



Ketzel Levine, with Zoe Mae and Starlet, celebrates her new-found advocacy role (p. 29).



Barbara Hutcherson of the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation is among the many advocates working with The HSUS (p. 11).

## Telling Our Collective Story

**A few months ago**, I was pleasantly surprised when an e-mail from Ketzel Levine landed in my inbox. She'd long been a household name for my family of avid NPR listeners, but, like most of her fans, I hadn't "heard" from her since the final installments of her 2008 series about victims of the economic downturn.

In a cruel twist of fate, Ketzel became part of her own narrative when she and dozens of coworkers lost their jobs. Making my way to The HSUS as I listened to the news, I was stunned by the irony. And after decades of storytelling, I wondered, what would she do now?

I needn't have worried. As you'll read on page 29, it didn't take long for this talented, animal-loving whirlwind of a woman to find her new calling. And though it should have come as no surprise that her new-found path had already intersected with the work of The HSUS and Humane Society International, I was intrigued nonetheless that the arc of her story was so closely aligned with our own.

Echoes of Ketzel's experience reverberate throughout this issue. While she was carving out a new life for herself last year, a kindred spirit in Ohio who'd just lost his job began rewriting his own narrative, too. And soon enough, David Meadows had become the top signature gatherer in a ballot campaign to free the state's farm animals from extreme confinement.

You'll read about his devotion to the cause on page 12. You'll also learn about the commitment of HSUS staff like equine protection specialist Stacy Segal, who helped bring dozens of starving horses back to life; emerging media manager and rescue group volunteer Sarah Barnett, who coordinated a transport of homeless animals from the beleaguered Gulf Coast; and campaigners Beau Archer and Michelle Cascio, who spent almost two weeks caring for animals from a Mississippi puppy mill.

But the faces of the HSUS constituency comprise more than just those who deploy to the latest disasters or edit magazines or advocate

for reforms in the statehouses and the halls of Congress. They also include people like Elisabeth Gambill-Niksich, a full-time volunteer who heads our End Dogfighting program in Atlanta, and Martin Welych-Flanagan, a 10-year-old who sells bead bracelets to raise money for the campaign against Canada's brutal seal hunt.

As their accounts demonstrate, you don't have to work for an animal protection organization to take action. You just have to care enough to do what's right. Young, old, laid off, gainfully employed, or newly retired, anyone can help animals. As Ron Wentworth says on page 13, a recent *All Animals* article about fox penning in Florida turned him into an activist for animals simply because "I thought that people should do it."

Because longtime HSUS members Mike and Barbara Douglass share that sentiment, there are beavers in Alexandria, Va., who've been saved from death by trapping. After reading our piece on nonlethal solutions to beaver damage in the March/April issue ("Go with the Flow"), they set off a chain of events that would eventually persuade community officials to remove the traps they'd set near destroyed cherry trees.

"A beaver is just doing what a beaver does, in my opinion," says Barbara, whose efforts got the city's naturalist in touch with The HSUS's Humane Wildlife Services, which provided advice on how to wrap trees to prevent damage. In an urban community with nesting blue herons, osprey, foxes, deer, turtles, and a Cooper's hawk, the Douglasses' tolerance and commitment provide a new chance for peaceful coexistence.

In the end, that's what this magazine is all about. It is the collective story of hope, change, and the power of persistence. And though it is an animal-focused publication, it is also a celebration of the human spirit, and of our broader connections to the other creatures who share our world. Thanks for reading, engaging, and taking our words to heart.

— Nancy Lawson

## Intensive Care

I was so pleased to read the letter from Leslie Grinnell about degenerative myelopathy (Letters, July/August, 2010). Our beloved “pound puppy” Jay-Bob was 12 when he became totally disabled from the disease. He was part German shepherd, part something undefined, but was the love of our lives and without question the neighborhood’s favorite canine.

Jay-Bob’s vet wisely recommended we switch to a mobile vet when it became difficult for him to get around. Also, having a mobility cart was a huge helper.

I was relieved to hear from Ms. Grinnell that we weren’t cruel or in denial for not immediately euthanizing him. We both agreed, along with our new vet, that Jay-Bob still had an interest in day-to-day activities, even though he could only observe them.

While I truly love the breed, I would never go through this again. I am happy to know that there’s a way to ensure I never have to. If any reputable breeder ignores the obvious, or refuses to have the blood test done, then run as fast as you can. When we had been without a dog for 18 months, we found a breeder of English pointers. I had no doubt about her integrity and honesty. She was not in the puppy mill business, but bred for conformation and health. Oliver is a happy, healthy, active dog who makes us laugh daily and loves us to distraction. That said, there will never be another Jay-Bob, but maybe one day I can have another shepherd who can live out his days free of disease.

— BARBARA LEVERITT  
JARRETTVILLE, MARYLAND



## Fan from the Farm

I really enjoy your publication, and I’m particularly pleased to see the recent articles regarding factory farms. The article “From Homeland to Wasteland” by David Kirby (July/August 2010) was outstanding. Please keep this up along with the articles promoting farmers like Tom Harrison and Bruce Rickard. Thanks for all that you do!

— KEVIN FULTON, FULTON FARMS  
LITCHFIELD, NEBRASKA

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## Condos for Kitties

I read your article on helping feral cats (“The Accidental Cat Lady,” July/August 2010). I, too, felt really bad for feral cats. They had nothing to help them survive the winter. Even though I live in Texas, it gets really cold. We were going to get a deep freeze for about a week. I then decided to build my two feral cats a shelter. I completed the two shelters in two days just before the freeze. They both loved the houses all winter. I added a special outdoor heating pad, made especially for animals, to each one. They were connected to a GFCI outdoor receptacle. It made me feel very good knowing they were warm every night. In the mornings when I fed them, they would be looking at me from their shelters. I have enclosed my simple blueprints and pictures of the shelters. I hope you enjoy the pictures and maybe pass on my ideas.

— DAVID FYFE  
KINGWOOD, TEXAS

▲ EDITORS’ NOTE: Find photos and blueprints of David Fyfe’s feral cat shelter at [humanesociety.org/feralcats](http://humanesociety.org/feralcats).