN A.C.O.

When many people think of an animal control officer, the first thing that normally comes to mind is a dogcatcher, some unkempt guy whose food-stained shirt hangs out of his pants, with buttons stretched over a belly that sticks out like that of a pregnant woman, chasing down the street with net in hand after a poor dog who looks like he is running for his life. “Run, doggy, run!” People don’t want the dog to be caught because they believe he’ll be killed the instant he’s put into the truck, as if there is a gas chamber in it and this guy actually likes killing animals.

I have to say that I really didn’t have a very positive opinion of animal control officers when I became one. However, I soon learned that there is a lot more to the job than chasing dogs, and the image of the dogcatcher is a common misconception. Contrary to popular belief, the job is not just catching stray dogs. It involves emotionally draining human interaction and dealing with potentially violent people and aggressive animals.

One of my first assignments was working the coastline between San Francisco and Santa Cruz Counties. Patrolling California Highway 1, one of the most beautiful roads on earth, was like a dream come true. I would look out at the ocean, the rugged cliffs, and the sandy coves between the rocks, and think how beautiful and peaceful it all was. But the beauty of the coast was often overshadowed by the attitudes of the residents living there. Many of the people who live in the area feel that they’re in a different world from the rest of us, and actually, in many respects, they are. They’re separated from the mainstream of the Bay Area, away from the general population and the authorities. They live more private lives. Many move there from the busy Bay Area cities to enjoy the isolation and freedom of the coastal hills.

I learned that being able to suc-
"I’m the one who has to pick up dead animals every day, and those who allow their dogs to run loose often never see the results of their actions—the dogs just never come home.”

Animal control officers are “responsible for the irresponsi­bile,” writes Kurt Lapham.

After sixteen years and quite a few tears, Blaine Schon recently retired from his duties as dog warden and humane officer for Hancock County, West Virginia.

call in a complaint about what I had just done, but I just didn’t care at that point. I’m the one who has to pick up the dead animals every day, and those who allow their dogs to run loose often never see the results of their actions—the dogs just never come home.

A number of weeks passed and no complaint was made against me. I drove by that same house. What I saw made me feel good. I realized I was accomplishing something after all. There, by the side of the house, was a new fence, a doghouse, and a small puppy behind the fence. It was too late for Rocky, but at least this dog wouldn’t end up on the side of the road.

After a few years working in animal control and dealing with aggressive dogs and aggressive people (who were normally worse than the animals), climbing through sewer drains to rescue pets from the cruelty people inflict on their animals, and having to look into the eyes of thousands of dogs and cats destined to die, there came another incident that really made me wonder why I did the job.

A dog was trapped between a fence and a house in Daly City. Daly City is where all the houses are lined up like book matches on the hills below San Francisco. The woman who made the call told me to get the dog out of her yard. I looked down between the fence and the house and saw a German shep­herd in the process of giving birth. It was in such a small area that she couldn’t even lie down. After consulting with our veterinarian, I decided not to disturb the dog until she had finished giving birth.

When I returned an hour later, I could see six or seven shiny bundles of fur on the ground near the dog. As I approached her she stood sideways in that cramped little room at the shelter to allow them to be separated from their mother. I had a nauseated feeling; it was like betraying a friendship. She trusted me to take her and her pup­pies with me, but what was going to happen? I knew the answer, and felt she might have been better off without me. Maybe she would have had a chance, because what she was facing now was most likely certain death. Who would want to adopt an old dog, a toss-out in a throwaway society?

As I drove to the shelter, tears filled my eyes. A car pulled alongside me, and I noticed the peo­ple in the car looking up at me. I looked over and they glanced away. I realized they had no idea what I do, or what I was feeling right then. They, along with the rest of society, would merely blame me for what was going to happen to the old dog in my truck. Society stereotypes animal control officers as inhumane killers and as uncaring individuals. Our job is misunderstood by most people and they haven’t a clue about why we do what we do any more.

It is society’s fault that millions of homeless animals are born each year, that millions are killed under the wheels of vehicles, and that millions more have to be put to death each year in shelters. To allevi­ate their guilt, society blames the animal control officers and the peo­ple who work for animal shelters.

As is so often true, it is easier for people to blame someone else than accept their own responsibility. It isn’t hard to understand the animal control officer’s job; he is responsible for the irresponsible. Many drive with tears in their eyes.
HSUS ISSUES POLICY STATEMENT ON THE USE OF ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

At its September 1991 meeting, the Board of Directors of The Humane Society of the United States approved the following policy statement on the use of assistance animals:

The Humane Society of the United States recognizes that certain animals can help special-needs individuals lead more independent lives by assisting them in the performance of everyday tasks that would otherwise be difficult or impossible. Animals can assist individuals who have physical, visual, or hearing limitations. They can also alert owners to dangerous situations as fire or intruders. The HSUS believes that when animals are trained and used to assist humans in this way, it is critical that the needs of the animals, as well as the people, are met.

In order for an assistance animal and its owner to have a successful relationship, the HSUS believes that the following criteria must be met:
1. The animal must be a domestic animal.
2. The owner of the animal and/or another person must accept responsibility for insuring that the animal’s medical, physical, behavioral, and psychological needs are met.

Organized programs that provide assistance animals must adhere to the above criteria as well as the following guidelines:
1. Selection of animals to be used as assistance animals must be based on a sound knowledge of their specific physical, behavioral, and psychological characteristics, as well as knowledge of the individual animal’s temperament. The animal must be able to carry out desired tasks without invasive physical manipulations such as teeth pulling or debarking. Sterilization of the animal is highly recommended.
2. Programs that provide temporary housing and care for assistance animals must ensure that the needs of the animals are being properly met during this period.
3. Training of animals to perform tasks for their new owners must be based on positive reinforcement rather than physical punishment such as striking, choking, or electric shock.
4. Humane disposition must be assured for animals that fail to qualify for the program or become unable to perform required tasks, animals whose assisted owner dies, or animals that, for some other reason, cannot continue in the program for which they were selected. Acceptable disposition options include placement with another qualified individual, adoption to a responsible home, or euthanasia when unavoidable.

The HSUS believes that programs that meet the above criteria can provide some special-needs individuals with a level of independence they would not otherwise be afforded, without harming the animals involved.

RECENT ANIMAL CRUELTY CASES FEATURE NOTABLE CRIMES, PENALTIES

By Geoffrey L. Handy

Due to unusual crimes or penalties, recent cases of animal cruelty were uniquely notable. Descriptions of these cases follow.

NJ Health Officers Plead Guilty to Cruelty

Two New Jersey municipal health officers were recently convicted and fined the maximum $500 each for failing to provide necessary sustenance to an injured dog. Because Mount Olive Township’s regular animal control officer was away on vacation, the township health department was contacted to rescue a dog injured in an accident. With instructions from the health department, the town­ship sanitarian picked up the injured animal and then left the van at the health department office.

Some four hours later, a local police officer discovered the dog in the van, still suffering from his untreated injuries. Temperatures were below freezing, and the dog had no food or water. The officer immediately transported the dog to a veterinarian who then euthanized the animal.

New Jersey law specifies that failure to provide necessary sustenance to an animal—typically defined as food, drink, shelter, or protection from the weather—is a misdemeanor. The court ruled that “sustenance” in this case included medical treatment for the injured dog.

Bob Reder, investigator for the HSUS Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, testified on behalf of the prosecution. “This ruling sends a message to all public officials entrusted with the care of animals that a disregard of cruelty laws will not be condoned,” he said.

Horse Abuser Gets Five Years

Lebanon, Pennsylvania, man who starved and neglected 34 horses received one of the stiffest sentences ever given an animal abuser: five years in prison and a $14,500 fine.

The case began in April when Stafford County Animal Control Officer Bob Arkins responded to a complaint about a loose horse and discovered 32 purebred Morgans in various stages of starvation and neglect. He also found and photographed the decaying remains of two other horses.

Accompanied by sheriff’s deputies, Animal Warden William Tinsley and members of the Equine Rescue League at its 65-acre farm in Loudoun County, Virginia, and later adopted out.

Man Convicted of Cruelty to Reptile

Adapted from MSPCA Animal Action

In a landmark case in Massachusetts humane law enforcement, a man who slowly boiled a snapping turtle to death was recently found guilty of cruelty and fined $200. It was the first time that the state’s anti-cruelty laws were applied to reptiles.

The charges were brought against a Haverhill, Massachusetts, man who caught a snapping turtle last August and returned home with it. He built a wood fire in his backyard and placed the reptile on a large, galvanized trash barrel with chilly hose water. At 5 p.m. he put the turtle in the water, over the protests of his neighbors. At 5:30 the neighbors witnessed the turtle struggling to climb out of the barrel, they protested again. The man ig-
Turtles are capable of suffering, said two veterinarians in court statements.

When admitted boiling the turtle, claiming he wanted the meat as food. The offender pleaded guilty, was convicted, and now admits he no longer thinks the charge was a joke. To prove that the reptile's death was indeed inhumane, Greaney solicited two veterinary statements that documented the ability of turtles to feel pain. Basing her testimony on clinical examinations of reptiles, one veterinarian remarked that turtles are neurologically advanced and that their response to pain is similar to that of humans. "The action against the snapping turtle was cruel in the extreme," she wrote. Another veterinarian described the nervous system and brain of a reptile, helping Greaney make the case that the turtle was capable of suffering.

The veterinarians' statements were persuasive at court hearings and at meetings with the defendant. The offender pleaded guilty, was convicted, and now admits he no longer thinks the charge was a joke.

Operators of Pet Scam Receive Felony Convictions

Three California residents were sentenced to lengthy prison terms last September after being convicted of obtaining people's pets under false pretenses and later selling them to medical research laboratories. The three felons received prison terms of six, five, and five years. Brought about by the City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Regulation, the case took three-and-a-half years of work and received substantial media coverage. Prior to their arrests in 1988, the three San Fernando Valley residents obtained dogs and cats by answering "free to good homes" ads and telling pet owners they would give the animals good homes. In reality, they operated two private kennels and sold the animals to medical research laboratories. At the time of their arrests, the defendants turned over documentation on 141 dogs and cats to the Department of Animal Regulation. The department immediately contacted the three medical research facilities named in the documents and was able to retrieve a total of 39 dogs and cats from them. The department impounded 64 other animals from the kennels (which were immediately shut down); 39 were later redeemed by their original owners, and the others were adopted within two months. This case "illustrates that proper and detailed professional animal control work can result in justice," said Robert Rush, general manager for the Department of Animal Regulation. "The media coverage raised public awareness of responsible pet ownership and alerted people to the presence of such nefarious activity in our society."

Contraceptive Agents Offer Hope For Humane Wildlife Management

By Geoffrey L. Handy

For more and more local animal shelters, the surplus of companion animals isn't the only population problem that's giving them trouble. Increasingly, problems caused by wildlife such as deer, raccoons, skunks, and foxes are creeping into their purview. While animal shelters traditionally leave wildlife problems to other agencies, many are now responding to wildlife rescue requests, cultivating relationships with wildlife rehabilitators, or incorporating wildlife issues into their educational programs. The spread of rabies through skunk, raccoon, and fox populations, of course, is a vital concern for shelters as well.

A large reason for wildlife population problems is the animals' abilities to adapt to urban and suburban environments where reduced natural mortality can easily affect relatively long-lived animals such as white-tailed deer. Deer populations, in fact, have increased by 300-400 percent in some areas of the United States. Fortunately, a humane and practical solution to selected wildlife population problems is gaining wider viability and acceptance: humane fertility control. At recent HSUS conferences, Jay F. Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., associate professor of physiology in the biology department at Eastern Montana College, has presented research that indicates wildlife contraceptive agents are not only more humane than lethal methods of wildlife management, but also more effective. FDA approval for these agents is several years away, but the progress of Dr. Kirkpatrick's work mirrors that of studies into nonsurgical methods of sterilizing dogs and cats (Shelter Sense, February 1991).

Kirkpatrick and his colleagues have spent the last 20 years searching for the ideal wildlife contraceptive...
tive agent. This ideal agent, says the scientist, would be 1) greater than 80-90 percent effective, 2) free of harmful side effects, 3) reversible (i.e., not permanent), 4) inexpensive to produce or acquire, 5) able to be delivered remotely, 6) free of effects on target species’ behavior, 7) unable to be passed through the food chain, and 8) safe for use in pregnant animals.

Kirkpatrick and his colleagues abandoned the steroid approach because they can be passed through the food chain, are unsafe for use in pregnant animals, and are often expensive. According to Kirkpatrick, studies of contraceptives for wildlife have in the past focused on steroid implants and oral doses. Steroids, though, have proven problematic for most applications because they can be passed through the food chain, and are often expensive. In this study, the scientists have found the vaccine to be 100 percent effective and to meet most of the other criteria of the ideal wildlife contraceptive agent. Especially encouraging is the fact that the study has involved absolutely no direct contact with the animals, the vaccine, and its annual boosters, are given via darts that fall out soon after delivery.

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Another version of the immunocontraceptive vaccine is being tested in a pilot study involving captive white-tailed deer in Ohio. Thus far, all seven treated does have not produced offspring. Effects on behavior and other long-term consequences of the vaccine have yet to be studied, but negative effects are not expected. Unfortunately, FDA approval of wildlife immunocontraceptives for use by state and local animal control personnel is probably at least a decade away. In addition to further general studies of anti- zona pellicida vaccines, developing a vaccine that requires less frequent doses and boosters, says Kirkpatrick, will remain a focus over the next few years.

While much work still lies ahead, wildlife contraceptives offer the hope that effective and humane control of selected wildlife populations can become a reality. As HSUS Vice President for Wildlife Dr. John Grandy says, “We want to end the reliance on lethal methods to control wild animals—whether predators, skunks, raccoons, deer, wild horses and burros, or any other animals—that have been perceived as nuisances.”

NEW NATIONAL GROOMING SHOP ORGANIZATION FORMS

A new nonprofit trade association for grooming shop operators has formed: the American Grooming Shop Association (AGSA).

“Our new national association will provide traditional trade association benefits to grooming shop operators, concentrating particularly on educational programs,” said Sherry Berger, AGSA’s acting president.

“We have contracted with the Pet Services Council to provide space and support to AGSA, just as they now provide space and support to the American Boarding Kennels Association (ABKA).”

For membership and other information, contact the American Grooming Shop Association, 4575 Galley Rd., Suite 400-A, Colorado Springs, CO 80905; (719) 570-7798.

NEW HSUS REGIONAL OFFICE OPENS IN BILLINGS, MONTANA

The Humane Society of the United States’ tenth regional office has opened and is now serving the states of Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho.

The new Northern Rockies Regional Office (NRRO) will answer questions and provide support to animal shelters, humane groups, and individuals on animal protection issues ranging from legislation to cruelty investigations.

If you live in one of those three states, the Northern Rockies Regional Office should be your first contact with The HSUS. NRRO director Dave Pauli and assistant Sylvia Lee invite you to introduce yourself by writing to them at Suite 315, Transwestem II, 490 North 31st St., Billings, MT 59101, or by calling (406) 255-7161.

“CANINE GOOD CITIZEN” PROMOTES ANIMAL CONTROL

Who has four legs, weighs 145 pounds, promotes the benefits of pet ownership, and serves as Ambassador-at-Large for the City of Toronto’s Animal Control Services?

Newfoundland. Dr. Kirkpatrick is also studying the viability of contraceptive vaccines in small mammals. Here, be inserts an implant containing levonorgestrel (Norplant) into the neck of an anesthetized skunk.

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TELEVISION COVERAGE GETS RESULTS IN LOS ANGELES

A friend of mine sees the picture this way,” said Gail Christensen, director of public relations for the Los Angeles Spca (5026 W. Jefferson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90016). “The pet overpopulation issue is like wallpaper. The public knows it’s there. The news media knows it’s there. Nobody really looks at it anymore. Nobody but us!”

Early last summer, Christensen succeeded in revising that assessment when she persuaded KABC-TV, Los Angeles’ ABC affiliate, to give the issue in-depth coverage. The KABC news team interviewed veterinarians, breeders, humane workers, and politicians, covering every aspect of the issue.

KABC also had a phone bank installed at the station. For two hours following each evening’s five minute piece, volunteers from the L.A. Spca and the Coalition for Pet Population Control answered viewers’ questions and referred them to veterinarians for low-cost or free spay/neuter surgeries.

Christensen estimates that, as a direct result of the coverage, at least 1,000 dogs and cats were sterilized through hotline referrals. Thousands of other pet owners called the hotline to request brochures on spaying and neutering. The KABC minidocumentary also spawned three additional television news stories and two debates.

“Thanks to the interest and commitment of one terrific news team,” says Christensen, “millions of viewers had to face the truth. For a while, in Los Angeles, pet overpopulation wasn’t wallpaper anymore!”

LET SPAY U.S.A. KNOW ABOUT YOUR LOW-COST PROGRAM


PREVENTION, NOT DESTRUCTION

SPAY U.S.A. will refer each caller to a spay/neuter assistance program or low-cost spay/neuter clinic in the caller’s area. In locales not served by established programs, SPAY U.S.A. will refer callers to individual cooperating veterinarians.

SPAY U.S.A. joins the New York-based Friends of Animals in helping pet owners nationwide get their pets sterilized at a reduced rate. Callers to Friends of Animals’ national toll-free line (1-800-631-2212) are directed to one of the organization’s 1,600 participating veterinarians across the country.

If your humane agency or spay/neuter assistance group has not yet notified SPAY U.S.A. of your low-cost sterilization program or clinic, please do so by contacting SPAY U.S.A. at P.O. Box 801, Trumbull, CT 06611, (203) 377-1116. The group will send you a questionnaire and return envelope.
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shelters that have ever searched for an easy way to provide information about recom-
mended dog and cat books to adopters need look no further.

The Direct Book Service (DBS), a mail order company based in Washington state that specializes in dogs and cat books and videos, can provide shelters with copies of their "New Pet Owner's Reading List." This one-page list features brief synopses of several dog and cat books recommended by the Direct Book Service for the new pet owner, from general care books to training videos and out-of-print titles.

DBS offers discounts for books purchased for local libraries and will be happy to make special arrange-
ments with groups that wish to sell books as fundraisers.

For more information about the reading list and other services of Direct Book Service, write Woodward at DBS, P.O. Box 3073, Wenatchee, WA 98801, or call (800) 776-2665.

Give New Adopters a Reading List

Animal shelters with a full-service humane society. Reproducible

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.

Director—For the Chester County SPCA in Pennsylvania. Unique opportunity for energetic, outgoing individual who can help grow animal welfare organization. Requires strong people skills for community outreach, knowledge of animal care and behavior, management skills to oversee 25-plus employees and budget of $600,000. Send resume, salary history to Search Committee, Chester County SPCA, 1222 Phoenixville Pike, West Chester, PA 19380.

Executive Director—To guide humane society shelter through major growth period. The agency has city animal control contract, and expect 8,000 animals in 1992. Ideal candidate will have animal welfare management experience, business sense, computer expertise, strong interpersonal skills, and self-starting initiative. Send resume to Executive Search, 1840 E. Lancaster, Fort Worth, TX 76103.

Executive Assistant—To serve as assistant to the executive director of a full-service humane society. Responsibilities include personnel and program development. Organization has $1.5 million budget, 94 employees, and handles 35,000 animals annually. Send resume, references, salary requirements to Houston SPCA, 519 Studemont, Houston, TX 77007.

Director of Development—For the organization above. Degree and experience necessary, CPFR certificate preferred. Enthusiast development and implementation of fundraising program. Send resume, references to the address above.

Animal Care Supervisor—Responsible for all aspects of animal care for a progressive urban shelter that receives 19,000 animals annually. Responsible for training and supervision of 18 staff with the help of an assistant. Leadership management experience required. Salary $18,22,000 plus benefits. Send resume only to Oregon Humane Society, P.O. Box 15364, Portland, OR 97231.

Assistant Shelter Manager—For a no-kill animal shelter in suburban Chicago. Veterinary technician experience is preferred. Send resume to Gail Monick, President, West Suburban Humane Society, P.O. Box 757, Lombard, IL 60148.