

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

A New Voice for The HSUS

Convincing the majority that it shares our goals

For twenty-two years the President's Perspective for The Humane Society of the United States has come from one voice. That voice, of course, belongs to John A. Hoyt. To many of us, he is the one who has shown the way, the one who first saw the pathway and then had the courage and ability to lead us. Because I am indebted to John Hoyt for much of the perspective I bring to this office, I wish to begin my first communication to you as president by acknowledging not only that indebtedness but also my gratitude and respect. He will have my complete support and heartfelt encouragement as he assumes the task of shaping Humane Society International and the global initiatives of our animal-protection efforts.

During my term as president of The HSUS, I will continue to focus on the vision, the implications, and the hope of creating a humane society. Our task is noble and all encompassing. Certainly the humane society we envision will be one based on sustainability and survival and circumscribed by compassion and empathy.

As we begin our new relationship, I wish to share with you some of my thinking regarding our important mutual interest, protecting animals. I am totally convinced that the great majority of people in our country respect and have compassion for the multiplicity of creatures who share this planet. Many of these people, like us, have had life experiences enriched through sharing their homes with companion animals. Others, also like us, know that the glory and mystery of life approach completion only when nonhuman creatures share our individual lives. The knowledge that there are vast numbers of different beings out there not only underscores our separateness but also profoundly reflects our sameness. Who among us hasn't wondered what the primate thinks, empathized with the injured pup along the roadside, or marveled at the navigational expertise of migratory birds?

Ours is the age of loneliness, perhaps because we don't hear the elephant's song and the kitten's purr. Perhaps we would rather not acknowledge just how much other creatures have in common with us. In truth we frequently are incapable of accepting the precious gifts that they continually offer. One of

those unrecognized gifts surely is alleviating loneliness.

I believe that the mission of The Humane Society of the United States is as mainstream as is life itself. We must identify the life-affirming majority and join hands in changing the world! Love, compassion, and reverential respect circumscribe our work. Sometimes in derision we are called animal lovers. I really don't mind the term and generally accept it as an unintended compliment. Nevertheless, we love not only animals, but life itself in all its fullness. We behave compassionately and seek to act with reverential respect. Our efforts must rest on and be directed by these premises. They explain why we work to eliminate the use of the steel-jaw trap, the hunting of animals for trophies and sport, and the uses of animals for public spectacles. They also explain why we involve ourselves in programs to end the population explosion of companion animals, advocate use of tactics such as reduction, refinement, and replacement of laboratory-animal experimentation, and seek to provide humane environmental classroom education for children.

As president of the society, I have a unique asset at my disposal that makes it possible to turn philosophy and concepts into reality. I am privileged to work with more than 150 totally dedicated staff persons who have the expertise necessary to create the humane society we envision. These people operate our regional facilities, staff our many departments, as outlined in the annual report, and provide the communication links to members, the media, and the general public. The strength of our staff energizes and challenges me.

Finally, let me express my gratitude to each of you as members. It is not trite to say that the primary asset of the society is its one-and-a-half million constituents. I welcome your comments and suggestions. I ask for your continuing financial support through regular contributions, and I ask you to seriously consider naming The Humane Society of the United States in your will. Our legal staff will be honored to provide assistance and information to you or your attorney. Joining together we will see a new day for animal protection. Joining together we will create a humane society. ■



Paul G. Irwin, President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul G. Irwin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.