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# Shelter Sense™

For the people who care about community animal control



Craig Van Steenburgh

## *Taking Advantage of Courts*

By Geoffrey L. Handy

**P**rosecution should always be an investigator's last option," says Ricky Evans, abuse investigator for the Humane Society of Pulaski County (P.O. Box 24263, Little Rock, AR 72221).

"Try to solve everything out on the street that you possibly can through education, negotiation, even financial aid," says Louise Puckett, executive director and chief cruelty investigator for the Humane Society of Guilford County (P.O. Box 18105, Greensboro, NC 27419).

"Educate first," echoes Bob Baker, investigator for The HSUS.

Evans, Puckett, and Baker have worked hard at their jobs long enough to know that education—about responsible pet ownership, animal handling, animal care, even husbandry practices—solves the majority of problems with animals.

## *There are times when you have to prosecute. Remember that prosecution can be education.*

Another fact of life makes education doubly important: the American criminal justice system is stacked against animal cruelty and neglect cases. Not only are the courts often overburdened, but crimes against people, of necessity, take precedence over cases involving cruelty to animals. To compound matters, judges and prosecuting attorneys often have little grasp of animal protection laws.

Despite these obstacles, all three investigators still attest to this fact: judicious use of the criminal justice system is a crucial and necessary tool of the animal cruelty investigator. Often, use of the courts will be the only effective way to combat the blatant animal abuser or the chronic violator of animal control or neglect laws. As Baker says, "There are times when you'll reach the point that you have to prosecute. Remember that prosecution can be education. You're showing that animal cruelty will not be tolerated."

### **The Plight of the Court System**

In an ideal criminal justice system, a cruelty investigator would sit down with a knowledgeable prosecuting attorney well in advance of a court date to devise an effective prosecution strategy.

For most investigators, says Baker, reality is a far cry from that scenario. "Most of the time, when you're dealing with animal cruelty, the prosecuting attorney knows nothing at all about animal cruelty laws and has no time to review the case with you before going to trial. It's not a criticism—our court systems are just overflowing. Sometimes, prosecutors are flooded with as many as 30 or 40 cases in one day."

Baker can tell horror stories about prosecutors fumbling through reams of paper looking for case documents even *after* he had been sworn in for testimony. Once, when on the stand, Baker was asked an outrageous question by the defense attorney, only to discover that his overworked prosecutor couldn't object because he had his head buried in papers and wasn't paying attention. "I could tell that he was actually preparing for his next trial," Baker says.

"Certainly, on major cases, like dogfighting, you're going to have DAs that are prepared. But for the majority of animal cruelty cases, a prosecutor won't have time to sit down with you and discuss the case."

### **Plan for the Long Term**

Over the long haul, investigators may be able to improve upon this situation. Because animal cruelty is generally of low priority to court officials, the long-term goal of any investigator should be to develop positive working relationships with magistrates, prosecutors, even judges.

Accomplishing this, in a word, means effort. Investigators need to get to know these officials, educate them about animal cruelty laws, handle most of the legwork on cruelty cases, come fully prepared for any court dealings, and avoid bringing "frivolous" cases to court in the first place.

Puckett and Baker suggest scheduling an appointment with magistrates and district attorneys to foster a cooperative spirit and to best learn how they want you to handle filing and prosecuting cruelty cases. The magistrate, DA, or other prosecutor can also inform you on how rules of evidence and search and seizure are handled in their jurisdictions. Justify such a meeting by telling them that it will prevent many headaches and thrown-out cases for them later on.

A meeting also gives you the opportunity to educate court officials about animal control and welfare laws. Many states have compiled separate booklets of animal laws. Providing magistrates, prosecutors, and even district judges with their

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**On the Cover:** *Having read notarized statements from two veterinarians, Guilford County (NC) District Court Judge Tom Foster signs a euthanasia order as Louise Puckett looks on.*

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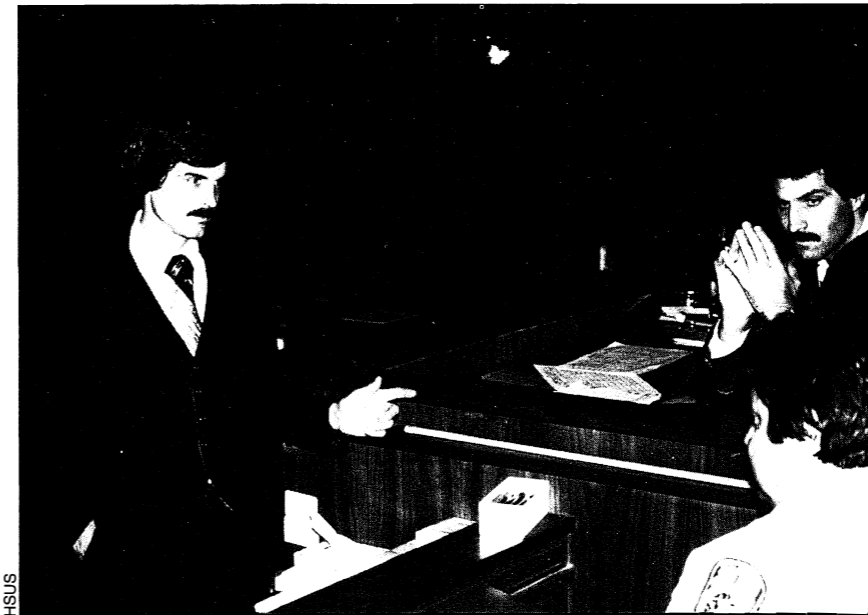
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HSUS Vice President, Companion Animals . . . **Phyllis Wright**  
Editor, SHELTER SENSE . . . **Rhonda Lucas Donald**  
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*In many cases, investigators have to sell the case to the court on their own.*

own copies, says Puckett, "is a minimum investment for a maximum result." She even gave them copies of the laws and her investigation forms in bright green folders for easy recognition.

Of course, it is vital that investigators themselves have a working knowledge of all the laws within the scope of their enforcement duties. Only a knowledgeable and creative investigator, for instance, would be able to put a puppy mill out of business simply because it was operating in violation of health or zoning codes.

### **Make the Most of the Courtroom**

After seven years in Guilford County, Puckett is in an enviable position; she has reached a point where she is well known inside and outside the courthouse. Rarely does she find herself in the position of entering a courtroom without having prepared the case with the prosecutor beforehand.

For many investigators, though, dealing with prosecutors "blind" is a common occurrence. Baker, Puckett, and Evans all sound the same theme: do the legwork yourself, be prepared, and help the prosecutor do his or her job whenever you can. "Prosecutors will go to the fullest extent to help you if you do your work well," says Evans. "If you can't make the prosecutor happy,

you're just spinning your wheels."

Perhaps the most important tool to "make the prosecutor happy"—and help your case—is to prepare an outline of your case for the prosecutor. "The prosecutor is probably going to have only a few minutes to prepare," says Baker, "and won't do very well if he or she has to read tons of documents on the case.

"So give the prosecutor an outline of basically what took place, who the major witnesses are, a list of evidence, what you want the prosecutor to ask the witnesses, and what you want the prosecutor to ask *you*. Most prosecutors really appreciate this; they don't resent it at all."

Puckett concurs. "Always have

your case laid out expertly and in depth," she says. On the outline, you should explain the importance of each witness and each piece of evidence and why it should be introduced.

Early in his career, during the trial of a man charged with dogfighting, Baker gave the prosecutor videotapes the defendant had actually filmed of his own dogfights. The prosecutor failed to have the videotapes introduced because he thought they were simply generic dogfighting tapes that would serve no purpose other than to inflame the jury. An easy-to-read outline for the prosecutor can help prevent such mishaps.

The three investigators also stress that investigators go beyond the outline to make things run smoothly in court. For instance, "investigators must make sure the witnesses get to the trial," says Baker. "Technically, it's the job of the court to make sure witnesses are notified, but it certainly never hurts to call the witnesses in advance to make sure they get there. This is especially important with veterinarians.

Sometimes your whole case will rest with the veterinarian, and if the vet doesn't show up, the case can be thrown out." Occasionally, you may find it necessary to have the prosecutor subpoena a vital witness to ensure that he or she shows up.

## *In court, investigators must always keep in mind their supreme goal: the relief of animal suffering.*

Perhaps most important in combatting an over-worked court system, says Baker, is recognizing that you may have to relate the whole case to the court yourself. "It's crucial that investigators are able to succinctly tell the case and make the major points to the judge or jury," he says. "If you have a prosecutor who is not familiar with the case, you're going to have to sell that case on your own. And that's going to make the difference."

### **Strive for Credible Testimony**

Reviewing field notes before the trial can certainly help you accomplish that, but remember not to take them with you to the witness stand. Not only could it hurt your credibility to use field notes during your testimony, but it also gives defense attorneys the right to inspect them.

When giving testimony about conditions of animals, stick to factual terms. Don't say that a horse was malnourished. That's open to a broad interpretation. Instead, describe exactly what you saw—that the horse's ribs stuck out, that its eyes were sunken in, and that it was so dehydrated that when you pinched its skin, the skin just stayed there.

First of all, specific descriptions have a much stronger effect on judges and juries. Saying a horse was malnourished will elicit responses of "Oh, that's terrible." But actually describing protruding ribs and sunken eyes paints a much more vivid picture of the equine's condition, one that gives them a more accurate grasp of the cruelty involved. "Let judges and juries draw their own conclusions about cruelty," says Baker.

"In addition," he says, "describing specific conditions makes your testimony much more credible because you're talking about facts, not judgments." Sticking to the facts prevents defense attorneys from accusing investigators of making improper interpretations about the health of abused or neglected animals. "Only expert

witnesses—veterinarians—should make judgments," Baker emphasizes. "It's much better as testimony."

Those expert witnesses, in fact, ideally should have experience with the type of animal that's been victimized by cruelty. "If you bring in a small-animal veterinarian for a horse-abuse case," says Baker, "the defense can really question the expertise of the veterinarian because he is not a large-animal practitioner."

Baker also notes that it is convenient to have one or several veterinarians you can rely on to provide assistance and testimony for most of your cruelty cases. Whenever possible, however, it will behoove investigators to use a veterinarian who works in the locale in which the incident occurred, or one who cannot be pegged as being prejudiced in favor of the humane agency.

### **Never Forget Your First Objective**

When taking animal abusers to court, investigators must always keep in mind their supreme goal: the relief of animal suffering. Going after abusers with a vengeful zeal without also helping the animals themselves is an easy trap to fall into. But remember that a plea bargain in which an owner surrenders his animal is almost always preferable to a conviction in which he's slapped with a \$500 fine but gets to



*An effective investigator would testify that these horses had "protruding ribs," not that they were "malnourished."*

keep the animal.

One of Puckett's favorite avenues for resolving cruelty cases is the use of "deferred prosecution," in which she agrees not to prosecute as long as the violator abides by certain rules set forth by her. For instance, Puckett might forbid the offender from owning more than two dogs. "We agree that as long as he abides by those stipulations, I will not prosecute," Puckett says. "But I can activate the charges at any time." In this way, Puckett uses the courts to her full advantage without actually having to enter the system; just the threat of taking the perpetrator to court usually resolves the case.

Finally, remember that solving problems outside the court system or through a plea-bargain agreement may be preferable especially when the other option is holding animals at the shelter until a cruelty trial is over. If you can't get the pet owner to sign over the animals before the end of a trial, you're often looking at a tremendous monetary investment, not to mention the undue stress placed upon the animals themselves.

The investigator who sees the result of cruelty to animals may have an understandable vendetta against the person who inflicted the cruelty. Using the courts effectively, though, means getting an outcome that's both best for the animals *and* appropriate for the offender. ■

## *Courtroom Appearance and Demeanor are Important*

It's a fact of life that people's initial impressions come from outside appearances. The same holds true for judges and juries. Your appearance and behavior on the witness stand are just as important as the content of your testimony. As a cruelty investigator, you'll appear much more credible if you follow these pointers:

- When you testify, wear your uniform or business attire. Your clothes should not be worn sloppily, and your hair should be neat and trim.
- Be aware of your posture and body signals. Sit upright and do not cross your legs.
- Speak clearly, slowly, and confidently, slightly louder than you would in normal conversation. Use straightforward language and speak directly to the judge or jury.
- When answering questions, always maintain eye contact with the judge or jury.
- Always remain professional and objective. Be pleasant and courteous to all court officials, and never let your frustration show. ■

## *Photo Contest Winners Announced*

Thanks to all the entrants in the first *Shelter Sense* Photo Contest. We had some outstanding entries, and the judges had a good time reviewing the photos and selecting winners.

The winners in each category are as follows:

Category I: Goings-on in the Shelter.

Overall Winner: Carol Ann Pilkonis, British Columbia SPCA, Nanaimo, BC, Canada.

Honorable Mentions: Pamela A. Semon, Kent Animal Shelter, Calverton, NY; Lois McAloon, McHenry County Animal Control, Woodstock, IL; Jane Lethlean, Stephenson County Humane Society, Freeport, IL.

Category II: Work in the Community.

Overall Winner: Nancy Palmieri, Fall River Animal Rescue League, Fall River, MA.

Honorable Mentions: Jennifer Knott, Chester

County SPCA, West Chester, PA; Jennifer Bohannon, Lawrence Humane Society, Lawrence, KS; Kathy Macklem, Cat Care Society, Lakewood, CO.

Category III: Cruelty Investigations.

Overall Winner: Scott Barnes, Chester County SPCA, West Chester, PA.

Category IV: Seasonal.

Overall Winner: T.J. Fegley, Chester County SPCA, West Chester, PA.

Honorable Mentions: Cathy Johnson, Animal Defense League, San Antonio, TX; Diane Defeasa, New Hampshire Animal Rights League, Tilton NH; Megan Adams, Iowa City Animal Shelter, Iowa City, IO.

We wish to congratulate each of the winners. Overall winners received \$150 for their winning photo. But even if your entry didn't win a prize, it



could still be a winner: all of the entered photos will be considered for use in future issues of *Shelter Sense*.



Scott Barnes



Nancy Palmieri

Carol Ann Pilkonis

T. J. Fegley

## Are Your Laws Ready for Cold Weather?

By Rhonda Lucas Donald

Now that cold weather is coming to most parts of the country, it is a good time to reevaluate your state laws and local ordinances regarding shelter for outdoor animals. If your laws don't mandate proper protection for outside animals, they should be revised to provide clear-cut definitions of adequate shelter, unacceptable temperature extremes, and neglect.

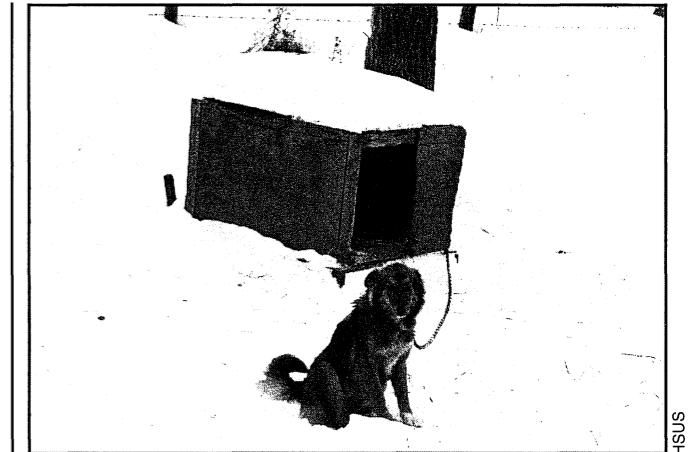
The states of Minnesota, Maine, and Wisconsin have good laws on proper shelter. Their examples can help animal protection workers in other states improve existing laws.

Minnesota law, for example, delineates when a humane official may legally remove an animal from its owner in cold weather. This law gives officials the ability to remove "any animal remaining more than one hour without attention in cold or inclement weather." Minnesota law also requires dog houses to be of a size that "allows retention of body heat," and specifies that there must be bedding material that "provides insulation and protection against cold and dampness."

Maine law states that inadequate shelter "may be indicated by the shivering of a dog due to cold weather for a continuous period of 30 minutes." All laws also address proper shelter and other health and welfare considerations for animals in hot weather.

These laws can be used to draft your own local ordinances or modify state law to provide better protection for animals. Of course, drafting the legislation is only the first step. Getting it passed, according to Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals, "takes knowledge, planning, and warm bodies."

To pass legislation, it is necessary to decide which legislative body you want to first approach. Do you want a new city ordinance, a county-wide rule, or a new state law? (A state law is best, because it provides protection for the most animals, but it is the hardest to achieve.) Get to know the elected officials who represent you. Wright advises that "if you don't already have a working relationship established, call up the



HSUS

Good laws allow ACOs to alleviate frustrating situations like this.

elected member(s) and go to lunch to discuss your concerns." It helps to find a sympathetic member who represents you and will become a liaison between you and the rest of the legislative body, but this is not always possible. Know the issues you are tackling and be able to educate others on them. Part of being informed is knowing opposing arguments as well as your own.

Before you plan your legislative campaign, contact an HSUS regional office for basic information, i.e., which elected officials have been helpful in the past, who has been opposed to animal issues, and what other animal issues are being considered. To pass a piece of legislation, efforts must begin early, and you must know the way your legislature works to be able to function within the system. Even though it may take months before the issue is considered by the legislative body, you and your supporters must be ready and in force at the proceedings.

Enlist the press for help in making your issue known. Editorials and local news coverage of your issues will generate public support. If there is a case of an animal suffering, let that case generate the publicity for you. Make the case "real" by using the animal's name. Make it clear that no more animals should suffer the way "Fido" did.

Another means to involve the public is to make an animal mascot your public relations leader. This has worked extremely well for a number of animal protection agencies. (See February 1990 and September 1990 issues of *Shelter Sense*.)

Supporters must be developed into informed, active voices for your cause. Supply them with the information necessary to make them convincing spokespersons. Simple bulletins are a good way to keep them apprised. Supporters must know their council members and be willing to call them when

the need arises. To show council members that your piece of legislation is vital and wanted, produce strong numbers of supporters (warm bodies) at key council meetings. A visible show of public support weighs heavily in getting a piece of legislation through.

To obtain free single copies of the three state laws mentioned above or for help in getting legislation enacted in your area, write to The HSUS, State Legislation Division, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037. ■

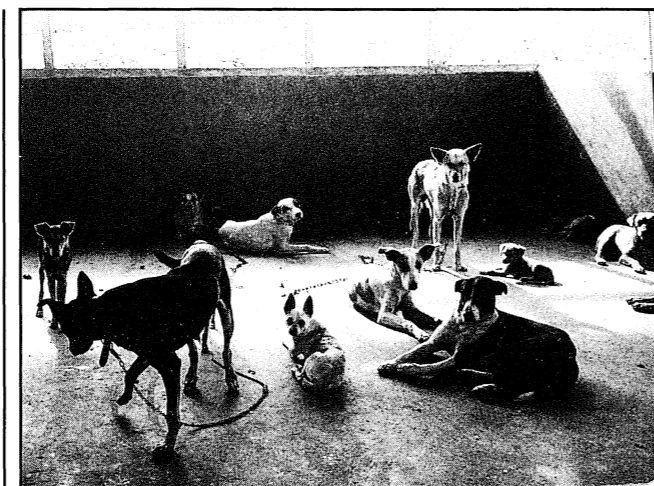
## Working For Animals and Against the Odds

By Rhonda Lucas Donald

The 40-50 dogs at the municipal pound were all thrown in together. Dogs of all sizes, ages, and physical condition were in one pen—a slab of concrete with no bedding, food, or water. Little puppies tried to nurse from any dog that would allow it. Large shepherds dragged eight-foot chains that no one bothered to remove. Small dogs cowered in corners, trying to avoid fights with the more aggressive ones. All the dogs went in, but few came out. When T-61 was discontinued and their supply exhausted, pound officials were thought to be strangling and poisoning the unwanted dogs.

This pound was in Mayaguez, a city in western Puerto Rico. Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals, says, "In 1984, this municipal pound was like the U.S. impoundment yards for dogs in the 1950s. I've visited inadequate animal shelters for 21 years, but I was haunted by the eyes of these helpless dogs for months later. The local group was trying to feed the dogs, but they could not protect them from horrible dog fights or a slow, painful death. It was devastating to first pass the garbage dump, come to the dead end of the road, and then see the 'pound' where they just left these poor animals. They never had food, water, or attention. The fact that this pound has been shut down is a miracle."

Like most miracles, this one came through the efforts of people—in this case, Hilda Ramirez and the Asociacion Pro Albergue y Proteccion de Animales (Association pro Shelter and Protection



The municipal pound in Mayaguez before APAYPA succeeded in building a shelter.

of Animals—APAYPA). Now the dogs (and cats) of Mayaguez have a safe haven in the form of a brand new shelter and a concerned group of people tending it. The board president and acting shelter director, Ramirez has taken the shelter from an idea to completion and is negotiating a contract with the city for animal control.

A professor of mathematics at the University of Puerto Rico, Ramirez initially became involved with animals by attempting to deal with the many strays that abound in Puerto Rico. "It is a big problem," says Ramirez. "It was breaking our hearts. We would pick them up, but what could we do with them? Foster them, put ads in the

papers, euthanize those that couldn't be adopted."

About six years ago, Ramirez decided that fostering strays and taking food and water to the pound animals was not enough. "I wanted to collect money for a shelter," she says. But it was to be a long, difficult task. She contacted The HSUS and arranged for a visit from Phyllis Wright in February of 1984. After meetings with various humane groups, a plan to build a shelter was formed.

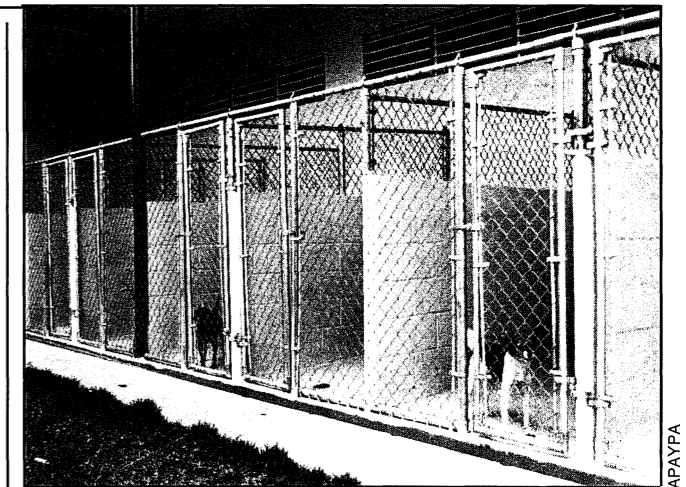
Previous attempts to help the animals had not been workable with the city government, and many local people did not feel that enough money could be raised for a shelter. But Hilda and other supporters wanted to take on the task. The project was launched. "Phyllis really inspired me," Ramirez says, "because she convinced me that I was on the right track."

Wright says that she wanted the group to work on solving their problem rather than merely reacting to opposition. She pointed out that instead of feeding the dogs and keeping them under the existing miserable conditions, it would be better to take matters into their own hands. Although not particularly comfortable with the responsibility, Ramirez tackled the problem with a few other supporters. "I'm a shy person," she says. "I suddenly had to start speaking to people—to government officials."

The first thing Ramirez did was sever ties with the humane society and form a new group, which is now APAYPA. This way, she could start on new ground with the mayor and city government, with whom relations had deteriorated in past negotiations. The new group began raising funds and generating public support, mostly through direct mail. Rather than seeking the mayor's approval, they went directly to the city legislature and asked for land to locate the shelter and donations to build it.

The land came first. The legislature leased the group a parcel of land that they are allowed to use as long as their organization exists. It is in a good location, accessible to the public, and attractive to look at. It took much longer (almost four years) for actual construction of the shelter to begin, but APAYPA did not give up. During this time they raised money, obtained permits, and ironed out kinks in the plans.

The legislature then authorized a \$10,000 dona-



APAYPA's shelter features modern, spotless runs and excellent care for the animals.

tion. Subsequent donations totaled \$50,000. Construction began and early this year, the 16-run facility was complete. In addition, grants from both the Edith Goode Foundation and the William and Charlotte Parks Foundation have helped finance a cat room and spay/neuter clinic. This past March, Wright had the thrill of her career—to see the shelter open and caring for animals.

"The community is so pleased with the shelter," Ramirez says. "They keep saying how it is so clean. Now the legislators tour the shelter and want to help. Everybody is happy."

APAYPA is still in the process of negotiating an animal control contract with the city, and it looks promising that additional runs, employees, and a truck for animal pickup will be part of the deal. Ramirez has been careful to have shelter workers properly trained in euthanasia and seeks additional training for them down the road. Although professional training is hard to come by, the Puerto Rican Federation and other societies do provide some training on the island.

APAYPA is also beginning to do educational programs in the schools and provides some materials through the Adopt-A-Teacher program. They plan to develop a full-scale humane education program once the shelter is established in the day-to-day operations of animal control.

Phyllis Wright couldn't be more pleased with the shelter and the progress APAYPA has made. "Many people start out to build a shelter," she says, "but they get frustrated along the way and

give up. It's not a quick fix, but a laborious process. And in a country where animals have little value, the feat is even more remarkable. The fact that this group has accomplished this under such adverse circumstances is a testament to perseverance and courage."

The results of Ramirez's efforts to humanely house

the homeless animals of her town have been outstanding. As Ramirez says, "You could go on for years banging your head against the wall over the old pound. But you don't convince people by just talking. They have to be shown what can be done. Before, the government didn't even know how to handle animals. Now they know what is possible." ■

## ITEMS

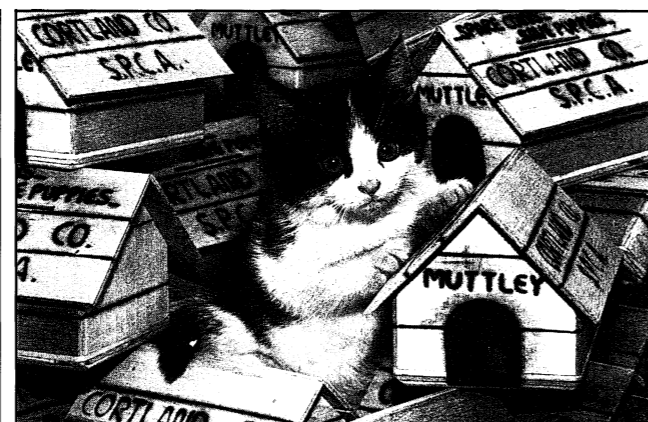
### Wooden Banks Donated to Shelters

Over the past year and a half, residents of Rome, New York, have noticed small wooden collection boxes in the form of dog houses popping up at various stores and restaurants. The miniature dog houses are clearly handcrafted, and all have "Spare Coins Save Puppies" flame-branded on them above a coin slot. The word "Muttley" appears above each box's dog-house doorway.

There are some 25-30 of these attractive boxes around Rome at any given time, put out by the Humane Society of Rome. Since April 1989, the society has reaped over \$7,000 in donations from the boxes.

The dog house collection cannisters were all made and donated to the humane society by the same man. Rich Pittwood, a woodworker hobbyist and full-time aircraft mechanic, has constructed nearly 700 of the boxes and given them free-of-charge to seven humane societies. Using mostly scrap materials such as old shipping crates picked up at local industries, he constructs the boxes and gives them a unique touch with a flame-branding technique he developed himself.

Pittwood didn't come up with the idea of building collection cannisters in the form of dog houses entirely on his own. In 1987, while living in Lynchburg, Virginia, he noticed handmade dog house collection boxes being utilized by the Lynchburg Humane Society. Inspired by religious conviction and a stray mutt (Muttley) he had rescued while in college and kept as a pet, Pittwood offered to donate his woodworking



Rich Pittwood's collection boxes have brought in over \$7,000 for the Cortland County SPCA.

talents to mass-producing the boxes. He constructed 158 boxes for Lynchburg, and the society has since garnered over \$7,000 in donations.

Pittwood relocated in 1988 to Rome, where he lives and works in a structure originally built in the 1940s as an autobody shop. He converted the building to one-third studio apartment and two-thirds workshop space, and named it Muttland. He decided to continue making the boxes, and racked up 1,400 miles last year trying to promote them at area shelters. "I'm really pleased," he says. "I didn't think they would take off like they have up here in New York."

Pittwood hopes to donate Muttland and its facilities one day to animal shelters. For now, Pittwood seeks to establish working relationships with some 25 to 50 shelters in the Northeast, and also wishes to contact other woodworkers interested in donating their time for animal shelters. He plans another production run of dog-house cannisters for donation to humane

societies early next year. Interested groups can write for more information by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Muttland, 7004 Rome/Oriskany Rd., Rome, NY 13440.

### All To Save a Cat

By Marilyn Adams

Reprinted courtesy of the Knight-Ridder Newspapers

Just after takeoff, the Boeing 727 captain faced a life-or-death choice.

In the cabin sat 53 unsuspecting passengers expecting to make the Fort Lauderdale-to-Houston flight in two hours. But below was another little passenger: a cat that would die in an unpressurized cargo hold if the jet flew on.

It cost extra fuel, missed connections, and a three-and-a-half-hour delay. But the kitty won.

"The captain announced we were going back to Fort Lauderdale," said Bob Schachner, a Fort Lauderdale passenger on Continental Airlines' Flight 1129. "He said there was a mechanical problem. He didn't say it was because of a cat."

In the cargo hold, a device that heats or cools pressurized air from the engines had failed. The air was growing deadly thin and cold as the jet climbed.

Only when the jet returned to Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport did passengers learn why they had come back.

"They opened the door of the plane and brought on this cat to see if it was still alive," Schachner said. "It was a tuxedo cat—black and white with a white stripe—and it was fine. The owner was so relieved."

"It was just good customer care," said Ken Gordon, Continental's general manager at Fort Lauderdale. "After all, I've got a cat, too."

### Volunteers Deserve a Handbook

More and more groups are realizing the value of volunteers. And as volunteer programs grow, methods of recruiting, training, and keeping volunteers are becoming more organized and integrated into shelter operations.

Several animal protection groups have developed handbooks to prepare their volunteers for

an informed and rewarding experience. Although the handbooks vary, they all cover basic policies and procedures that volunteers should follow, descriptions of the positions available, and a brief overview of the organization.

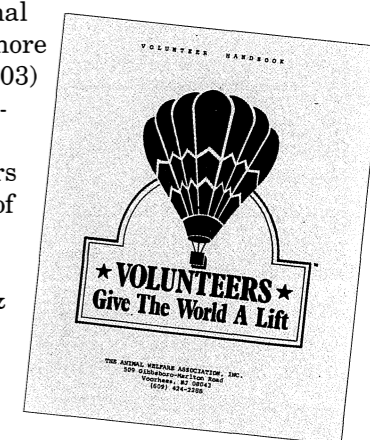
The "Volunteer Orientation Manual" for the City of Palo Alto Animal Services (3281 E. Bayshore Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94303) also discusses the question of euthanasia to prepare their volunteers to deal with this part of shelter work.

The handbook from The Humane Society & SPCA of Seattle/King County (13212 SE Eastgate Way, Bellevue, WA 98005) includes an organizational chart, animal handling guidelines, a list of answers to the most frequently asked questions, and a special message on disease transmission from the staff's veterinarians. Detailed job descriptions and qualifications, along with information on tax deductions for volunteers, are vital parts of "Volunteers Give the World a Lift" from The Animal Welfare Association (509 Gibbsboro-Marlton Rd., Voorhees, NJ 08043).

Volunteer handbooks lend structure and organization to the programs. When questions arise, a volunteer has a source of reference. If the handbook addresses whom a volunteer should report to with questions or problems, administration of the program will run smoothly and volunteers will not feel lost in the system. A handbook adds a helpful, professional touch to a well-thought-out, efficient volunteer program.

### Classified Ads Aid Outdoor Pets

Each year at Christmas and New Year's the Albert Schweitzer Council on Animals and the Environment (Rt. 1, Box 82-A, Edinburg, VA 22824) places small display and classified ads in the classified section of local newspapers. These ads remind rural pet owners to provide their outdoor animals with warmth and companionship during the holidays.



Your dog would appreciate  
A HAPPY NEW YEAR,  
too.

A warm, dry, wood doghouse  
if kept outside. (Inside better  
in severe weather.)

Good walks with you.  
Tasty special treats  
Plenty of fresh water  
Companionship  
Be a friend to "man's  
best friend."  
Greetings from  
The Albert Schweitzer Council

One of the headlines reads, "Your dog would appreciate a Merry Christmas, too." The ad goes on to encourage pet owners to provide doghouses, tasty treats, fresh water,

and good walks and companionship.

Ann Cottrell Free, who heads the Council, says that the ads cost very little, yet reach quite a few people. To make the ads more noticeable and appealing, they often dress up the copy with holiday art, which most newspapers can provide. This idea is appropriate for both cats and dogs and could be adapted to run at various times throughout the year.

### Dog Elimination Day Ends

Every May 30 for 18 years, police in Vienna, Georgia, had "handled" the city's stray-dog problem by shooting the strays. Dog Elimination Day, as it was known, went on virtually unnoticed each year—until this one. When a national newswire ran a story about the event, the little town of Vienna was besieged by angry callers, letters, visitors, and the media.

In stepped Dan Rogers, executive director of the Thomasville/Thomas County Humane Society (299 Davenport Dr., Thomasville, GA 31792). Rather than join in the public blasting, Rogers called with an offer to help the neighboring town. He proposed a joint round-up effort using personnel from his organization and other neighboring humane groups. Vienna City Manager Stanley Gambrell went for the offer.

"Instead of blessing them out," Rogers says, "I offered them help," adding that "concern does a lot more good." Regarding Vienna's tradition, Rogers says, "The thought of handling this problem any other way never crossed their minds. But when I called them, they were willing to accept any offer because of all the press attention."

So Dog Elimination Day became Dog Round-up Day, with Rogers heading a group of ten ACOs who humanely captured 17 dogs. The dogs were transported to the Thomasville shelter and to a shelter in Albany, Georgia. After some TLC at

the shelters, most of the animals were eventually adopted.

City Manager Gambrell was quite pleased with Roger's efforts and was glad to have the matter resolved. He assured *Shelter Sense* that the stray-dog problem wouldn't be handled again as it had been in the past. He spoke of humane trapping and even forming an education program to encourage people to take better care of their pets.

### Free Earth Day HSUS News

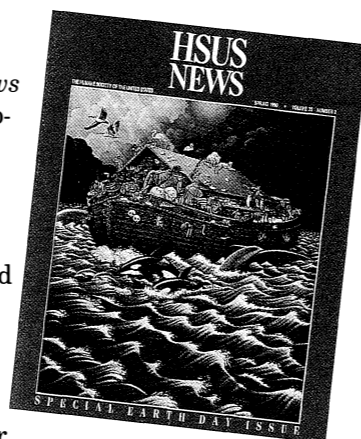
Free copies of the special Earth Day issue of the *HSUS News* are available while supplies last. This issue has material that is relevant for Earth Day and every day. A variety of environmental and animal protection concerns are covered, including "The Global Ecological Crisis" by Senator Albert Gore, Jr., "Are We Killing Mother Earth?" by Dr. Michael W. Fox, and "Our War Against Our Water" by Sam LaBudde.

To obtain free copies of this special issue, please write to The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

### Equine Senior Citizens Join a Club

Linda Todor-Newcomb was perplexed over the problem their humane society had adopting older horses and ponies. She was dismayed that people didn't want to take a chance on adopting horses older than 15, even though the animals were healthy, lively, and active, with many years of companionship left to offer.

To combat this old-horse prejudice, Todor-Newcomb founded the Older Horse Registry (17356 Meadow Pkwy., Townsend, WI 54175) to promote pride in owning an older equine. In addition to registering horses age 15 and older for \$7.50, the Registry will list free-of-charge any older horse adopted from a humane society. Benefits of belonging to the Registry include receiving a certificate of registry and an infor-



Gerald Johnson

The Older Horse Registry promotes the values of older equines adopted from shelters.

mative newsletter that features educational articles and stories of older horses and ponies excelling in many ways. Todor-Newcomb points out that the purpose of the Registry is not to make money, but to provide a source of pride for owners of older horses and to educate people about the value of these seniors.

To date, 200 older horses are registered in the club and more are coming in from many states. The Registry will provide humane societies with copies of their application to have on hand. Any person adopting a horse age 15 or older from a humane society is eligible for free registration and at least one free year of the newsletter. Write to the Older Horse Registry at the address above for more information and application forms. ■

### Regional Conference Scheduled

Humane professionals in the northeastern part of the U.S. should make plans now to attend a major animal protection conference in Morristown, New Jersey, April 25-27, 1991. Co-sponsored by The HSUS Mid-Atlantic and New England Regional Offices (MARO and NERO), the three-day event will repeat the 1990 HSUS Annual Conference theme "Animals... It's Their World Too."

Look for details in an upcoming issue of *Shelter Sense* or call MARO now at (201) 927-5611. ■



### The Chosen Puppy *Fulfills a Need*

It's here at last—a book written specifically for anyone adopting a puppy from an animal shelter. *The Chosen Puppy: How to Select and Raise a Great Puppy from an Animal Shelter* is a delightful, well-written book that is short enough to be practical yet long enough to cover everything an adopter needs to know about the process of puppy selection and training.

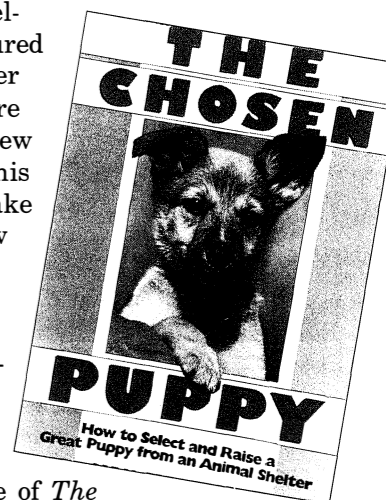
Author Carol Lea Benjamin, who also wrote the acclaimed *Second-Hand Dog*, understands pet overpopulation and how to help its innocent victims. As a noted dog writer and active volunteer at a New York City shelter, Benjamin has captured the essence of the shelter puppy—why its needs are so special and what a new owner must do to help his or her chosen puppy make the adjustment to a new and loving home.

The 87-page text is straightforward and readable, and is complemented by witty illustrations that drive home important points.

One outstanding feature of *The Chosen Puppy* is Benjamin's puppy evaluation test. This temperament test is actually a series of simple questions designed to help the adopter evaluate a puppy's responsiveness, aptitude for training, activity level, dominance level, friendliness, and reaction to a new environment. These tests assist adopters in determining not only a puppy's suitability for adoption, but also whether or not their home would be right for the dog.

Benjamin strives to help the reader understand puppy behavior, and even includes a primer on "canine rights." She offers a sound training program based on gentle, positive reinforcement. Adopters who follow her advice will likely end up with a wonderful, well-mannered companion.

The Humane Society of Carroll County (MD) gives a copy of *The Chosen Puppy* free to every adopter of a puppy under six months of age, and a copy of *Second-Hand Dog* (reviewed in the August





1990 issue) free to every adopter of a dog over six months old. The Montgomery County (MD) Humane Society loans a copy of *The Chosen Puppy* to each potential adopter, and also has the book available for purchase.

*The Chosen Puppy* costs \$7.95 per copy, but shelters can get a 50% discount on orders of 50 or more copies. Shelters may combine *The Chosen Puppy* and *Second-Hand Dog* (now \$5.95 per copy) to meet the 50-book minimum. Postage is included for orders sent with payment. Send orders—on agency letterhead to get the discount—to Howell Book House, 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

—Barbara Cassidy

### Reminder Cards Save Time

Remind adopters of puppies and kittens to have their young companions spayed or neutered when they're old enough with these handy veterinarian reminder cards.

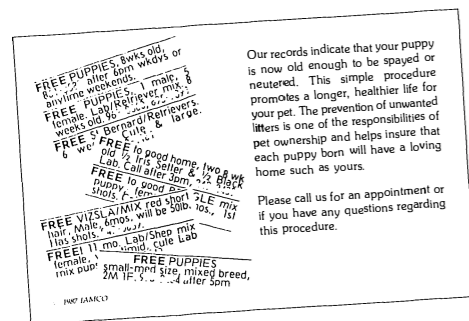
Ideal for shelters with clinics, they can also easily be used by agencies that offer spay/neuter services through a network of cooperating veterinarians. Your group could even send them out on behalf of adopters' own veterinarians, or ask local vets to use the cards themselves.

The cards include space to identify the name and address of the clinic or veterinarian.

Cards can only be ordered in sets of 100 at \$9 per set. Deduct 10 percent from the total cost for orders over \$100, and 20 percent for those over \$200. Prices include postage. (Arizona residents must add 6.7 percent tax.)

For humane societies and animal control departments that submit orders on agency letterhead, an *additional* discount of 10 percent of their original payment will be sent back with their cards.

To order, specify the number of cards of each type (puppy or kitten) and mail with payment to IAMCO, Box 30186, Phoenix, AZ 85046.



## 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.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**—For John Ancrum SPCA in Charleston, S.C. Requires strong administrative, supervisory, fundraising, and development skills, and ability to interact with the public and media. Position includes financial administration, shelter operations, oversight of 16 employees. Send resume, salary requirements to Ronald Rowland, President, Board of Directors, 1249 Robin Rd., Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464.

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**—Responsibilities include management of facilities and staff, assistance with budget, and program support. Qualifications: at least three years management experience in animal welfare/control plus working knowledge of animal issues. Salary: low to mid 20's. Send resume, cover letter, references to Jim Tedford, Knox County Humane Society, P.O. Box 9479, Knoxville, TN 37940-0479.

**SHELTER MANAGER**—Shelter handling 15,000 animals annually seeks mature individual with experience in managing large urban shelter. Responsible for overseeing shelter staff, ordering shelter supplies, coordinating ambulance calls and rescues, etc. Send resume, references, salary history to Thomas H. White, Director of Operations, Animal Rescue League of Boston, P.O. Box 265, Boston, MA 02116.

**SHELTER MANAGER**—Will handle all aspects of city animal shelter, and supervise five personnel. Qualifications: two years of college, one year of shelter experience, plus euthanasia and animal quarantine experience. Salary: \$20,000, plus liberal benefits. Send resume to City of Brownsville, Personnel Office, P.O. Box 911, Brownsville, TX 78520.

**REPRODUCIBLE** This message can be clipped out and reproduced in quantity by your local printer for distribution at schools, shopping centers, libraries, and other community locations. You can also purchase advertising space for it in your local newspaper or use it in your organization's newsletter.



When you're decking the halls this holiday season, keep in mind the safety of household pets.



© 1990 Ed Swartzey

#### Pet-proof Decorating

Pets find holiday trimmings irresistible, so be extra careful in placing decorations.

- Fasten the Christmas tree to a wall or secure it another way to prevent the cat or dog from knocking it over.
- Hang breakables, tinsel, or other tempting decorations well out of paw's reach. Tinsel, ribbon, string, and ornament hangers are especially dangerous for pets to chew on.
- Make sure pets don't play with or chew on electric cords.
- Place holiday plants out of pet's reach. Many seasonal plants are poisonous, including mistletoe, holly, and poinsettias.

#### Treats To Eat

Holiday foods may be tasty, but they aren't always a treat for pets.

- Poultry bones splinter and can be very dangerous for pets to chew.
- Ham and other pork dishes are rich, often upsetting pets' systems.
- Chocolate contains theobromine, a chemical that can be deadly to dogs. Never share chocolate or other candy with animals.

Instead of people food, give pets a few of their favorite pet treats during special meals.

#### Gifts and Goodies

Pets deserve presents, too, but choose safe toys that won't harm them.

- Avoid toys with small parts or those made of soft materials that pets can chew up and swallow.
- Avoid hard plastic dog bones. They can splinter or shed fragments that dogs swallow. Nylon-type chews are much better and last longer, too.
- Don't put catnip or other edibles in hanging stockings (especially if they're by the fire). ID tags, collars, and leashes are better stocking stuffers.
- And don't forget needy animals during the holidays. Shelter animals always need donations of food and money.

We hope these tips will help you and your pet have a safe and happy holiday season.

[Your organization's name and phone number here.]

Provided by The Humane Society of the United States.

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**JUST**   
**WRIGHT**

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Tim Redel

## *The Best Part of My Job*

**By Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President,  
Companion Animals**

**W**hat makes my job so rewarding is being part of the team that makes a difference for animals.

As I travel and spend time with people involved in local animal protection, I feel the frustrations and pain they endure to make changes in their communities. The encouraging thing is that it takes only one person to be responsible for starting a new group or holding an existing group together; one person to get the ball rolling on a project or goal. It is this person who can identify a problem and work out solutions that will make change.

The story of Hilda Ramirez (page 8) is a perfect example of how an individual can turn things around against the worst odds. Working with people to help animals is not easy. But there is no

greater satisfaction than knowing you have been a part of preventing pain and suffering of animals. I consider myself privileged to get to know and work with so many wonderful, dedicated people.

And I want to remind you that The HSUS is here to help you accomplish your goals. Each day the companion animals staff and the staffs of the regional offices provide advice and help in solving animal problems in the community. I know that when you are embroiled in an issue or project it can become hard to see it objectively. A fresh look by someone who's not directly involved but is experienced in dealing with animal problems can do wonders. We are here to help and are glad to do it.

Plan your goals and work towards them each day with the knowledge that it will take time, energy, effort, and money. Whether you are a group of many or a group of one, we are here to provide guidance and support. It may not be easy, but know all the while that the rewards are waiting for you—and so are the animals. ■



## **Shelter Sense**

**The Humane Society of the United States  
5430 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 100  
Bethesda, MD 20814**

**Address Correction Requested**

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