Where Reservations Need You

Outside groups partner with tribal members to bring veterinary care to underserved community

BY JIM BAKER

Life is hard for people on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in Arizona, and it’s tough for their animals, too.

There’s a high rate of canine infectious disease, such as parvovirus and distemper, and there are occasional human deaths due to Rocky Mountain spotted fever, a zoonotic, tick-borne illness. Pet overpopulation is rampant, because residents lack both the ability to pay for spay/neuter surgery as well as access to the services.

“The only service [on the reservation] is the picking up of dead animals that are hit by cars, and that’s because of transportation laws by the state and the federal government,” says Kathleen Norton, former board president and a volunteer at the Humane Society of the White Mountains in Lakeside.

Many of the roughly 15,000 residents are poor and unemployed, and many live in communities located a lengthy drive from a veterinary clinic or animal shelter. An average trip for veterinary care is a one-hour drive each way, and a typical household has one vehicle that’s shared by five or more family members. Insurance coverage is spotty, and travel is burdensome, Norton says.

The shelter and the tribe have been trying to improve the quality of life for animals on the 2,600-square-mile reservation, working for the past eight years with the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association-Rural Area Veterinary Services (HSVMA-RAVS) at annual, weeklong clinics where owned pets are spayed or neutered, diagnosed and treated for illnesses or injuries, and receive wellness care at no cost to tribal members.

The collaboration has attracted the attention of other Arizona shelters that also want to extend essential veterinary services onto tribal lands near their communities.

The relationship between the Humane Society of the White Mountains and HSVMA-RAVS is unusual, according to Windi Wojdak, director of the nonprofit veterinary outreach program, which brings free services to rural communities where poverty...
and geographic isolation make regular veterinary care inaccessible. “There are very few shelters that are making that bridge and going into the reservation communities. Even if they’re relatively close by, there’s usually a pretty big gap there, and so it’s really exciting to have them doing work in collaboration with the tribal communities,” says Wojdak.

That’s Logistics
HSVMA-RAVS held its first clinic at the reservation in 2003, and the organization has returned every year since, with a team of staff and volunteer veterinary professionals, plus about 30 veterinary students from schools around the country. The clinic typically sees 600-650 animals each trip.

Pet Allies, a rescue group with a low-cost, spay/neuter clinic in Show Low, paved the way for the HSVMA-RAVS clinics, according to RJ Owens, the group’s director. With the tribe’s help, Pet Allies found suitable locations for the clinics, fed the staff and volunteers, and provided veterinary supplies.

Owens says her group kept turning to Norton as an intermediary between the tribe and Pet Allies, since Norton knew the right people to talk to, and how to get permission to help support the RAVS clinics on tribal lands. In addition to her ties to the humane society, Norton is a faculty member for the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health, where she is field director for the center’s offices on several reservations.

Now, Norton and her shelter work with the White Mountain Apache tribal administration to find suitable locations for the clinics—the one in March was held in a school gymnasium—and get supplies when they run short.

Christine Holden, treasurer of the shelter’s board and a White Mountain Apache tribal member, is a key contact between the humane society and the tribe. She communicates with the tribal council to get approval for any shelter activities on its lands.

“I’ve never been around people who are so dedicated to serving animals and protecting them,” Holden says of the humane society’s board and staff. “I love that they’re really open to partnering with the tribe.”

This year, about two weeks before the RAVS clinic, Pet Allies and the shelter organized their own vaccine clinic for pets on White Mountain Apache tribal lands.

Many of the patients seen by the clinic are sick and not ready for spay/neuter, so the advance preparation with vaccine work is helpful—a way to begin shifting the health status of more animals in the community, Wojdak says.

Making Connections
Angelina Reid, a Navajo tribal member who lives on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, is among those who brought pets to the latest RAVS clinic. She first took her cat Mila to be spayed, and she was so pleased that she returned the following Saturday to have her German shepherd Oso and Lhasa apso Chewy vaccinated for rabies and distemper.

A veterinary student who was examining Chewy felt a lump on his abdomen, and asked a RAVS veterinarian to look at it. It turned out that the dog had a hernia that had gone undetected, and Reid subsequently got him scheduled for surgery at Pet Allies. “They knew what they were doing,” Reid says of the RAVS clinic staff and volunteers. “If they hadn’t spotted that [hernia], I wouldn’t have seen it either, and who knows what would have happened to my dog?”

Dr. Meredith Beard, owner of Sunrise Small Animal Mobile Vet in Show Low, often provides follow-up treatment for clients referred by RAVS. One dog she treated was a Rottweiler mix named Ryder, at the clinic for vaccination and neutering, Ryder was diagnosed with transmissible venereal tumor, and his owner was referred to Beard for follow-up care. Since then, the dog has gotten better, and Ryder’s owner has made an appointment to bring in another dog for vaccinations and other treatment.

Beard is happy to help pet owners get their animals appropriate care. “Especially when you know that that treatment, one injection once a week or every couple of weeks, for a few times, is going to take care of a situation like that,” she says.

At the RAVS clinic in March, the 40-member team of 12 veterinary professionals and 28 veterinary students from six universities treated 523 animals, according to Wojdak.

This year, Kat Knauff, animal services manager at the Humane Society of Central Arizona in Payson, drove up to see the clinic in action. She had told them spay/neuter was a big passion of hers, and “they were like, ‘You should definitely come to the RAVS clinic, because you’re going to just be really impressed,’ and they were right,” Knauff says. “For the amount of services they were offering at no cost, it was phenomenal, and the staff was so nice.” Knauff says she’d like to invite an organization like HSVMA-RAVS to come to her community, and help it offer similar veterinary services on Tonto Apache tribal lands near Payson.

Norton hopes the support that her shelter and Pet Allies offer to RAVS clinics can serve as a model for other animal welfare organizations that want to bring basic veterinary care to pets on tribal lands. “When I visited [the Humane Society of Central Arizona], and I told them we have lines of hundreds of people waiting before the doors open in the morning, I think they just wanted to come and make sure I was telling the truth,” she says, laughing. “But it is the truth, and we’re really thrilled.” AS
Getting Black (and Mostly Black) Cats Adopted

Forget the old myths about not adopting black cats on Halloween or Friday the 13th—promotions on these days can be very helpful. Just be sure to put a positive spin on the promotion (“Make Their Friday the 13th Lucky!” could be a tagline). Restricting adoption of black cats during these times is a bad idea. A good screening process for adopters should eliminate concerns over the cats becoming victims of pranksters or those wandering bands of satanic cults shelters used to be so suspicious about!

To get your inky cats noticed, house them in prime viewing locations in top-tier cages, and try to herd potential adopters to your adults before they reach the kittens. Black cats can also be great candidates for satellite adoption locations, where potential adopters can get to know them individually, without the flashier cats around to draw attention. Promote these events on your website, through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, in your newsletter, and through the local media.

In addition to adorning your midnight kittens with colorful bandanas, rhinestone collars, and brightly colored nail caps, shelters suggest using cat-chy strategies, plus reduced adoption fees, to get your undercats adopted. Here are some dark ideas:

■ **Movie Meows** – Name black and mostly black (BAMB) cats after the actors or characters in the classic movie *Casablanca* (Cats-a-blanca). Play off the summer bat-blockbuster *The Dark Knight Rises*, or riff off other Oscar-nominated films. Place movie posters and other movie-themed props around the shelter. *(Animal Care League, Illinois)*

■ **Me and My Shadow** – Charge the regular adoption fee for a nonblack cat and provide a BAMB companion free. *(Helen Woodward Animal Center, California)*

■ **Black CATillion** – Use sparkly bows to dress up BAMB kittens graduating from your foster program. Crown a cotillion king and queen, and place them in a decorated cage in a prominent location. *(Burbank Animal Shelter, California)*

■ **St. Cat-rick’s Day** – Remind people that the Irish consider black cats lucky. During March, let adopters roll giant “Luck of the Irish” green dice to win a reduced adoption fee for any adult black cat. *(Valley Animal Center, California)*

■ **Black Friday** – Promote your BAMB cats on the day after Thanksgiving, the busiest shopping day of the year, known as Black Friday. Offer 50 percent off adoption fees, and a free adoption kit that includes a cat carrier, litter, scoop, and can lid cover. Enter adopters into a prize drawing for a black cat gift basket. *(Cat Adoption Team, Oregon)*

Share your BAMB cat and kitten promotions at asm@humane society.org, and see other ideas for promoting overlooked animals at animalsheltering.org/wallflowers.

—Nancy Peterson
cats programs manager, The HSUS
Minding Their Manners

Like most dogs, pit bulls don’t kennel well for long periods of time. On average, after two weeks in a kennel environment, a dog’s behavior starts to decline.

Some of the more typical behaviors dogs develop include jumping manically at the cage doors when people approach, jumping up on people, and pulling hard on the leash when walking.

When a potential adoptive family approaches a cage to meet a dog, excessive jumping and manic behavior can often be enough to dissuade them from considering the overeager pooch. But if that same family approaches a cage door and the dog on the other side runs forward and sits while wagging her tail and wiggling her body, those behaviors could easily be that dog’s ticket to her new home!

Impulse control is a tough concept for any dog, and we all know how hard it can be for our little bully-breed buddies. But shelter staff and volunteers can play a big part in helping curb these behaviors by putting simple-yet-effective procedures in place. Give it a try! The goal is to teach the dogs to sit, and remain sitting, until the cage gate opens.

- Approach the cage in a relaxed, friendly manner.
- As soon as the dog jumps against the cage door, stop, look away, and wait.
- As soon as the dog’s feet touch the ground again, continue forward.
- Repeat this stop-and-start until you reach the cage door.
- Once at the cage door, apply the same approach. If the dog jumps, stop opening the latch, look away, and wait.

Impulse control exercises are best learned if the dog figures it out through trial and error. Troubleshooting requires large amounts of mental output. Large amounts of mental output can be extremely tiring for a dog, and dogs in shelters need as much mental output as they can get!

It takes only a few days. You will be amazed at how quickly they learn to sit and wait. Try applying this rule each and every time the gate to a dog’s cage is opened. AS

—Kate Jackson
professional dog trainer and consultant for The HSUS’s Pets for Life Atlanta

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A Trip to Hamsterdam
Tips for shiny, happy hammies

BY RUTHANNE JOHNSON

As a volunteer with North Jersey Guinea Pig and Hamster Rescue, trial lawyer Justin Walker sees the heartbreak- ing side of hamsters in the pet trade. Snowflake was found in a dumpster, bleeding from an injured leg. “He must have had a day or two of hell,” Walker says. His own adopted Snuffler and the pregnant Panda were abandoned in a parking lot; Runty and Baby Hammie came from the litter of 16 that quickly followed.

Carla Holusha founded the rescue in 2005 after her husband saved a baby guinea pig from a storm drain. Most of the group’s rescues are the result of incorrectly sexed hamsters being housed together. With gestation periods of just weeks and large litter sizes, two hamsters can quickly multiply into dozens; Holusha has received calls from people wanting to surrender up to 50 unplanned pets.

Considering such anecdotes, remember the most important element of hamster care: Don’t let your fuzzy-wuzzies be fruitful and multiply! Divide them by gender when housing them. Here are more tips for keeping them happy.

Hamming It Up: Hamsters eat a variety of foods—from nuts, seeds, and grains to produce and even tofu. They can stuff their expandable cheek pouches with food and nesting materials (a trait that earned Syrian hamsters the name “Mister Saddlebags” in their native land). Augment a quality hamster mix with hamster-safe veggies and occasional servings of fruit (the diabetes-prone dwarf species should avoid the latter). Hamsters also enjoy special treats such as unsalted nuts, cooked whole wheat pasta, and rolled oats. Keep an approved food list near their enclosure so that no one accidentally feeds them something iffy.

On Burrowed Time: Wild hamster burrows have many chambers and can be several feet underground. Cages sold in pet stores are often too small or don’t provide proper ventilation. Cages should be single-level and at least 24-by-18 inches. Place the cage in a temperature-controlled, draft-free room and fill it with a layer of recycled wood pulp bedding or finely flaked aspen chips (don’t use cedar, cat litter, or treated pine). For nesting material, simply tear toilet paper into strips. Keep in mind that Syrian hamsters are territorial and must be housed separately. Other species may live in family groups of the same sex, but be prepared to separate them if fighting occurs.

Ham I Am: Hamsters are nocturnal, traveling up to 12 miles a night in the wild. Variety and exercise are vital for physical and mental health. A solid-surfaced exercise wheel (for Syrians, at least 8 inches in diameter) is a must; avoid wheels with rungs, which can cause injuries. Place paper towel tubes, small blocks of untreated wood, large diameter PVC piping, empty tissue boxes, ceramic dishes with chinchilla sand, and other hamster-safe toys in the enclosure, and rotate them to keep life interesting.

Hammy Handling: To avoid a nip, don’t grab a sleeping hammy, and wash your hands to remove any food smells. Gently scoop up the hamster with both hands, or coax her into a cup or other container. Regular handling allows you to check for masses, nasal discharge, dull eyes, or other signs of illness, and helps socialize the animals so they’ll be adopter-ready.

To watch a video on hamster care, go to humanesociety.org/allonanimals.
Your new cat may be a lion at heart, but she’s not a lion in size.

Cats who are allowed to roam outdoors can get hit by cars, taken by predators, or just get lost. And firemen really can’t spend all their time getting cats out of trees.

KEEP YOUR KITTY INSIDE.

The birdies will thank you. And you’ll have a safer cat!
Going the Distance for Cats

Catnip Acres serves as a way station—and a spay station—for homeless kitties

BY NANCY PETERSON

When she was called in 2003 to help trap a feral cat in a town near her home in Waynesburg, Pa., Carol Pultorak ended up with more than she’d bargained for: Three 5-week-old kittens were also onsite, living in the caller’s chicken coop.

Pultorak, who’d been trapping cats for years—making regular trips from her home to Pittsburgh, where low-cost spay/neuter was available—saw that the kittens’ eyes were crusted over and they were dehydrated, so she took them home to try to nurse them back to health, as she’d done with so many others.

The kittens did well, but when they had their first vaccinations at 3 months of age, one had a severe reaction. She became paralyzed and started having seizures. But her will to survive pushed Pultorak along in her personal mission to give all cats a chance for a good life.

She adopted the paralyzed kitten, named her Weebs, and began bringing her everywhere to make sure she got the round-the-clock care she needed. “I had a warmer in the car for her food, a kitty stroller, and a regular baby buggy. I’d cover her up in the buggy when I went shopping, and no one knew I had a cat and not a baby,” she says.

Pultorak estimates that she transported about 3,000 cats—owned, stray, and feral—to Pittsburgh for low-cost spay/neuter in the years that followed. In 2005, she journeyed to Asheville, N.C., to learn about the Humane Alliance’s model for a high-volume, high-quality, low-cost spay/neuter clinic. When she heard that Asheville area shelter intake was down by 70 percent, she knew the model was working.

In April 2007, Pultorak founded Catnip Acres, a nonprofit cat sanctuary and adoption center, on land adjacent to her home. She dedicated Catnip Acres to Weebs, who died in 2006.

In 2010, she opened a state-of-the-art surgical suite there, and happily gave up her long hauls to Pittsburgh.

Pultorak met her right-hand woman, Carin Camp, in 2008 at the veterinary hospital where Camp worked and Pultorak was a client. Camp, a retired veterinary technician, helped Pultorak figure out the design for Catnip Acres’ surgical suite. “When you do this for 20 years, you know just what you need,” says Pultorak.

They designed the space with an eye toward disease control. Disinfecting the suite and its equipment is easy because the walls are made of plastic sheets, the kind used in milk barns. The paint on the cabinets is wood-baked, the handles have no grooves to trap pathogens, and the drains in the ceramic tile floor make it possible to power-wash and sanitize the entire room.

It’s also designed for efficiency: The building next door serves as an additional holding area for the main floor, where a dumbwaiter can move four box traps per trip to the surgical suite downstairs.

Veterinarian Marina Siegert serves on Catnip Acres’ board and performs most of the clinic’s surgeries. Siegert, who learned her
technique from Humane Alliance, has done as many as 86 cats in a day—Pultorak says it takes three prep stations to keep up with her.

Behind the clinic and next door to Pultorak’s residence, a tall privacy fence surrounds a large house, where around 75 cats currently live, 50 of whom are up for adoption. They lounge on bunk beds, cat trees, counters, chairs, the veranda—almost anywhere they please—and are cared for by two part-time staff.

In addition to spaying and neutering feral cats, Catnip Acres helps feral cat caretakers. “Since caretakers can’t transport 10 to 20 cats, we might as well do the trapping,” says Pultorak. When an elderly or disabled person has even a small number of cats, Catnip Acres traps and transports the cats to and from the clinic, and holds them overnight.

In 2011, Camp assisted Jane White, Catnip Acres’ official trapper at the time, in trapping cats on a nearby farm. The farmer had been feeding cats on his property for about five years, but he couldn’t afford to have them spayed and neutered. White and Camp trapped the cats and had them sterilized, but the cats couldn’t be returned to the farm because the farmer was moving to New York state. White and Camp went the extra mile when they transported the cats to the couple’s new home about four hours away. “The farmer and his wife were an older couple. They didn’t have much,” says Camp, “but they would spend their last dime for the cats.”

Caretaker Judy Rock loves her feral cats and Catnip Acres too. “I brought 24 cats here. I couldn’t have caught or paid for them. Catnip Acres was a godsend to me.” Rock says. She pays it forward by volunteering at the sanctuary.

“We’re into cats because cats are in crisis,” Pultorak says. Catnip Acres has spayed and neutered more than 4,482 cats since the surgery suite opened in 2010. Weebs would surely be proud. AS

Kitties at Catnip Acres enjoy the fresh air on a spacious screened porch, complete with cat trees and soft beds for napping.

Helping You Help Feral Cats

Alley Cat Allies’ Trapping Kit includes every material you’ll need to perform and teach others about Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). It includes How to Help Feral Cats: A Step-by-Step Guide to Trap-Neuter-Return, a DVD which includes Trapping Cats: How to Trap an Entire Colony, 50 leaflets to help you explain the basics of TNR and 25 We’re Helping Outdoor Cats doorhangers to announce your next neighborhood trapping—all for just $15.

Community relations and cat deterrent information also available. Shop at alleycat.org/marketplace.
The shelter needed a massive makeover, and that’s what it got: In June, the Animal Rescue League unveiled its $2.7 million, down-to-studs renovation of the Dedham branch. ARQ Architects of Kittery, Maine, designed the shelter with two benchmarks in mind: the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, published by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians; and the Five Freedoms, basic ideals of welfare for animals. “The idea of this project was to renovate and change a facility like this into the modern design strategies for adoption and wellness … and also do a sustainable project as sort of an example to others that are faced with the same challenge,” says Lucinda Schlaffer of ARQ. The quality of dog and cat housing was vastly upgraded, there’s a medical/surgical suite to treat shelter pets, and the whole facility is on track to be the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified shelter in Massachusetts.

You Got Me What?

John Breslow could have gotten his wife Sonia just about anything she wanted for her 60th birthday, but he chose to surprise the animal lover with a new adoption center named in her honor, paying $2 million of the project’s $3 million total cost. For more than two years, Breslow and the Arizona Animal Welfare League & SPCA in Phoenix kept the gift a secret, before the 12,000-square-foot center was unveiled in March, at a special event for the couple and about 80 of their friends. The adoption center, located near four other buildings on the organization’s older property, will double the number of pets the AAWL can pull each year from the open-intake shelters of Maricopa County Animal Care & Control and the Arizona Humane Society. (The AAWL adopted out more than 3,000 pets in 2011.) “Even though I was there for every single meeting, every single plan, and every change to every plan, I could not envision how beautiful it looks,” says Judith Gardner, president and CEO. One neat feature is a second-story balcony, covered in artificial turf, which runs the length of one side of the building. Staff offices have sliding-glass doors that open to the balcony. “So we can have dogs in our offices, and just open the door, and let them run around out there,” Gardner says. Vince Dalke of Archicon Architecture & Interiors thinks it makes a great first impression on visitors. “The old [adoption] building was back on an industrial street, tucked away behind some old buses and stuff. This building raises the bar for the organization,” he says.
Stylish Shelter

Few rescue groups are fortunate enough to have their own shelter, let alone the new space that Westside German Shepherd Rescue in Los Angeles now calls home: a $4.5 million facility designed to resemble a modern Cape Cod-style residence. Wood shingles sheathe the outside, while clean lines and cool colors dominate the interior. If it looks more like a home that might be featured in the pages of Architectural Digest than a typical shelter, that’s no mistake. "When we first met with the client, they had this concept of rather than rescuing dogs, they were rehoming dogs. So they wanted people to come to the facility and feel like they were adopting a dog from somebody else’s home," says Rania Alomar of RA-DA, an architecture firm in West Hollywood that designed the shelter. The rescue, founded by Robin Jampol in 2002, moved into the 11,000-square-foot facility in October 2011, after nearly a decade of boarding its dogs in a succession of veterinary hospitals and kennels—the last one located in a warehouse under a major L.A. freeway. The facility was made possible by a gift from a wealthy donor, who paid to renovate the property—formerly a printing company—over more than two years. The shelter has 59 runs, three isolation runs, two rooms for maternal care and puppies, and 2,000 square feet of space for play, socialization, and training, among other features. The facility is a huge step forward for the rescue, which rehomes 700-800 dogs per year. "This is definitely rags to riches," Jampol says. AS

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Carla Zinanti notes with a laugh that she’s been around for all 23 years of her county’s annual Be Kind to Animals poster contest for children: “I feel like those teachers you hear who say they’re teaching their original students’ grandkids.”

She’s worked for Jefferson County in Colorado for 26 years, starting as an animal control officer in 1986, getting promoted to supervisor in 1988, and rising to her current position—animal control manager—in 2000. Until college, though, Zinanti says a career in animal control never crossed her mind. She worked on a horse ranch during college, and one of her co-workers also held a part-time job as an ACO. Zinanti got to ride along with her several times on her ACO rounds. She remembers thinking, “Wow, this is really cool. This is something I think I would like to do.”

Zinanti has aggressively prosecuted animal cruelty cases in Jefferson County, even when she’s taken heat for it, notes Holly Tarry, Colorado state director for The HSUS. County officers last year seized 193 rabbits from cramped and unsanitary conditions in a resident’s barn—an action that sparked criticism from breeders and what Zinanti calls an “anti-government faction.” But Tarry notes that Zinanti and her team stayed focused, refusing to flip-flop based on public pressure. “There was a lot of pushback on the department,” Tarry says, “and they just kept working and did their jobs, and got 35 counts of cruelty.”

In the edited interview that follows, Zinanti—whose own animals include a yellow Lab named Charlie, a shelter cat named Mister Boots, and a 14-year-old poodle mix brought home by her daughter (who has since grown up and moved away)—discusses her work with Animal Sheltering associate editor James Hettinger.

**Animal Sheltering: What’s going on in your community right now?**

**Carla Zinanti:** One of the major pushes that we’re working on now is trying to increase our dog licensing compliance. We’ve had a licensing program in the unincorporated portions of the county since 1994, but we went countywide in 2007 as a funding mechanism to build a much-needed new animal shelter. And we’re going to transition that license revenue stream now to supporting operations.

**And you’ve been involved in some cruelty issues?**

A couple of summers ago, we had a complaint that there were injured livestock animals at our fairgrounds. It happened to be an event called a coleadero, which is steer tailing. Cowboys on horses run these steers down the fence line, and the cowboys run after them on horseback, grab them by the tail, and try and bring them to the ground. When the animals are thrown to the ground, there [are] broken bones. The other thing that happens is they can actually de-glove the tail, meaning the hide and the underlying flesh comes off, leaving the raw bone. We had no idea this was happening right in our own backyard. We were horrified by it. There isn’t anything currently in state statute that prohibits it. We were able to address it because the injured animals were not afforded veterinary care. So we were able to charge two of the promoters with animal cruelty, and we did get convictions on those. We did follow up and try to work on getting some legislation to ban that particular activity in Colorado. We weren’t successful on our first try, but we’re going to keep trying.

**What advice would you give a young person who is thinking about getting into the field?**

Get a good, solid foundation in law enforcement topics. It’s a different job than it was 25 years ago. You need to know about civil liability, you need to know about search and seizure, you need to be able to write a good report, you need to collect evidence—things that nobody asked you for 25 years ago when you started in this field. “Are you afraid of dogs?” was the question that you got asked. “Do you have a driver’s license? Here’s the keys, and here’s a catch pole,” and away you went. We’ve professionalized the field, and there’s training and education that needs to come with that, and so a good, solid background in law enforcement is almost a must. AS
You’re helping us. We’re helping you. We’re all helping animals. Carry on!

Kudos & Thank Yous

Reservation dogs
In April, staff from The HSUS Shelter Services team spent a few days on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation, located in two of the poorest counties in the nation. The area is overwhelmed with stray dogs, and the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association’s RAVS team conducts a free spay/neuter clinic for owned animals once a year. Despite this effort, the reservation still has a devastating overpopulation problem due to unsterilized free-roaming stray dogs. In the past, officials have rounded up and shot stray dogs as a way of controlling the population, but have recently realized the need for a more humane response. At a presentation to 12 representatives from tribal government, The HSUS Shelter Services team provided information on basic cleaning and disinfection methods for the reservation’s new animal holding facility, and tips for recognizing signs of disease or injury in the dogs they impound. The team also provided a hands-on cleaning demonstration at the holding facility, explaining how to properly scrub, clean, and disinfect it. The tribe is interested in transporting dogs for adoption, so the team took four reservation dogs to Brookings Regional Humane Society to be adopted—many thanks to the shelter for helping get them new homes!

Putting a stop to puppy mills
In April, The HSUS’s Animal Rescue Team assisted the Lee County Sheriff’s Office with the rescue of 52 dogs, mostly schnauzers, along with some other small breeds, from a Giddings, Texas, puppy mill. The ART, officials from the sheriff’s office, and assisting veterinarians from Austin Animal Services inspected the property and found dogs living in stacked cages in a poorly ventilated shed behind the house; most were suffering from mouth and eye infections, dental disease, and foot sores. The team also found a Chihuahua who had been placed in a hole on the property in an effort to conceal him from the rescuers, says Ashley Mauceri, manager of cruelty issues for The HSUS. “If we hadn’t walked the property really thoroughly, we wouldn’t have found him,” she says. Austin Animal Center transported the dogs to their facility, where they worked to rehabilitate the dogs and adopted them into new homes—at press time, almost all of them had been placed, with a few still in caring foster homes.

“First class”? Try no class
In May, the Fond du Lac (Wisconsin) Sheriff’s Office seized 69 dogs from Howl’N Wind Siberians, a breeder with a website claiming to be “first class breeders of champion Siberian huskies.” Law enforcement found dead animals, dogs in various stages of starvation, a dead goat in the house where a child was living, and a pile of burning animal carcasses apparently used to feed the dogs. Many of the dogs were found tied to stakes in a barn, on short leads that gave them no room to exercise. There were also more than 50 goats on the property in need of care. The HSUS provided a grant to assist with the case; many thanks to the Fond du Lac Humane Society, which took in the dogs and has been successful in finding them new homes.

Help us end puppy mill abuses!
The HSUS has launched a new program to help save dogs from some of the worst puppy mills across the country. Thanks to a generous donor, The HSUS is now offering a reward of up to $5,000 for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of a puppy mill operator for animal cruelty.

Please consider posting this reward poster in your community, especially if you live in an area that has puppy mills. To order the poster, send your request to crueltyresponse@humanesociety.org. We can send you up to 25 posters free. AS

$5,000 REWARD
Report Puppy Mill Abuse

World Spay Day drives pet lovers to worldspayday.org, where organizers advertise their events, solicit donations and other resources, and show off the results of their hard work. Even if you provide spay/neuter services year-round, World Spay Day can be a fun way to boost your efforts. For more information or to join us, visit worldspayday.org.

Heads up!
Be part of something big
Tuesday, Feb. 26, is World Spay Day—a day to focus the world’s attention on how we can save and improve the lives of thousands of homeless pets by sterilizing our own. Throughout the month of February—designated as Spay/Neuter Awareness Month—hundreds of animal welfare organizations, shelters, rescue groups, veterinary clinics, businesses, and individual advocates organize events around the world to increase awareness of the critical, life-saving benefits of spay/neuter.

Be part of this global campaign in 2013. The HSUS supports World Spay Day and drives pet lovers to worldspayday.org, where organizers advertise their events, solicit donations and other resources, and show off the results of their hard work. Even if you provide spay/neuter services year-round, World Spay Day can be a fun way to boost your efforts. For more information or to join us, visit worldspayday.org.

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Kitties, Lindy Hopping, and Bathtub Gin

At this Jazz Age-themed event, hepcats raised funds for real cats

BY CARRIE ALLAN

In the age of the Great Recession, when we’re buying generic-brand cereal and putting off vacations, when we’re cutting back and scrapping and trying to save cash, what better way to bring out the animal-loving glitterati than an event that harkens back to the days when excess was still chic, a heady champagne bubble unpopped by the knowledge of the colossal economic hangover to follow?

We’re referring, of course, to the Roaring Twenties, the era of jazz and flapper skirts and speakeasies, of gangsters and Busby Berkeley dance numbers. And, of course, the era of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s classic novel of towering class-climbing aspirations, The Great Gatsby.

With the creative brainstorming and marketing help of the Philipson Group, Lollypop Farm (also known as the Humane Society of Greater Rochester) put an animal twist on the glitz and glamour of the legendary parties at Gatsby’s West Egg estate, figuring the theme would make for a gala that would stand out as unique in a region which, says Jenny Hatch, the shelter’s associate director of development, is often cluttered with fundraising events competing for donors’ interest and financial support.

And so The Great Catsby came to pass. Branded with the image of an art-deco style kitty wearing long, flapper-style pearls, it was an evening that included live music, a juggler, hand-rolled cigars, a live and silent auction, silent movies playing on a loop in a mansion sitting room, and donors clad in period attire as they quaffed themed cocktails and danced the night away.

The evening in May was a lot of fun, says Hatch, but it almost didn’t happen. “We had done a gala event for several years called Bark and Wine, and it had turned into just a wine-tasting event where wineries would come in and people could taste and have little things to eat. And we weren’t really raising a lot of money with it. There is large competition for gala-type events in Rochester, with lots of nonprofits. And at that point we kind of decided we were either going to stop doing it altogether, because it wasn’t worth the time and investment for what we were getting, or we were going to really commit and be one of the best galas in town.”

In other words, they decided to go Gatsby or go home.

The shelter paid a fee for the Philipson Group to take on the bulk of the preparation work, securing an appropriately beautiful location—the Sonnenberg Gardens & Mansion Historic Park in nearby Canandaigua, N.Y.—and the alcohol, food, and décor for the evening. Lollypop staff invested the bulk of their time soliciting donations for one of the gala’s traditional big moneymakers, a live and silent auction that took place on the night of the party.

It was an expensive fundraiser, costing around $60,000 to create, but it netted the shelter around $40,000. “It’s tough to invest this kind of money initially, but the good will it has created is already going a long way—bringing on new sponsors and increasing attendance,” says Karen Stolt, the shelter’s special events manager.

Among the more intoxicating items at the auction were bottles from a collection of wine provided by a generous donor—the whole of which was appraised at more than $10,000, says Hatch. On the more serious side, one item reminded attendees of the great cause they were there to support: Bidders vied for the opportunity to shadow one of the shelter’s veterinarians for a day in the clinic.

Along with the issue of ever-increasing competition from other nonprofits—and from all the people attending college and high school graduations at around the same time of year, creating potential conflicts—the mansion itself proved to be a challenge. While perfect for the Gatsby theme, it’s still an old house, and there were times when it was a bit tight for the number of guests and parts of the evening’s program. “At about 300 people, we’re not quite large enough for a convention center, but we’re kind of too big for some smaller venues,” says Stolt. “It’s hard to find that unique place that will fit with what you’re doing and not feel cavernous with a smaller group of people.”

Those who came, though, didn’t let the occasional crowded hallway in the mansion cast a pall. Stolt notes that there aren’t a lot of events in Rochester where there’s a theme and people get dressed up in costume.

“It was great that our clientele were so into that,” she says. “Of course, you know animal lovers—we’re all fun people anyway.”

The Great Catsby gala, true to its name, was branded with the image of a stylized feline wearing a long, flapper-style strand of pearls.
Holding Their Horses
Two Massachusetts shelters partner to rescue, rehab, and rehome herd of miniature equines

BY JIM BAKER

The animals she went to rescue may have been short of stature, but nothing else about the scene that confronted Melissa Ghareeb on that dark and icy night in early March was small in scale.

Rarely does a person find herself looking down on a horse—much less 38 of them. But “when we got there, we saw a lot of horses that were very, very skinny, covered in mud, covered in manure. ... There were just a lot of sad little faces looking up at us,” says Ghareeb, manager of the equine and farm animal center at the MSPCA-Nevins Farm in Methuen, Mass.

The horses’ overwhelmed owner surrendered the animals to the MSPCA and the Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) after the state veterinarian concluded that their basic needs were not being met. Ghareeb was among a handful of staff and volunteers who went to the farm in West Boylston, Mass., to help. The closer that the rescuers looked at the horses, the more suffering they found. They were infested with worms, which caused diarrhea that ran down their legs and, left caked there, scalded their skin.

Many of them, too, had “rain rot,” an itchy bacterial infection of the skin that afflicts horses who don’t have adequate access to shelter. And they were infected with lice, something that Ghareeb says you don’t see on healthy horses.

On top of everything else, the little horses were fearful of those who’d come to rescue them, making it that much harder to load them onto trailers for transport. They’d lived most of their lives out in a field, and didn’t really know how to interact with humans.

The effort to rescue, rehabilitate, and rehome the horses was daunting—not only was the herd in poor shape, but there were so many of them. And even a small horse is still a horse, requiring a pasture or barn, lots of the right food, specialized veterinary care, and adopters who have experience with equines.

The MSPCA and ARL each took in half of the herd, which also included some Shetland ponies, according to Ashley Arseneau, the ARL’s livestock liaison.

Nineteen went to the MSPCA’s Nevins Farm, a 55-acre animal care complex that provides shelter and adoption services for both farm and companion animals, and the others were taken to ARL’s Dedham shelter. The 29-acre facility houses and adopts out small animals, and also has a livestock rehabilitation center. The horses were put on a refeeding program of many small meals to prevent their severely malnourished bodies from going into shock from the reintroduction of food. “You have to be very, very careful. It takes a lot of work,” Ghareeb says.

Luckily, the community responded to news of the horses’ plight, coming through with all kinds of support. More than $10,000 in donations poured into the MSPCA. “We got something like 250 bales of hay, an equine dentist agreed to volunteer her time, a farrier stepped forward to work on all of the horses’ hooves for free, and we got enough deworming and de-lousing medicine for the entire herd from a local vet,” says Rob Halpin, the MSPCA’s director of public relations.

Meanwhile, ARL received more than $14,000 in donations earmarked for the horses. And many volunteers showed up to help feed them meals of soaked alfalfa cubes every four hours, according to Jennifer Wooliscroft, ARL’s director of communications. “That also really helped to keep the cost down,” she says.

The two shelters were able to save every horse, despite their serious health problems. And they were able to adopt out every animal, as well—all but a few into private hands. Two horses who needed further care and socialization went to the Maine State Society for the Protection of Animals, New England’s largest equine rescue facility.

As the horses recovered, their behavior went from fearful to friendly. They began to nicker when they saw caretakers, and often came over to say hello and get a scratch. And they soon let staff groom them, and lead them in and out of the barn, Ghareeb says.

“They’re happy to see people, they’re outgoing, they’re happy to be around other [mini] horses and full-size horses. It’s pretty rewarding.” AS
Hey, look me over!

What do a black cat, a potbellied pig, a middle-aged Chihuahua, a pregnant horse, and a bonded pair of rabbits have in common? They’re all stars on The Unadoptables, a show airing on a new YouTube channel called The Pet Collective, which officially launched on May 31. A collaboration between YouTube and FremantleMedia (the folks who bring us American Idol), the channel offers cat and dog information, veterinary and behavioral advice, and of course boatloads of cuteness and fun. The Unadoptables features pets up for adoption in Los Angeles-area shelters and rescue groups, focusing on animals who are frequently overlooked because they’re plain or less than perfect—special needs pets, seniors, funny-looking animals, black animals, pairs, and more. “We’re letting people know that all animals are wonderful, but don’t overlook these particular ones,” says Michelle Davis, The Pet Collective’s supervising producer. “We … profile an animal who really deserves a home and give a shout-out to the organizations that are trying to adopt them out.”

Davis follows up on adopted animals, filming them in their new homes for the My Forever Home series, in which owners talk about how animals they never foresaw adopting have changed their lives completely. Check out all the shows at youtube.com/thepetcollective.

Beware the bezoar

You may not know what a bezoar is, but if you know cats, you’ve certainly seen one. A bezoar is a fancy name for “hairball.” Actually, it’s a Persian word (how appropriate!) that means “protection from poison,” and back in the old, old days, bezoars from cud-chewing animals were thought to be antidotes to poison (we don’t want to know how the treatment was administered). Today we know them as annoyances that our kitties deposit where we’re most certain to step on them. But hairballs can be a serious feline medical problem when ingested fur forms dangerous obstructions in the stomach or bowels. National Hairball Awareness Day, observed the last Friday in April, was started to bring attention to the hazards of hairballs and the need for regular pet grooming. The history of the holiday is a little “fuzzy,” but the National Museum of Health and Medicine in Washington, D.C., mounted an exhibit of bezoars from its own collection to commemorate the 2006 occurrence. This year, to celebrate the hairy holiday, the makers of the FURminator pet grooming tool held a celebrity look-alike contest. More than 30 cat bloggers were invited to create celebrity figures out of (undigested) fur obtained from grooming their kitties. Photos of the entries, which included Angelina Jolie, Justin Bieber, the cast of Mad Men, Einstein, Whoopi Goldberg, and many more, were posted on Facebook, where fans could vote for their favorite. The winner: “Katy Purry,” fashioned by Catsparella blogger Stephanie Harwin. FURminator donated $1,000 in Ms. Purry’s honor to Harwin’s chosen rescue, the Sayresville Pet Adoption Center in New Jersey. See all the contestants at facebook.com/FURminator/app_171998229557160.
Eat your art out, Michelangelo!

Who wants fine art when you can have feline art? The SPCA of Los Angeles is selling sets of notecards featuring modernist masterpieces by cat artists Jackson Pawlick and Frida Katlo for the bargain price of $5.99. How did the shelter get its hands on these masterworks? It seems the cats were available for adoption at spcaLA in April when the developers of Game for Cats for the iPad asked if they could test their newest creation, Paint for Cats, on shelter kitties for a segment on Animal Planet’s Must Love Cats. SpcaLA president Madeline Bernstein was admittedly skeptical. “I thought they were completely crazy, but I said, ‘Sure, knock yourself out!’” The basic premise is the same as with the earlier app: A cat pounces on an onscreen mouse as it runs around the iPad screen. But in the Paint version, a spot of color appears wherever the cat’s paw touches the screen. Eventually the screen fills up with colors and voila! An original Pi-cat-so! “[It] looked like when I was a kid and we’d go on the boardwalk and do spin art,” says Bernstein. Amazingly, there were no catfights—the felines took turns “painting,” though a couple of the more dominant cats hogged the game. “[They] put a paw out as if to say ‘Stand back, I’m looking at this now,’ ” says Bernstein. Sale of the cards has raised almost $3,000. Watch kittens get their creative groove on at youtube.com (enter “ipaw’d” in the search box) and order cards at spcala.org.

Adopt till you drop

An unusual store popped up at New Jersey’s Freehold Raceway Mall in April. The “goods” are puppies and kittens, but this is no pet shop. It’s the Homeward Bound Adoption Center, a satellite of the Monmouth County SPCA in Eatontown, N.J., and it takes the space formerly occupied by a pet store that sold puppies. Last October, mall owner Macerich Co., which runs more than 70 malls nationwide, struck a blow against puppy mills by banning the sale of live animals at all of its properties. The shelter immediately reached out to the mall’s leasing agent with a proposal to open an adoption store. By happy coincidence, the agent and his wife had just adopted a husky puppy from the SPCA two weeks earlier. “You never get that lucky!” says Lisa Mulhearn, the shelter’s director of public relations. “He was very, very supportive and helped us any way he could.” Many of the SPCA’s adoptable puppies have been transported from overcrowded shelters in Southern states and Puerto Rico; portions of their adoption fees are then used to promote spay/neuter programs in those areas. Currently the center is open only Thursdays through Mondays, but the response has been so great that “we wind up going back to the shelter to get more puppies,” says Mulhearn.