

Extension of Community Programs for Animal Protection

**By Milton B. Learner, President
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What real value does a county, city, or village humane society actually contribute to the humane movement in our country?

Allow me to cite one example that occurred in Indiana. During 1965, the Indiana Federation of Humane Societies introduced their version of a state humane slaughter bill in the House of Representatives. There it languished in committee until approximately ten days prior to adjournment. The pertinent committee chairman came from a small Indiana town where no effective humane society existed. In fact, it was only the efforts of a well organized humane society located several counties distant that finally resulted in the release of the bill from committee and passage by the House. Unfortunately, insufficient time remained for action by the Senate. Two years later, such a bill was enacted into law. During this two year hiatus, thousands of Indiana cattle were pole-axed, and countless numbers of pigs were tortured in the slaughter process. Please excuse this reference to tragedy, but it is nothing less than the terrible truth.

My discussion today will cover the development and extension of humane activities at the state and local levels. This will include the work of a state federation, a comparison between federations and HSUS branches, and the cooperation in national programs by both—while extending such activities to the grassroots local societies. Whatever authority this speaker can muster on these subjects has been gained essentially, it must be remembered, during his tenure as President of the Indiana Federation of Humane Societies.

A state federation of humane societies is quite impressive in nomenclature. It implies united action, resulting in the exercise of

power from the top down to the local individual societies. At least in Indiana, nothing could be further from the truth. Probably a more accurate term to use in describing our group would be a confederation of autonomous societies instead of a federation controlled solely by its own Directors and its own dictates. Our federation exercises no veto authority over any of its individual member humane societies. Funds are not solicited from constituents or donors of such local member societies. Our funds are obtained only through dues from member humane societies and individual members of the federation. Now, in spite of this ostensible, fragile structure, most of Indiana state humane legislation of the past ten years has actually been enacted through the leadership, or under some influence, of this particular federation.

How does the federation operate? Our federation is based on four principal policy objectives:

1. It acts as legislative liaison and actual lobbyist for state and national humane bills.
2. It offers a forum for discussion and dissemination of matters, both practical and philosophical, pertaining to functions of the humane movement.
3. It serves as a sort of collection agency of animal cruelty cases.
4. It aids, advises, and supports new humane societies and individual worthwhile projects of these societies.

At no time has our federation considered operating an animal shelter or adoption center for pets. This is not our objective; we leave this to the local societies. We do, of course, advise and furnish research material for such purposes, but let me develop these four policies objectives with some concrete examples as they occur in Indiana.

The Indiana Federation's main forte thus far has been legislation, and I make no bones about it as I believe legislation has to come. That's your start; you have to have laws.

An example is the current Rogers-Javits laboratory bill, which under various other names has previously caused some controversy. During a recent federation meeting, this bill was again thoroughly examined and discussed. Ultimately, a resolution supporting the bill was adopted and forwarded to all Indiana federal legislators. We now have documented confirmation of approval of the Rogers-Javits bill from both United States Senators from Indiana — Birch Bayh and Vance Hartke. At least one Indiana Congressman was a co-sponsor of a previous companion bill. The views expressed in our resolution supporting the Rogers-Javits bill are really the views of several local Indiana humane societies. Each individual humane society then issued its own resolution and then the ball started rolling. The word went out to local constituents who in turn contacted Congressmen,

sought editorial help, and rounded up local support. Consequently, we reached the state where a large number of Hoosiers are having their say not only in person, but also through several humane societies. The sum total of all of this eventually results in an outflow of material from the incorporated societies voicing their collective views in unison.

In the case of state legislation, the Federation forms a legislative committee prior to the current session. This committee not only makes personal contacts with legislators but directs local society efforts in persuading their lawmakers to see the light at strategic times during the legislative session. The timing is very important in this. It is in this area where our legislative policy is either going to be successful or just be mediocre.

Our federation people spend considerable hours at the state capitol. But it is futile for a federation officer to consistently and repeatedly contact a balking legislator outside of his own voting district. What counts in local politics is the direct solicitation by a legislator's district constituents. One can have the forensic elocution of a Bryan and fail because one happens to live in the wrong county. If there were no other reason for forming a local humane society, the reason for effective legislation would be, in my opinion, sufficient.

Continuing with the second policy objective, one of the most interesting functions of our meetings involves discussion of current problems and their solutions. It is surprising how many local societies never thought of charging spaying fees nor obtaining long-term shelter leases. Many don't understand that saving clauses can be included in their shelter lease to protect their interest in case of animal seizure laws. Not all of our local societies are even knowledgeable of laws that enable them to obtain funds for operation of shelters in their own jurisdictions. Our federation can offer these people answers based on the pooled experience of years of experience in animal humane work of society members.

On several occasions our federation board members have appeared with the local people before their governing agencies and aided in obtaining funds and passage of local humane ordinances. The federation recently published a packet containing all Indiana laws affecting our objectives in the humane movement in general which, obviously, includes all animals. We delivered these packets to all Indiana county sheriffs as well as all individual humane societies. You see, we are laying the groundwork. We are going to advise everybody what the law is in reference to cruelty. The next action will be to send the packet to each county prosecutor. He is a very powerful individual under our form of government. In many instances he makes the decision whether or not the case will be tried.

The need for solving cruelty cases, in keeping with our third policy objective, has caused our federation the most concern. This

function actually requires time and professional personnel. Reduced to a simple quotient, it requires finances. Our federation needs a full-time salaried investigator who is experienced with searches, warrants, and the constabulary in general. At the present time, we forward the investigation of cruelty cases to a society nearest the scene of the cruelty. This can present difficulties. Societies do not always want to get embroiled in matters that may lead to notoriety as a result of investigations. Not because they are afraid of the notoriety, they just don't have the time to perform this function. They have their own problems.

We are now speaking of investigations of major, systematic cruelties such as conditions existing at rodeos, large-scale dog thefts and maltreatment and, of course, possible violations of the state humane slaughter act. We know that is going to present a problem. We finally have the law, but the big problem will be enforcement of the law. The hiring of a professional investigator will be on our agenda during our fall meeting next month.

The same problems of personnel and financing affect the function of our policy of initiating new humane societies, our fourth objective, where these societies are needed. Again, we try to have nearby, effective societies perform this task. Adjacent societies usually know who the expressed local humanitarians are in those areas actually needing a society.

Many times an investigation of a cruelty case will disclose sufficient interest by individuals who may form the nucleus of a prospective society. Sometimes the very needs of a local area stimulate interested, although latent, humanitarians. A need for proper animal shelter facilities can result in such stimulus. Although we encourage local societies to correct the existing pound facilities first, where the governing agency is willing to finance both the construction and the complete administration of the shelter, we advise a local group to build a shelter. Our federation will furnish construction plans, lease forms, and operating procedure suggestions for all these local societies we try to start. Our goal is a humane society for each county—92 humane societies for Indiana's 92 counties.

Throughout the execution of these four policy objectives runs a steady current of planned education of the public. The federation has contact with approximately 74 radio stations, 15 television stations, and well over 500 newspapers in Indiana. Prior to the passage of the Indiana humane slaughter bill in 1967, all these news agencies were solicited on at least two occasions, carefully and factually stating the advantages of humane slaughter.

What is the composition of a state federation? Who are its members, officers, and directors? Does a federation duplicate functions of local societies?

The federation must have as members the strongest and most effective societies in the state. Although individuals can be members, and we welcome them, the representation must be essentially that of the incorporated local humane society. I think the reason is obvious; I have spoken about legislative attempts in the past.

Indiana has approximately 40 societies on the books. At least 20 of these 40 societies are members of our federation and we believe that most of the effective Indiana societies are members of the federation. As a matter of fact, I think we are represented by 5 local societies here today. We insist that our board of directors include active officers of local societies. It is obvious that with this type of representation there will be strength and little duplication of effort will occur.

There is another salient reason for the composition of the type of federation I have described. Indiana authorizes local county commissions to appropriate up to \$15,000 per year to societies for animal control purposes. This sum is a vital source of operating revenue to local societies. These funds are not available to our federation or to any other statewide organization. Consequently, in order that these funds be obtained for animal welfare, we have to start local humane societies that would be capable of operating shelters. It is true that our federation can come up with the names of about 1,000 individual Indiana humanitarians. We have, however, only used this source of manpower in our efforts towards obtaining humane legislation and not as a source of revenue.

We are now exploring the possibility of obtaining joint county financial support, that is, one county to finance adjacent counties, or two or more counties to finance operations for a central shelter. We are talking now of obtaining statutory funds for operating shelters. It should be remembered, however, that many of our large and powerful humane societies already are operating shelters so they might as well obtain this \$15,000 and thus release additional funds for other humane purposes. Perhaps the laws in other states may be similar and I am most anxious to have a further discussion on this.

It is obvious that the type of state federation I'm talking about exists only because a sufficient group of local humane societies believe that such a federation serves a worthwhile purpose. So long as the four main policy functions outlined previously are followed diligently, I am certain such a federation will continue to exist. Our members have had minor differences of opinion. As President of the Indiana federation I am very careful to air and consider all views during our discussions. It should be remembered that our members are affiliated with or otherwise influenced by several national organizations.

I have described a federation of societies in the past few minutes and now I should like to bring into the picture another level

of humane activity of the individual states. The HSUS state branch program is similar to that of the federation, similar in objectives. It, too, believes in not duplicating local activity. It believes in strengthening state and local anti-cruelty laws, campaigning extensively for national laws such as the Federal Humane Slaughter Act and the current laboratory regulatory bill.

I think the major difference between our type of federation and the HSUS branch program is probably one of form of organization. The HSUS branches exercise a large degree of autonomy and they are financed through their own efforts without reliance on the parent organization.

The HSUS branches, as I see it, complete an interstitial gap untouched by national and local society activity. The HSUS branch actually completes projects on an operational level in those areas not covered by a local society, but these projects are at least statewide in nature and not restricted to local situations.

The HSUS branch operates directly in the field as an adjunct to local societies. The purpose of the branch is to amplify all of the HSUS campaigns against national cruelties and to execute the program of protecting animals from cruelty at state and local community levels. In order to effect these objectives, the branch organizes statewide or regional programs for public education, for passage of additional and improved anti-cruelty laws, for enforcement of existing laws by conducting thorough investigations of cruelties, and for cooperation with local societies.

An example of an HSUS state branch program is prevention of the breeding of surplus animals. This is done by active education of the public, primarily directed to the adult. Now we have heard and we all agree that we must emphasize the children in our society. Obviously, they are the future minds. But if you want to get action today and tomorrow, you also have to educate the adult. He casts the vote, he spends the money.

By education, the HSUS branch means, for example, the pressure of taxpayers on city governments to use humane methods. Now how do they use this pressure? They have to show these city governments that it may be more economical to do something in a way other than it is being done. This is the type of pressure that will move women's clubs to help sponsor a spaying clinic and that will bring about higher license fees for unspayed female dogs in order to discourage breeding altogether. The same attack is directed by the HSUS branch in obtaining state humane slaughter and legislation against the use of rodeo bucking straps.

During the past 20 minutes I have explained in some detail a federation of humane societies as it exists in the state of Indiana. Indiana has what I would consider a number of effective local humane societies. Consequently, I think a federation serves their

interest by coordinating their local society activity. Perhaps in another state where insufficient numbers of effective local humane societies exist, a more autonomous federation would be required.

Please don't allow the words "advise," "coordinate," and "distribute" leave an incorrect impression of this type of federation. These words smack of staff operations as distinguished from actual action in the field. Our officers are not members of a "passive resistance" movement. We are hard-hitting in our field of endeavor, and our board of directors contains personnel who are the officers of the most active societies in the state. But, we do believe that humane treatment of animals can be achieved by people convincing their neighbors through their own local society.

If I may end with this observation, I shall like to state that the Indiana Federation of Humane Societies will accept advice, help, and comfort from all national organizations. We will carefully weigh all material, we use most of it, and thank the offeror even if it is not used. It gives me great pleasure to advise this group that we in Indiana have never rejected any advice, material, nor offer of use of personnel from this magnificent organization, The Humane Society of the United States.

Protection for Animals in Biomedical Research

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Now, I know that some of you are not going to like what I have to say about laboratory animal legislation. I can only describe the situation as confused. It reminds me of a sign on the desk of a business friend: "If you can keep a cool head, then you just don't understand the situation." But whether or not you agree with me, let's keep a cool head. I don't hate anybody, and I hope you won't hate me.

By every rational standard — numbers of animals involved, the average amount of suffering undergone by those animals, and the comparative feasibility of remedial measures — laboratory animal protection is by far the most important humane project of this or any other decade.

Yet, little more than lip service has been given to this project by many or most humane societies. The HSUS and Humane Information Services are the only two large societies that really have gone to town in behalf of this much-needed improvement in animal welfare.

I am not going to review here the need for some kind of laboratory controls. If there are a half dozen people in this audience who are not already thoroughly convinced of this, I would be greatly surprised. With at least a hundred million animals used by the laboratories annually, in all kinds of ways involving a great deal of completely unnecessary suffering, anyone who is content to let the situation continue to ride along is indeed lacking in any compassion for animals.

Nor am I going to review in detail all of the things in the Rogers-Javits bill which would result in eliminating or reducing this