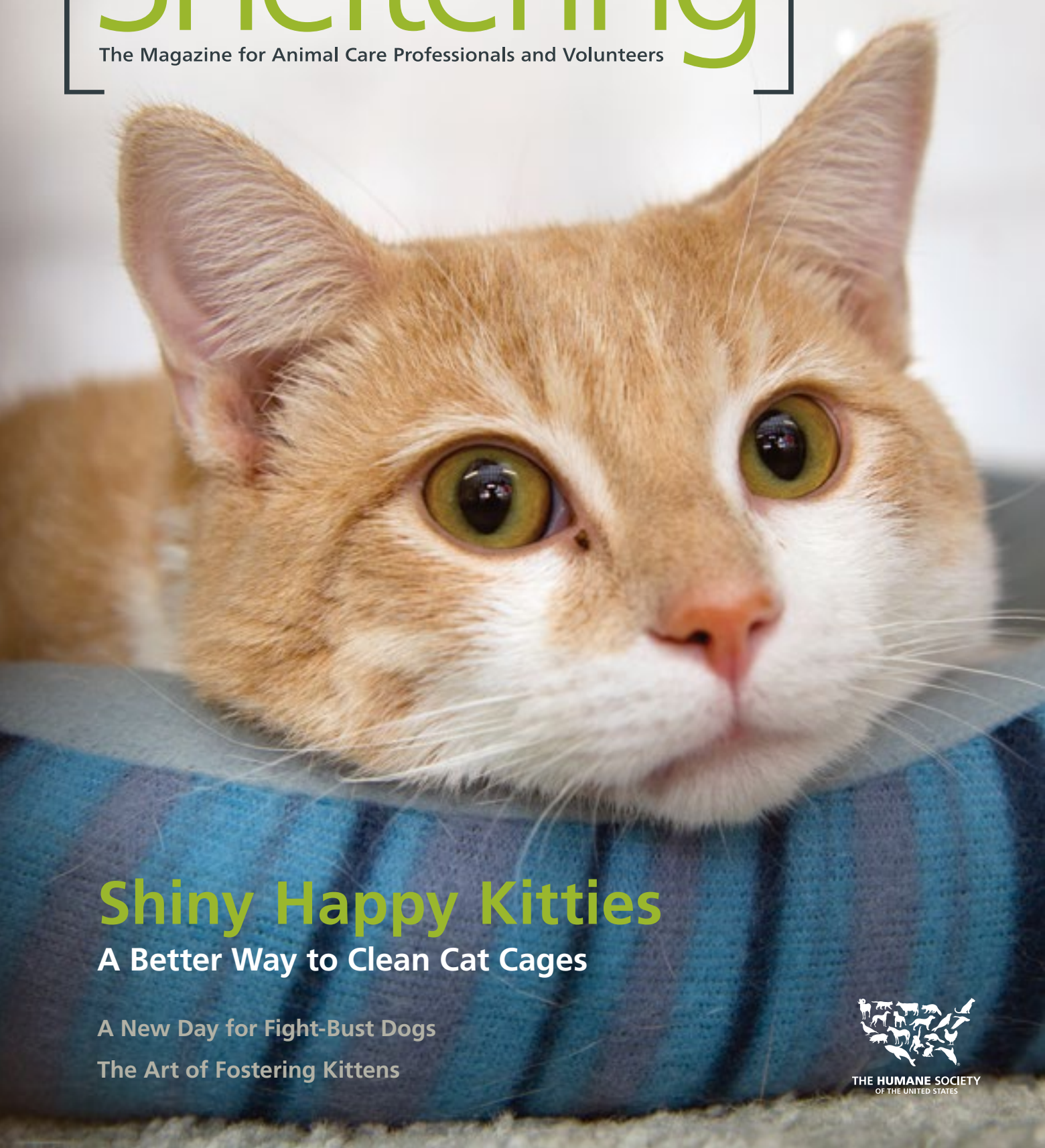


ANIMAL

Sheltering

July/August 2011

The Magazine for Animal Care Professionals and Volunteers



Shiny Happy Kitties

A Better Way to Clean Cat Cages

A New Day for Fight-Bust Dogs

The Art of Fostering Kittens



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

800 551-1498

Animal Transport Vehicle Conversions

www.mavron.com
sales@mavron.com



AT-350



ATL-6

The tide in Animal Transport is turning to MAVRON vans.

- ◆ Lower Floor Height & More Cages
- ◆ 12 cages accessible from outside—You'll never have to crawl again

The best truck mounted modular bodies in the business.
For full size or mid-size trucks.



Large rear storage area

Custom built to meet your needs



Sliding tray in sealed dead box



ATL-4

For Ford Ranger and other mid sized trucks

SQUARE TUBE FRAMES

not like the other guys



Stainless Steel Cat Suite
with Outside Portal Control

SHOR-LINE

REDISCOVER QUALITY

Shor-Line has been a leading industry craftsman for 84 years. We have done so by reinventing established product designs and engineering new innovative products. We are committed to continuous product improvement and our products showcase genuine quality, not like the other guys. Call today and rediscover quality, **888.551.4058**. Visit www.shor-line.com/animalcare_as for product specific information.



Use your smartphone to scan this QR Code or visit www.shor-line.com for more product information.



ANIMAL Sheltering

The Magazine for Animal Care Professionals and Volunteers

ALSO:
 Jerry Lewis isn't the only one who knows the fundraising power of telethons: At least a handful of shelters around the nation host their own annual broadcasts that reliably bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars. Learn how it's done in **Show Me the Money, p. 10.**



22

Here for a Reason

The story of an Oklahoma puppy who lived through euthanasia, had his story publicized on Facebook, and went on to get adoption applications from as far away as France captures the bittersweet complexity of dramatic survival stories, which often garner great public attention and a passion to adopt the victim.



26

Getting Real

The Austin Humane Society is one of several shelters that have started a hand-feeding, enrichment, and training program for adoptable dogs. The results are easy to see—a kennel that's a pleasant environment for both people and pets. It's a good illustration of what happens when enrichment—a key tenet of new guidelines developed by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians—is emphasized for shelter animals.



30

A New Day for Fight-Bust Dogs

Law enforcement officials, the sheltering community, and the public used to view dogs seized from dogfighting rings as too dangerous to place. The Michael Vick case and its ensuing media coverage of rehabilitated pit bulls served as a wake-up call that better options exist for these dogs.

Behavior Department, p. 51



5 Letterbox

6 Scoop

An Indiana municipal shelter steps up whenever other animal welfare organizations need a helping hand; a major rescue operation in Texas removes more than 300 animals (including tigers and mountain lions) and finds them homes; a Michigan woman builds a 360-person volunteer corps targeting the puppy mill industry where it hurts; a New York shelter raises \$253,000 with its annual telethon; and much more.

20 Coffee Break

In your space, you tell us about some of your favorite programs to help cats—everything from partnering with a local hockey team to a community operation (pun intended) that's sterilized 250 cats in a single day.

39 The "101" Department

Older shelter practices dictate cleaning a cat cage by removing the cat and then blitzing the space with cleaners and bleach. The process is hard on germs—but, as it turns out, it can be hard on kitties, too. Spot-cleaning is an effective way to decrease disease transmission, and let cats stay in place amid their own familiar scents.

43 Q & A

When it comes to designing effective shelter programs to reduce euthanasia, you can never have too much information. That's the view longtime animal welfare advocate Peter Marsh expresses in his book *Replacing Myth with Math: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Eradicate Shelter Overpopulation*. We talk to him about how shelters can more effectively target their programs.

47 Humane Law Forum

What happens when an enraged adopter tells you that the lovely little Pekingese who came to you as a stray, and behaved himself so beautifully at the shelter, has bitten a neighbor without provocation? Is your shelter legally responsible? Every adoption's unique, but determining post-adoption liability can usually be broken down into three simple issues.

51 Behavior Department

A good foster network can be a major ally in saving animals' lives, but fledgling fosterers have a lot to learn before embarking on their kitty-mentoring adventure. How long should you keep kittens confined in their own space? How soon should you introduce them to visitors? Veteran fosterers offer their advice—and their practical knowledge and experiences are worth their weight in kitten chow.

60 Off Leash

A new smartphone application gives people access to everything a Kansas City, Mo., shelter has to offer—especially adoptable pets!

Animal Sheltering is a publication of
The Humane Society of the United States.

ANIMAL SHELTERING MAGAZINE STAFF

Editor

Carrie Allan

Associate Editor

James Hettinger

Staff Writer/Copy Editor

Jim Baker

Production/Marketing Manager

Shevaun Brannigan

Advertising Manager

ReNae Vorgert

Design

Bussolati Associates

Chairman, Board of Directors, The Humane Society of the United States

Anita W. Coupe, Esq.

President and CEO, The Humane Society of the United States

Wayne Pacelle

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

Animal Sheltering (ISSN 0734-3078) is published bimonthly by The Humane Society of the United States. Our magazine serves the people on the frontlines of animal protection—by offering practical expertise, technical know-how, forums for debate, program profiles, news on the latest research and trends, and a sense of inspiration and community among those striving to make the world a better place for animals.

Subscription Prices

Single-copy subscriptions are \$20 each (\$25 for subscribers outside the U.S.). Members of Shelter Partners receive a 10-percent discount. For information on multiple-copy discounts, visit animalsheltering.org.

Circulation Offices

To order, renew, change your address, or inquire about other subscription-related issues, visit our website at animalsheltering.org or contact our circulation office:

Animal Sheltering

P.O. Box 351; Congers, NY 10920-0351
866-512-3111 (toll free) 845-267-3004 (local)
845-267-3478 (fax)
animalsheltering@cambeywest.com

Editorial Offices

Please send letters to the editor, Coffee Break submissions, and article ideas to: *Animal Sheltering* magazine/HSUS
2100 L St., NW
Washington, DC 20037
202-452-1100 (phone)
301-258-3081 (fax)
asm@humanesociety.org
animalsheltering.org

Advertising Information

Contact ReNae Vorgert, *Animal Sheltering's* advertising manager, at 701-572-9100 or rvorgert@humanesociety.org.

Job Listings

To post a free job announcement, visit animalsheltering.org.

Reprint Information

We encourage private humane organizations and public animal services agencies to reprint *Animal Sheltering* articles by HSUS authors in whole or in part, without prior permission, provided that the reprinting serves educational purposes in keeping with the magazine's intent. Please credit the article's author as well as *Animal Sheltering* magazine, and send us a copy of the reprinted material. If you are interested in reprinting articles by non-HSUS authors, special permission may be required; email us at asm@humanesociety.org.

The Small Print

The HSUS does not endorse or guarantee any products, services, or vendors mentioned in *Animal Sheltering*, nor can it be responsible for problems with vendors or their products or services. Also, The HSUS reserves the right to reject, at its discretion, any advertising. Views expressed by non-HSUS authors are not necessarily those of The HSUS.

©2011 The Humane Society of the United States.

All rights reserved.





stay original

enhance animal life with the founders of modular kennel systems

T-Kennel gave birth to the modern kennel as we know it today. Our products are the essence of animal care and invention. In collaboration with industry leaders our products often set the standard by which animal handling is measured. Let our knowledge, experience and design work for you and your facility. Stay original!



Use your smartphone to scan this QR Code or visit www.t-kennel.com for more product information.



Enhancing Animal Life

888 551 4060
www.t-kennel.com

Modular Kennel Systems & Components • Cat Condos • Cages • Grooming Equipment • Tables



Become a fan on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

Rewarding Partnerships for Pet Adoptions



Each year, PetSmart Charities® works with Adoption Partners to find loving homes for more than 400,000 pets. Partner benefits include monetary rewards for every adoption that originates in a PetSmart® Store, and increased rewards during four nationally advertised adoption weekends.



Visit www.petsmartcharities.org/programs/adoption.php to learn how you can partner with us.

PETSMART
Charities

©2010-2011 PetSmart Charities, Inc. All rights reserved. 030-1009-006



ONE VEHICLE 4 USES...



1. ADOPTIONS
2. SPAY & NEUTER
3. TRANSPORT
4. DISASTER RELIEF

**PROVEN TIME and TIME AGAIN -
LABOIT is the RIGHT SOLUTION for YOU!**

Side roll doors
for viewing
animals!

**BEWARE... LaBoit Vehicles
are often Imitated, but
never Duplicated.**

LaBoit since 1981

For more information, please call or visit our website!

800.776.9984 • www.laboit.com

A New Day for Fight-Bust Dogs, p. 30

A Word From Us

Our field, in essence, is all about giving animals a second chance at a rewarding life in a loving home whenever possible. Yet for years, the notion that dogs seized from fighting operations could someday make good pets was rejected out of hand by many—including The Humane Society of the United States. But the Michael Vick case challenged everyone to view dogfighting in a new light. One of this issue's features, "A New Day for Fight-Bust Dogs," details the emerging options for these victims.

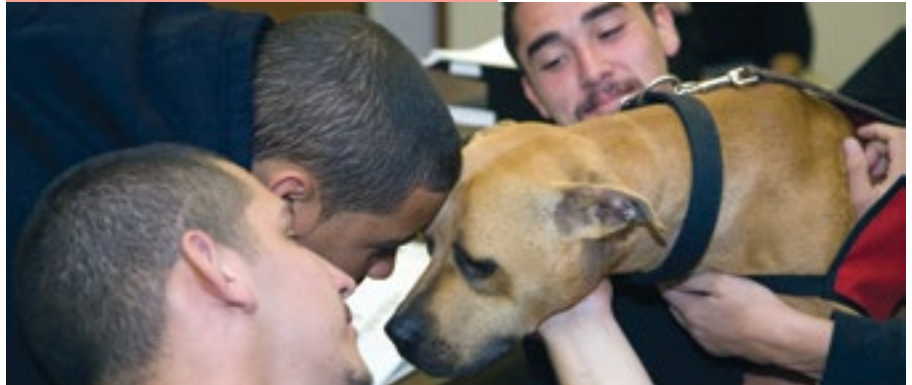
Last year, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians released its long-awaited *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*, designed to "balance animal welfare science with practical and realistic recommendations for shelters." In Part Two of our series discussing how the guidelines can be implemented, veterinarian Sandra Newbury visits the Austin Humane Society, which has implemented enrichment and training practices that have resulted in much calmer, quieter dogs.

Many animal welfare organizations couldn't carry out their mission without the help of those willing to foster animals in their homes—a kindness that opens up much-needed space at shelters and gives little ones a good start in life. As this issue's Behavior Department illustrates, it's a big job turning a frisky fur ball into a fun (and well-adjusted) companion.

These are just three of the many stories from this issue showing how sheltering professionals, rescue groups, and their supporters are making life better for animals—and giving them a second chance.

Tell us your own tales. Email us at asm@humanesociety.org, and don't forget to follow us on Facebook.

—Animal Sheltering *magazine staff*



Timely Information

The article "Back to Basics: Shelter Cat Enrichment" by Debbie Swanson (March-April 2011, p. 53) is terrific.

This issue is excellent, as always, but the last issue (January-February 2011) was above and beyond! The article on Calgary's licensing efforts ("A License to Succeed," p. 26) was terrific (we're only a half a day's drive from Calgary), and Hilary Anne Hager's Volunteer Management column ("Avoiding the Bait and Switch," p. 53) was great, as always. We'll have to find a way to bribe her into coming over some time.

We are going through a volunteer program revival, and an aggressive licensing campaign, so both of these were quite timely (as well as well-written). Keep up the good work!

—Cliff Bennett, Director
Flathead County Animal Shelter
Kalispell, Mont.

Lovie: Lovin' Life

Editor's note: "Yes, We Have Some Chihuahuas" (March-April 2011, p. 22) chronicled the Sacramento SPCA's experience after taking in more than 150 animals from an overcrowded "rescue" in Southern California—including Lovie, a Chihuahua whose dental problems required surgery. Lovie's adopter, Erin Long-Scott, provided the following update on Lovie's new life.

A few things have changed since I last [spoke to] you. I have added two more little dogs to the mix. I am fostering them, and they are from a rescue group I am with. Before, [I had] Lovie and Topper (who I adopted through my rescue group).

Lovie is extremely happy now having more dogs. He plays with them and runs around with them. He is older, so he doesn't run as hard, but he now has a kick in his step. He loves the bonding. I have a few pillows throughout the house, and usually all four of them will cuddle on one pillow. He is still grumpy with some stuff. But he has bonded more with me. He lets me do a lot of things that he wouldn't when I first got him. I can hold and touch his feet. I can touch his mouth and put my hand in his mouth.

I have a huge orange tree on my property, and he loves to hang out under it and chew on the oranges. He still loves eating. I call him my vacuum. Since it is cold now, I turn on my dryer, so while he is outside he likes to sit under the vent and get warm. He absolutely loves doing that. I consider it a massage for him. I ask him if he wants to go get his massage, and he runs to the door. He smiles a lot. Granted, it's crooked, but he smiles. His mouth still hangs down from where he had a rotten tooth sticking out, and his jaw isn't perfect, so he has a bit of a droop. But he runs through the house and is always wagging his tail. He watches everything I do and is completely tuned in to me. If I sit, he sits; if I am walking around, he follows me. When he tires out he will sit and watch me. He is doing really well.

It's a running joke now that we are a famous family. I was on TV a few months ago, and now Lovie is in magazines.

—Erin Long-Scott
South Sacramento, Calif.

Lions and Tigers and Rotties—Oh, My!

Huge effort in Texas rescues Noah's Ark of animals, including big cats and 200-plus rottweilers

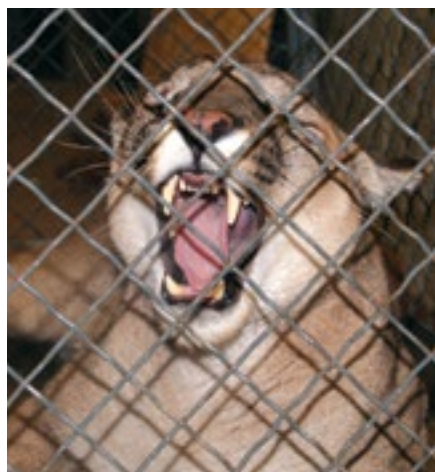
TO THE RESCUE

BY JIM BAKER

There are rescues, and then there are rescues—for example, those that involve extreme weather and the seizure, triage, and sheltering of hundreds of animals from nearly a dozen species.

That's the kind of rescue that took place earlier this year in Coryell County, Texas.

Starting Jan. 31, and lasting three days, the Coryell County Sheriff's Department, the Houston SPCA, and the Houston Zoo seized and transported more than 200 adult dogs and 40 puppies (most of the canines were rottweilers, but there were other breeds present), more than 30 horses and donkeys, 18 domestic cats, 10 rodents, five birds, a Savannah monitor (a desert reptile), one tamarin monkey—plus two Bengal tigers and two mountain lions. Nearly 70 of the more than 300 animals rescued were found living inside a three-bedroom house on the ranch property near Gatesville, including many crated dogs, a white-tailed deer in a cage, and a small raccoon. The rottweilers were kept in outdoor pens with sheds.



Lucky for staff and animals, the Houston SPCA was built with the capacity to house wild animals, such as bears, big cats, and even gorillas—housing that came in handy after a recent rescue.



Houston SPCA staff members (clockwise from far right) Whitney Pozner, James Barnes, Robert Hernandez, Isaac Rosario, and Mark Devlin unload a rescued mountain lion from a transport arriving from the site of a seizure of hundreds of animals—domestic and exotic—from a ranch in Coryell County, Texas.

The owners' intentions aren't entirely clear, but Tara Yurkshat, the SPCA's vice president of animal welfare, believes it was a breeding and boarding operation gone terribly wrong. Animals found on the property were living in very poor environmental conditions, and the home itself was deemed dangerous for humans and animals due to extremely high ammonia levels. Investigators also found several dead puppies and several others suffering from hypothermia. The two suspects initially faced 20 counts of animal cruelty and two environment-related counts, with the possibility of additional charges being filed.

Complicating the effort was an arctic cold front that blasted Texas, plunging temperatures into the low teens. And the rescue site was located about 250 miles away from Houston, a four and a half hour drive, much of it on rural, dirt roads.

"We're able to deal with a large quantity of animals, we're able to deal with the diversity of species, and we're able to deal with exotics. [But] when you put those together

at the same time, it develops a certain level of difficulty," Charles Jansen, the Houston SPCA's chief cruelty investigator, observes dryly.

The effort to rescue, transport, and ultimately place hundreds of domestic and exotic animals required a huge cooperative effort.

The Texas Wildlife Department was called in to rescue the white-tailed deer and the raccoon. The International Exotic Animal Sanctuary in Boyd, Texas, agreed to provide a home for the four big cats. The Savannah monitor went to a reptile rescue group. And the American Rottweiler Club's Disaster Committee coordinated the placement of hundreds of rottweilers across the country.

"This became a *humongous* project in collaboration," Yurkshat says. "It's not unusual for Charles and his team to one day wake up and find that they've got a huge situation on their hands. [But] I think it is unusual for so many groups that don't always necessarily work together to come together and say, 'How do we make this work?'"

The operation started when the Coryell County Sheriff's Department, facing a situation that outstripped its resources, contacted the SPCA for help. Jansen's team arrived to assist with loading horses, but immediately saw that there was a much bigger task ahead.

Members of the SPCA's staff established a game plan, and began to perform triage on the animals, process them, and load them for transport. Each day of the rescue, a transport went to the SPCA, where another team was standing by to offload the animals.

The SPCA contacted the Houston Zoo to request expert help with the four big cats—two male/female pairs. Joe Flanagan, the zoo's director of veterinary services, was happy to assist, and he and three staff members—Maud Marin and Maryanne Toci dlowski, associate veterinarians; and Kevin Hodge, supervisor of carnivores—helped in the rescue, medical care, and transport of the cats.

Marin had a particularly exhausting experience, says Flanagan. From the time she arrived at the property to assess the condition of the big cats, sedate them, load them, and accompany their transport back to the SPCA, she spent nearly 24 hours in bone-chilling weather. It was so cold, in fact, that the anesthetic agent in the darts she had planned to use to tranquilize the cats actually froze, and she had to prepare new ones.



A rescued puppy receives replacement fluid therapy from Houston SPCA staff veterinarian Cheryl Hoggard and animal care team member George LaTorre.

Texas has a history of people keeping backyard tigers and bears—and, in one case, a chimpanzee in a garage—and the Houston SPCA's facility was constructed with the caging to handle such cases. All the animals from Coryell County, including the tigers and mountain lions, were taken to the SPCA before foster care or final placement could be found. The SPCA and Flanagan decided that the best place for the big cats was the International Exotic Animal Sanctuary, located about 25 miles north of Fort Worth. After a Coryell County judge awarded custody on Feb. 23 of all the seized domestic and wild animals to the SPCA, zoo staff performed ultrasounds on the female cats to determine if they were pregnant (they weren't), and sterilized the males. Then Hodge and Toci dlowski accompanied the cats to their new home at the sanctuary.

To help with the huge task of placing the rottweilers, the shelter reached out to Lew Olson, chair of the American Rottweiler Club's Disaster Committee, with whom they'd worked after Hurricane Ike struck Texas in 2008.

Olson contacted the club to share details of the situation. They agreed that the Coryell County rescue operation wasn't a disaster in the usual sense—like the aftermath of a hurricane—but it was a disaster nonetheless. Olson and the club spread the word about the dogs to rescues across the nation, and soon offers to place the dogs in foster homes started to roll in. To fund the rehoming effort, Olson set up a PayPal account, and people around the country sent in checks. PetSmart Charities gave \$10,000 to pay for medical care, as well as donating 150 dog crates.

Olson arranged to rent cargo vans and paid people to drive their own vehicles to transport the dogs to participating rescues. The outreach was successful: Olson was able to find foster homes for almost all the rottweilers.

Olson says working with the SPCA was a great experience. The shelter spayed and neutered all the dogs, vaccinated them, and fed and housed them while Olson looked for foster homes. "I was pleasantly surprised at how cooperative the SPCA was, and I think they were pleasantly surprised at how cooperative we were with them," she says.

Yurkshat acknowledges that there's often friction between rescue groups and shelters due to different philosophies about the best


Animal Sheltering Online

Your magazine isn't just in print—it's on the Web, too. Check out this issue's online extras.

- Go to animalsheltering.org/mouthpieces to download a poster describing the painful reality of declawing cats—and sharing some kinder solutions to protect your furniture from scratches.
- You went crazy over our Coffee Break question on your favorite programs for cats! We couldn't fit every response into print, so visit animalsheltering.org/publications/magazine/coffee_break.html to read more reader responses.
- And don't forget to "like" us at [facebook.com/animalshelteringmagazine!](https://www.facebook.com/animalshelteringmagazine/)

way to help animals, but in the Coryell County rescue, everything just worked. "I think that this shows that [animosity] doesn't have to happen, and that we can work together."

Apart from the collaboration of multiple partners, Yurkshat and Jensen credit the SPCA's staff for their enormous contribution to the effort. Not only did they have to run the shelter's day-to-day operations, caring for about 800 animals, they also had to absorb the sudden influx of 350 more. And their numbers continued to rise: About 70 puppies and five foals were subsequently born at the shelter.

Shift after shift of staff worked long hours to make the operation a success, and everyone at the SPCA contributed to the effort. "I think it's noteworthy when—at 3 o'clock in the morning—the president of the organization [Patricia Mercer] is here to lend support to the team, and be there to help with the offloading of the big cats, and basically express to them that we're all a part of this," Yurkshat says. 

Sure, No Problem

An Indiana shelter is always eager to help when pets—and those who protect them—need a hand

The supportive board that regulates the municipal New Albany/Floyd County Animal Shelter in southern Indiana has an ongoing worry.

It's not about the shelter's budget, the standards of care, or its relationship with the community. Those things are all fine, as far as the board's concerned. Rather, its five members fret that the shelter's taking on too much.

"They say, 'Are you sure you can handle this? We don't want you to burn out,'" says David Hall, director. It's easy to understand why the New Albany/Floyd County Animal Control Authority thinks Hall's shelter has a lot on its plate. It does—and that's the way Hall, and animal care coordinator Theresa Stilger, like it.

"I'm just a move-on-to-something-new kind of gal," Stilger says, laughing. "It's where we are and what we do. ... The support of our community and our board makes a difference, in that they allow us to blossom and grow."

Whenever an animal welfare organization—whether it's a small, in-state dog res-

cue, another shelter, or The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)—contacts Hall and his staff, they're game to help—whether it's testifying on pending legislation, taking in puppy mill or fighting dogs after a raid, or even crossing state lines to assist during disasters.

When heavy rains flooded the animal control shelter in Louisville, Ky., Pam Rogers, Kentucky state director for The HSUS, reached out to Hall immediately. Volunteers and animal control officers needed equipment like trucks and crates, and help evacuating nearly 500 pets from the building. "And here he comes, bringing some of his staff," Rogers recalls.

Another time, Hall was happy to contribute equipment and staff to assist Rogers with a hoarding case in Breckinridge County, Ky. And Hall's response when she asked him to drive three and a half hours to a western Kentucky shelter to show the ropes to a new director? "'Sure, no problem,'" Rogers says.



David Hall hangs out with the adult kitties in his shelter's communal cat room, dubbed Cat Central Station. The room features a custom-made climbing area.



Staff at the New Albany/Floyd County Animal Shelter in southeast Indiana are quick to lend a hand whenever help's needed after a puppy mill raid, dogfighting bust, or other emergency situation. David Hall, director, and Theresa Stilger, animal care coordinator—holding two shelter cuties—have also testified before the State House in Indianapolis on various issues.

Anne Sterling, Indiana state director for The HSUS, has had similar experiences with Hall and his team, who took in a handful of pit bulls after a dogfighting raid. And when she needed help setting up a temporary shelter before a puppy mill bust in southern Indiana, Sterling called Hall. His staff found a location, put her in touch with a local veterinarian so that the dogs could receive medical care, and took in some of the 233 dogs after the raid.

Hall and Stilger have also come to the General Assembly in Indianapolis to testify on issues such as dogfighting and puppy mills. "That's kind of an unusual thing, when shelters will just drop everything to come and testify," Sterling says. "It's got to be hard to shake loose when you've got mouths to feed and day-to-day operations. The fact that they make it such a priority to come and do this, that really means a lot."

The shelter has long been one to reach out. After Hurricane Katrina, seeing the devastation and feeling like his staff could do something to help, Hall got support from the New Albany/Floyd County Animal Control Authority, local government offi-

cial, and the community to partner with staff and volunteers from the Kentucky Humane Society in Louisville, sending a team to Hattiesburg, Miss., one week after the disaster. They drove a cargo van loaded with medical and cleaning supplies and bottled water, and once onsite, helped set up an emergency shelter, perform triage of the animals, walk dogs, feed pets, and clean up.

These days, Hall and his staff have their hands full caring for a steady stream of homeless animals. The shelter is addressing the problem at its root, through spay/neuter programs. The facility has its own clinic to provide veterinary care and ensure that every animal who leaves the shelter is spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped.

The shelter also operates a low-cost spay/neuter program for the community, called Fix Your Critter Day. The program was launched with a \$30,000 grant from PetSmart Charities, awarded in 2007, that was divided equally among the shelter, the Floyd County Animal Rescue League, and the Floyd County Humane Society, two unsheltered nonprofits that provide financial support and volunteers to Hall's facility. (Funding now comes from the city and county government, an anonymous donor, and the two nonprofits.) The rescue league runs its own low-cost spay/neuter program for cats, called Feline Fix, as well as a trap-neuter-release program. The humane society focuses its spay/neuter efforts on large-breed dogs.

Once a month, the shelter arranges a transport of 30 to 40 pets to the Kentucky Humane Society's S.N.I.P. Clinic in Louisville. The animals stay overnight for surgery, then are returned to the shelter the next day, when their owners can pick them up. Grant funding enables those who cannot afford the low-cost vouchers to have their pets spayed or neutered for free.

From 2008 through 2010, the shelter, the rescue league, and the humane society have collectively spayed and neutered 3,350 cats and 1,300 dogs. An additional 4,250 shelter pets had spay/neuter surgery at the shelter's in-house clinic.

Since the shelter and the two nonprofits began their cooperative spay/neuter ef-



David Hall and Angel, a salmon-crested cockatoo—the shelter's de facto mascot—have a stimulating conversation about current animal welfare issues. The demonstrative bird has been known to laugh, and yell at staff members.

forts in 2008, intake numbers have declined 25 percent, according to Stilger. And this, Hall points out, was during a recession and a major housing crisis that left shelters across the country swamped with surrendered pets. "In an economy that's in the tank—what do you think of that?" he says.

Municipal shelters often feel that they can't launch a spay/neuter program for the community's pets, because it could alienate the city's veterinarians, according to Hall. But, cooperating with the two Floyd County nonprofits, Hall's shelter has plunged ahead. "It really comes down to the support of your local government, and your governing board," Stilger says. The shelter has partnered with the Floyd County Humane Society to kick off a pet identification awareness campaign, called Tags Take Me Home, designed to encourage owners to microchip their pets and have them wear collars and tags. Local children will compete in an art contest, drawing posters to illustrate the campaign; the winner will receive a savings bond and a presentation at the mayor's office. The graphics from the

winning entry will be made into a poster, which will be distributed throughout the community.

In 2010, the shelter's return-to-owner rate for cats increased threefold—from 1 to 3 percent. "It sounds like nothing, but that's 27 cats that went back home," Stilger says. "And we've actually had some starting to come [into the shelter] wearing their city licenses that they get when they're spayed or neutered." It certainly helps that every animal who leaves the shelter is microchipped and wearing tags, she adds.

Hall and Stilger credit their community for their shelter's success. "They're supportive of our mission and what we do. They know that we want to take a stand against puppy mills, the dogfighting, and the animal abuse, that we want to place as many animals as possible," Stilger says.

Hall downplays the praise that comes his way, thanks to his shelter's repeated willingness to tackle challenges above and beyond its already substantial workload. "This is so confusing to me," he says. "... I thought that's why we were here." AS



And We're Back

Telethons reap rewards, boost adoptions, and showcase shelter programs to the community

You might not savor Jerry Lewis's over-the-top shtick—the tears and his signature, shaky rendition of “You’ll Never Walk Alone”—during the annual MDA (Muscular Dystrophy Association) Labor Day Telethon, but you’ve got to admit: The guy sure knows how to raise money for a cause.

While the longtime host's—*ahem*—unique creative style might be open to debate, animal shelters in search of new fundraising ideas could actually learn a lot from what Lewis has accomplished for the organization: netting hundreds of millions of dollars in contributions since the telethon's inception in 1952.

It's possible some shelters around the country have been taking notes; at least a handful host their own telethons that reliably bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars to help support vital programs and services.

Of course, organizing such an event isn't for everyone—if it were, there would be dozens of telethons across the nation, put on by shelters big and small, rural and urban, with deep pockets and shoestring budgets. But that's not the case; there are a number of important factors that help determine if a telethon's a realistic fundraiser for a shelter.

“It's a tremendous amount of work, and you definitely want to see a return on investment,” says Barbara Bagnon, marketing/communications director for the Oregon Humane Society in Portland. “If you were in a small town, and the viewership would be low during the air time [the local TV station] would sell you, I would definitely look at that before pulling the trigger on this.” The cost of putting on a telethon—in the tens of thousands of dollars—the time commitment from staff and volunteers that's needed, and the size of the potential viewership all pose challenges. That's likely why, Bagnon says, she's only heard of telethons being done in major metropolitan areas. (Her shelter's 11th annual Telethon to End Petlessness last October raised about \$290,000.)

One shelter that's made it work is Lollypop Farm, the Humane Society of Greater Rochester (N.Y.). Staff and supporters



It takes a village to hold a televised fundraiser. Marty Snyder, Evan Dawson, and Norma Holland of 13 WHAM-TV; Alice Calabrese, president/CEO of Lollypop Farm; and Julie DePasquale of local radio station 100.5 The Drive were among the 200 staff, volunteers, and on-air talent who helped pull off the shelter's 15th annual telethon in March.

had plenty to celebrate after its 15th annual telethon wrapped in March. A last-minute pledge of \$40,000 from longtime supporter and local businessman Greg Polisseni made it the most successful event in the shelter's history, raising \$253,000—and blowing past the goal of \$208,000.

Lollypop Farm got into the telethon business unexpectedly. A production company with experience running such events for shelters around the country approached Lollypop Farm with a potential sponsor and a significant grant already in hand, and offered its services for a fee. The shelter accepted the deal and used the production company's out-of-the-box model for three or four years, before taking over all the responsibilities itself.

Having someone to show the shelter the ropes was key to starting a telethon, and keeping it going in the early years. “[It] wasn't on our radar at all, and if it weren't for the production company toting a big name—at the time, Heinz—sponsor with them, we wouldn't have had the gameness to try,” says Debra Calandrillo, Lollypop Farm's special events manager, who's now worked

on five telethons. “Their providing the textbook of how to execute a telethon, as well as providing some financial assurance that we wouldn't go belly up, took away the degree of risk that we likely would have been subjected to without both of these elements.”

The telethon is critical to Lollypop Farm's bottom line; it's the shelter's biggest fundraiser of the year. But it takes a significant investment of time and effort—as well as \$50,000 to \$55,000 to pay for expenses—to get it off the ground each year. The team that's needed to pull it off includes shelter staff, volunteers, corporate sponsors, a partnering TV station, and a videographer/producer to tape vignettes of “success story” adoptions and touting the shelter's programs.

And once a telethon's over, planning soon begins on the next one.

“Large-scale events are a challenge,” says Rick Gabrielson, vice president of development and communications at the Dumb Friends League in Denver. “It is a machine that kind of moves through the year. Right now, we're working on two of them, and starting the telethon for next year.”



CONSIDER A CATALYST FOR SAVING MORE LIVES

Get innovative promotion ideas and helpful tips for bolstering cat adoptions in your community. You'll also find animal welfare tools and resources from experts across the field.

ASPCAPRO.ORG/CATS

ASPCA
WE ARE THEIR VOICE.®



Let your animals strut their stuff

Chameleon Software puts your pictures on PetHarbor.com, and automatically uploads them to AdoptAPet, Petfinder and other top sites.

Give your animals the ultimate chance of finding a new home or returning home after being lost!



Is a Telethon Right for Your Shelter?

Debra Calandrillo, special events manager for Lollypop Farm, suggests that shelters thinking about holding a telethon consider the following:

- Most animal sheltering telethons take place in media markets much larger than Rochester; the size of the market and the potential viewership should be considered.
- Does your shelter have strong brand recognition and community awareness? Those factors can help make a telethon a success.
- Analyze your main goals for having a telethon. Is it purely financial, a desire to raise awareness of your shelter, or a combination of these?
- It might take several years to reach the necessary level of financial support. Does your shelter have the financial strength and resolve needed to allow the event time to mature and reach its potential?
- Network with other shelters. Reach out to your local news stations to see what kind of support they might be willing to offer. Survey your supporters to see if they would be willing to donate to another fundraiser, or internally assess whether a telethon would attract new sponsors.
- Do you have volunteer videographers, photographers, etc., who could donate their services to keep your costs down? Do you have enough content to produce a multi-hour broadcast?
- Would adding one more event, especially of the size and complexity of a telethon, fry your staff, volunteers, and donors? Or could you potentially eliminate smaller, less popular events, and focus your efforts here?



Staff, volunteers, and other participants in Lollypop Farm's most recent telethon celebrate the event, which raised more than a quarter million dollars.

Lollypop Farm's telethon requires the efforts of about 30 people, starting six months before the broadcast, as well as 200 staff and volunteers pitching in the day of the show. "There are a lot of contributors here. ... Part of the success is because everybody's involved and sharing their expertise, and it makes it a much more fulfilling event," Calandrillo says. Staff continuity makes the job easier; the longer a telethon has existed, the more seamless it is to organize each year. Kelley Hildmeyer of Video Hound Productions, for example, has been producing and directing Lollypop Farm's broadcast since the very first show.

The telethon is a six-hour broadcast, from 3 to 9 p.m., with a half-hour break for the news. The shelter partners with WHAM-TV, the local ABC affiliate, which provides the hosts. The program is made up of live interviews, check presentations from corporate sponsors, and pretaped video segments about shelter programs and some of the more than 11,000 animals that come through Lollypop Farm each year. Adoptable animals are also brought on camera.

The telethon takes place at Eastview Mall in Victor, a suburb of Rochester. Staff and volunteers arrange the sets, including the phone banks, in the mall's main court. "I think that's part of the reason for our success, is just the visibility of it. ... We get to capitalize on people who may not even know about the telethon, but they stumble upon it that day," Calandrillo

says. Passersby can visit a "kissing booth," where they can get a friendly lick from a dog or a miniature horse, or buy a few things from the Lollypop Shop, a table stocked with pet toys and other goodies. Corporate sponsors line the set, featuring their products and services; raffles are held, and donation collection sites are placed around the mall. "It's a party-like atmosphere," Calandrillo says.

The average donation is about \$75, and the telethon attracts around 1,500 donations (not including corporate sponsors). Callers can use their credit cards to donate, or make a pledge and have the shelter mail them a bill after the tele-

thon. A few years ago, the shelter started a program called Humane Heroes, which is specific to the telethon; callers agree to give \$5 or more per month for one year, starting the month after the broadcast. The commitment is renewable at the next telethon. It enables people to give at a higher level than they could with a one-time donation, Calandrillo says.

The broadcast is streamed live on WHAM-TV's website, so donors from outside the Rochester area can participate, too. Corporate sponsorships begin around \$500, with a modest level of recognition, and go upward of \$10,000 to \$25,000. Sponsors at those levels, such as Hill's Science Diet, can have sets made that include their own signage.

The results of a successful telethon can be eye-popping. The Dumb Friends League's 13th annual telethon in January raised more than \$300,000 for the shelter and helped get 69 pets adopted. And in March, the San Diego SPCA and Humane Society's 14th annual telethon raised more than \$192,000.

But the value of having a telethon goes beyond the raw numbers of how much money is brought in that day, or how many animals get adopted. It's also about exposure. Lollypop Farm's telethon influences viewers who watch it, according to Alice Calabrese, the shelter's CEO/president. "[People think] 'Wow, Lollypop has cute animals, they take good care of them, they get lots of services ... with the adoptions.' So it's got a lot of spillover for a long time." AS



Then
Tombstone Animal Shelter
 Tombstone, AZ - 1,600 sq ft
 12 indoor/outdoor kennels



Top Dog

For over twenty years, Houndquarters has led the pack with innovative design, engineering and installations of kennel building systems for public and private needs.



Now
Bay County Animal Shelter
 Panama City, FL - 14,000 sq ft
 100 indoor/outdoor kennels

1991

2001

2011



Houndquarters, the kennel industry's leader in pre-fabricated, affordable solutions, has completed more than 140 major projects from 1600 to 20,000 square feet. Fabricated from the highest quality materials for a safe, comfortable and maintenance-free environment.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OFFER

An architectural design plan service for any retro-fit or new construction project up to 3,500 sq ft for \$1,500 (slightly higher for larger projects). Fee is refunded when an agreement is entered into for purchase.

Call (602) 320-0449 for more information.

(480) 502-9622
INFO@HOUNDQUARTERS.COM

HOUNDQUARTERS.COM

[scoop]

Puncturing the Puppy Mill Pipeline

Michigan resident targets pet stores supplied by unethical breeding operations

BY ARNA COHEN

In a city famous for heavy hitters like Henry Ford, Joe Louis, and the Detroit Tigers, the name Pam Sordyl may not get instant recognition. But among animal advocates, she's known for delivering knockouts to a formidable opponent: puppy mills.

The indefatigable Flint, Mich., native has singlehandedly built a 360-person volunteer corps that hits the abusive industry where it hurts most—in its wallet. Come rain, snow, or shine, group members spend Saturdays conducting “Adopt, Don't Shop” demonstrations outside pet stores that do business with puppy mills, which subject animals to desperate lives of confinement and neglect. Sordyl is racking up the wins: Since 2008, five of the puppy-selling pet stores she's targeted have closed.

Laid off from her job as a General Motors financial analyst, Sordyl brings the full force of her business savvy to bear on the problem. Sparked by her attendance at the 2007 Taking Action for Animals conference sponsored by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), her advocacy crystallized when she founded the Southeast

Michigan Puppy Mill Awareness Meetup to protest a boutique pet store in Northville, a tony Detroit suburb.

Concerned that sign-carrying protestors might alienate residents of the upscale community, Sordyl decided to hold a parade instead. She mapped out the route, staging a two-person rehearsal to gauge reactions. “I'm definitely a planner,” Sordyl says. The store owner called the police, who told Sordyl to leave. She complied but was surprised when the officer followed her and apologized. “[He] said, ‘I actually saw this on TV. ... [My wife and I] know about puppy mills, and I don't think [the owner] is on the up-and-up.’ He told us to come back.”

About 60 people turned out for the parade, accompanied by rescued dogs wearing “Priceless” price tags. So, too, did the police, who declined to intervene. Sordyl now regularly contacts local law enforcement beforehand to notify them of scheduled actions. “I'm all good with the sergeant,” she says, describing a town where's she's been protesting. “We e-mail, and he sends me nice thank-you notes.”

Sordyl employs the same due diligence in following the paper trail from pet store to puppy mill. She pores over purchasing records and U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection reports, and even travels out of state to document conditions at breeding facilities. One store owner insisted the dogs at his breeders had grass and shade trees. “But I know different,” says Sordyl. She has the horrible inspection reports and photographs of feces-laden wire cages to prove it.

Despite her knowledge of these horrors, Sordyl's objective is not to put people out of business but to offer a humane alternative to selling puppy mill dogs. A negotiator, she writes letters, meets with owners to present her evidence, and volunteers to help replace puppy sales with in-store adoption events to bring in potential customers. But she doesn't hesitate to take action when necessary. Following a fruitless meeting with one store



Pam Sordyl, founder of the Southeast Michigan Puppy Mill Awareness Meetup, battles puppy mills by encouraging people to adopt their animals rather than buying them from pet stores. She adopted Leroy Brown, her Jack Russell terrier, four years ago from an animal sanctuary.

MOUThPIECES)))



Just add your organization's contact information and branding, and hang Mouthpieces up in your lobby or hand them out

at your front desk, as appropriate. You don't even need to tear out the page: Go to animalsheltering.org/mouthpieces to download and print a clean PDF copy.

Send suggestions for future Mouthpieces to asm@humanesociety.org.

owner, Sordyl informed mall managers of her intent to protest. Ten days after she issued an action alert, the store liquidated.

Sordyl's powers of persuasion have helped The HSUS reach a new milestone. In January, more than 1,000 stores nationwide had signed its puppy-friendly pet store pledge; 90 of those signatures were gathered singlehandedly by Sordyl.

Michigan's animal shelters, recognizing that cutting the puppy mill-pet store pipeline will boost adoptions and reduce euthanasia rates, have also embraced Sordyl's efforts. The Michigan Pet Fund Alliance, a coalition of rescue groups and shelters working toward ending pet homelessness, features the Meetup prominently on its website and invited her to speak at its first Getting to the Goal conference last March

As if phone-calling, letter-writing, and protesting weren't time-consuming enough, Sordyl travels the state conducting lobbying workshops with HSUS Michigan state director Jill Fritz, preparing for the day when a puppy mill bill makes its way to the legislature floor. A bill introduced last November died in committee; budget cuts make it unlikely that it will reappear this term, says Sordyl, but she's not discouraged. When that day does come, she's ready to throw the considerable weight of her group behind it. **AS**

THIS PAGE: PAT PORTELL; OPPOSITE PAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

DECLAWING:

It's not like a trip to the spa.

(Unless your manicurist takes off the tips of your fingers.)

Many people think that declawing simply removes a cat's nails—the equivalent of having your fingernails trimmed. Sadly, this is far from the truth. Declawing traditionally involves the amputation of the last bone of each toe. It's like surgically removing the last knuckle of each of your fingers.

Cats need to scratch. It helps them exercise and mark their territory. There are kinder solutions than declawing to protect your furniture!

- 1** Provide sturdy, tall scratching posts, and put them where your cat currently scratches—in front of your fancy divan, for example. You can move them once she's come to like them.
- 2** Dangle a wand toy on and around appropriate scratching surfaces to entice her to use them.
- 3** Clap your hands when you catch her scratching inappropriately and entice her to the scratching post.
- 4** Use a product like Sticky Paws—a tape that deters cats from scratching—to protect the furniture.
- 5** Trim her nails, or use nail covers like Soft Paws to prevent damage.

For more tips, go to humanesociety.org/animals/cats/tips/destructive_scratching.html.



[scoop]

Is a Nonprofit/Government Merger Good for Your Community?

BY RICK JOHNSON



Humane organizations contracting for all or part of local government animal services is not a new concept, but one that has resulted in many successful collaborations over the years. However, the current economic slump has further hurt government budgets, and in some cases severely reduced city or county animal services. As the effects of these financial cuts “trickle down” into our communities, they can im-

pact the animals we serve in many ways, including live release rates, field service operations, and adoptions.

Keeping in mind that our ultimate goal is to save lives, the effects of budget cuts can also provide new opportunities to work more effectively. Municipalities, in larger numbers, are looking at nonprofit animal welfare, care, and control organizations to provide some form of support, ranging from housing animals to a comprehensive contract for all animal services. The beauty of the nonprofit model is that it has fewer constraints: It enables you to keep bureaucracy to a minimum, take advantage of a motivated volunteer base, try a multitude of approaches to an issue, and make changes in a heartbeat.

Due to dramatic budget reductions in our community, local government animal service agencies were losing critical staff and no longer able to fully serve our community. Administrators of both the County of Sacramento and the City of Sacramento

requested that the SPCA consider taking over the operations of the local animal service programs in hopes that the SPCA would be able to provide better care for the animals and better service to the community. As you look to either contract for the first time or increase government contracts in your community, here are some issues to consider.

The Sacramento SPCA recruited La Piana Consulting, through a grant awarded by the ASPCA (find out more at ASPCapro.org and click on “Grants”). La Piana has extensive experience with mergers and acquisitions of nonprofit agencies. We asked them for an independent analysis of the financial opportunities and risks of an acquisition by the SPCA of the County of Sacramento and the City of Sacramento animal shelters. (More than 45,000 animals annually enter our combined shelters.)

In the exploration stage, we wanted to find answers to many questions. Does supervising a government program fit into our mission? What might all the elements of this acquisition/merger look like? What is the financial viability of the long-term merger of housing, spay/neuter, adoption, licensing, etc.? Should we bid on housing, managing field services, or the whole program? What wealth of resources could we utilize? How would this merger be perceived in our community?

You must closely examine the government entity as a whole. After every election, you may end up reporting to an entirely different team than you negotiated with at the time of the contract. The team includes the local police department, city services, and the city council—each with their own ideas about how to best manage animal services. If your intake model is one that only receives relinquishments, your current animal population may have a higher adoption rate than a city or county shelter, but government animal control takes in stray animals with no history, which can present challenges on placement in your community. You may need to hire a dedicated employee to manage the government relationship, or create new job descriptions for several employees to manage the contract. Governments have limited resources; you must anticipate layoffs and further budget changes (in your contract as well).

SAWA 2011 Conference
San Francisco,
Calif., Nov. 13-15

You help animals. We help you.

From a board of directors' perspective, consider whether expanding your contract or management of the operation is a good business decision. When you absorb a government program, rather than simply working together, there is economy of scale on adoptions, care for animals, and buying of products. There may be advantages to providing a consistent message to the community on events, adoptions, and spay/neuter, which could ultimately benefit the animals in your community, and increase your fundraising potential.

The change in culture and preparation for that change must be key to your decision. The new culture you create is a shared culture between a nonprofit organization with a variety of programs and services, and a government animal services agency with its own mandates and requirements ... and there is no separating them. The collaboration will change the mindset of all employees. They may need to embrace a change in staffing levels, changes in promotions and career growth, and a new organizational chart.

The contract negotiation may include an option for the government to absorb shelter employees within other government service areas. In our feasibility study, we wanted to know if the employees were union or non-union; would hiring them impact the cost of running the program?

Take a look at the government facility. In our case, there is value in the physical structure, as Sacramento County Animal Care and Regulation is a new Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold shelter, meaning it's a federally recognized green facility.

Think about how community perception can be impacted. There are many passionate animal supporters, volunteers, and advocates who will view this contract with expectations and concerns.

In the end, you must make a decision that is best for your community; helps you fulfill your mission; supports spay/neuter, humane education, and community awareness; and is financially sustainable. Saving animal lives remains our ultimate goal. [AS](#)

Rick Johnson is executive director of Sacramento SPCA and a board member of SAWA.

Humane Society University provides an academic curriculum exclusively dedicated to human-animal studies. Undergraduate degrees and graduate certificates can be completed online or with a combination of online and onsite classes. We also offer a variety of professional development courses on topics such as animals in disaster, animal fighting investigations, mastering animal sheltering basics, and confronting compassion fatigue.

For more information, visit humanesocietyuniversity.org or contact admissions@humanesocietyuniversity.org.

Humane Society University
2100 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
p 202.676.2390
f 202.778.6147

Licensed by the DC Education
Licensure Commission



Learn. Lead. Achieve.

Humane Society University is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for all applicants regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, marital, or veteran status in compliance with Federal and state laws and regulations. All benefits, privileges, and opportunities offered by Humane Society University are available to all students and employees in accordance with federal and District of Columbia laws and regulations. This policy is applicable to all personnel policies and practices including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, compensation, transfers, layoffs, terminations, benefits, and social and recreational programs.



Spay cadets. It might have been a scene from the TV show *Scrubs*. Vintage pop songs played in the background, while teams named Hello Kitty and Castration Sensation competed for titles like “most creative costume.” But the participants were all business, gathered together in Madison, Wis., to spay and neuter feral cats in honor of The Humane Society of the United States/Humane Society International 17th annual Spay Day. The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association (HSVMA) and its student chapter helped fund and staff the Dane County Friends of Ferals clinic, a partnership that not only provided financial support for the clinic but also gave 45 veterinary and veterinary technician students the opportunity to observe and assist in surgeries. Eighty-six feral cats were sterilized there, while more than 100 were spayed and neutered in Corvallis, Ore., where HSVMA sponsored a clinic hosted by the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon and staffed by vet students from Oregon State University



(OSU). The students who participated in the clinics were excited about being part of the live action. “We don’t touch animals in the first year,” says student Laura Niman, vice president of OSU’s HSVMA chapter. “So it’s nice to be able to get out and remind ourselves why we’re doing this.”

Calling a spayed a spayed. We just call it like we see it. And we see that this year’s Spay Day was a smashing success! A reported 55,455 spays and neuters were performed—including 7,544 internationally—at more than 650 events held in honor of Spay Day, an increase of 4 percent over last year’s operation (pun intended). Surgeries took place in all 50 states and 45 countries, with the result that kajillions (yes, that’s a scientific measurement) of unwanted puppies and kittens will not be born.

Pads on the iPad. Tired of playing mind games with your cat? Too lazy to wiggle the laser pointer for her? Here’s a simple solution: Shell out for an iPad! Several companies have developed apps that allow cats to put paws to iPad, and entertain themselves without any effort from you. Aptly-named apps with creative names like Cat Game, Cat Toy, App for Cats, and Game for Cats have felines chasing a dot, bug, mouse, frog, or other creature around the surface; some of the icons emit a sound when the cat “catches” it. Some cats go crazy for the games, writes Bob Tedeschi, tech reporter for the *New York Times*, but his own cat, Kukio, didn’t appear to be that intrigued. “She swatted the screen once, then watched (with great interest) the dots and mice dart across the screen until I got tired of watching her,” he writes at *nytimes.com*. If your kitty is just as happy with a fly or a ball of foil, maybe just put your money in the bank.



thundershirt

100%
Satisfaction
Guaranteed

Drug-Free Solution for Dog Anxiety

Use for thunder, separation, crating, travel and other anxieties!

- Help Ready Dogs for Adoption More Quickly
- Proven Over 80% Effective
- Gentle Pressure Calms Dogs
- Money-Back Guarantee
- Recommended by Thousands of Vets and Trainers
- Contact Us for Shelter Donation Programs – Limited Availability

In Partnership With

Patfinder.com
ADOPT A HOMELESS PET



\$19 WHOLESALE

“Overwhelmingly, Thundershirt has been a success with our cases.”

Dr. Mark Guise, DVM, Harrisburg, PA

thundershirt.com | 866-892-2078 | service@thundershirt.com

When people see cats outdoors, they're often unsure what to do. Is that roaming cat a neighbor's pet who is allowed outdoors, a lost or abandoned pet, or a feral? This new brochure helps the public help cats, providing advice not only on how to find a pet cat who's gotten lost, but on how to determine the circumstances and provide assistance to cats they may find wandering outdoors. Order brochures for distribution at animalsheltering.org/catbrochure.

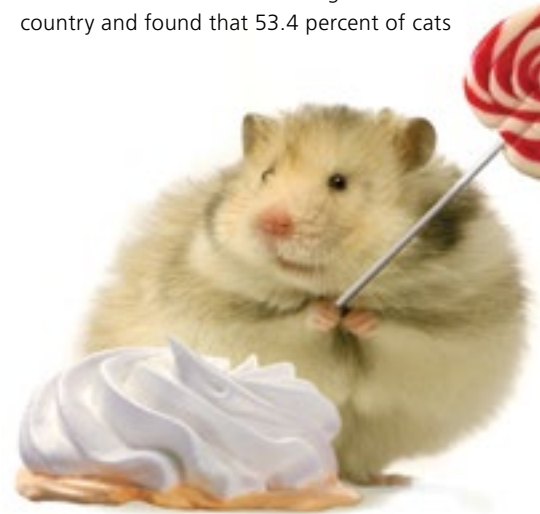


LEEDing by example. Green is the favorite color at the Ozaukee campus of the Wisconsin Humane Society. The new shelter and veterinary clinic, which opened in March, has incorporated a number of eco-friendly and energy-saving features that are expected to earn the 22,000-square-foot facility a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certification. Solar panels on the roof heat water for hand washing and bathing animals, while the roof itself reduces heat absorption. Rain barrels collect storm water runoff to irrigate the lawn and gardens designed with native plants. Many construction materials were manufactured

locally, reducing carbon emissions associated with transportation. Reflecting the society's origins as a humane education organization, the lobby holds an interactive exhibit that takes visitors on a scavenger hunt for green features throughout the building, as well as displays that teach about animals and the need to treat them, and each other, with kindness. The Ozaukee campus and its sister shelter in Milwaukee adopt out a combined total of nearly 10,000 pets a year and frequently take in animals transferred from overcrowded shelters in other states. Ozaukee opened its doors with 42 puppies from a shelter in Kentucky; by the end of the day, only two remained.

Clinical Immunology. In a small clinical trial with 88 patients, a single injection reduced the skin's inflammatory reaction by 40 percent and elicited no serious side effects. Five to eight doses a year may be required initially, a small inconvenience for the ability to bury one's face in cat fur.

The skinny on fat pets. The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention is sounding a warning about a disturbing trend. No, not the tendency to purchase matching pet-and-owner outfits, but that as more Americans become obese, so, too, do more of our pets. The association's fourth annual National Pet Obesity Awareness Day Study, facilitated by the Banfield Pet Hospital chain, examined 133 adult cats and 383 adult dogs across the country and found that 53.4 percent of cats

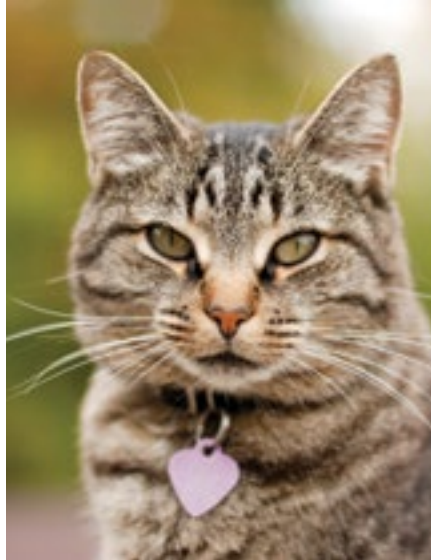


Coming right at-choo. Allergies are one of the top 10 reasons cats are surrendered to shelters. The severity of an allergy can vary, but those with serious reactions face a tough choice: deal with weekly allergy shots that may or not work and have side effects of their own, or give up a beloved companion. But hope springs eternal. Mark Larche and a team of researchers at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, have developed a vaccine that could change the lives of allergic owners and their cats. The researchers created a vaccine made of seven synthetic peptides modeled on an immune-stimulating protein secreted by cats. The synthetic peptides tell the immune cells that they're harmless, no need to get nasty, according to the report published in *Journal of Allergy &*

and 55.6 percent of dogs were overweight or obese. Based on these results, an estimated 50 million cats and 43 million dogs are packing too many pounds, most certainly due to too many treats and not enough exercise (sound familiar?). A 19-pound cat whose ideal weight is 10 pounds is analogous to a 5-foot-9-inch adult male weighing 321 pounds, while a 48-pound dog who should weigh 22 pounds is the same as a 5-foot-9-inch adult male weighing 368 pounds. As in humans, lugging around extra weight can have serious consequences for pets, contributing to arthritis and joint pain, diabetes, high blood pressure, and kidney disease. Comprehensive information on pet obesity and how to combat it is available at petobesityprevention.com. **AS**

What are some of your favorite programs to help cats?

That's the question we asked for this issue's Coffee Break, and you responded with an outpouring of creative—and successful—programs that are making a difference in your communities. We were excited to hear about so many good things happening for kitties! To read more of your responses and answer our next question, go to animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak.



When renovating our shelter we turned a former front-room office with a street view into a cage-free cat room. The room was a community effort. It was designed and built by students of the Montclair University industrial design program with materials donated by local businesses. The train station is around the corner, and it's terrific to watch commuters walk by and then do a double take, stop, and take time out of their busy day to smile at our cats in the window. It really connects our cats and our community and often leads to adoptions.

*—Melissa Neiss, shelter operations supervisor/senior animal control officer
Montclair Township Animal Shelter
Montclair, New Jersey*

We are proud of our Cat Castle that allows our cats and kitties to be in a room just for them with access to a screened porch for fresh air. There are rockers for people to sit with the felines. A local artist donated her time to hand paint the rooms. The room was built with a generous donation and is a big hit with the felines and the public.

*—Bruce Fishalow, executive director
Humane Society of Marion County
Ocala, Florida*

Good Mews Animal Foundation offers a program that allows experienced volunteers to work one-on-one with cats that need special attention or socialization. Kitty Buddies commit to spend at least 30 minutes every week with each cat they choose to buddy. While some KB cats just need extra attention, most need help to overcome trauma, neglect, or abuse. Kitty Buddies work with the cats on a long-term basis to help them become more social and adoptable. It's more than just petting and playing; most of the KB cats require intensive work to overcome fear or aggression. We observe each cat's behavior, determine what the cat needs, and then help the cat meet those goals. We record our progress and perform periodic evaluations; our observations are available to the adoption counselors. Kitty Buddies even socialized three feral cats; two have already been adopted. Such results prove the effectiveness of our program.

*—Joyce Fetterman, Kitty Buddy coordinator
Good Mews Animal Foundation
Marietta, Georgia*

I knew about Operation Catnip (OC) long before I moved to Florida. [The nonprofit organization has offered free spay/neuter surgeries and vaccines for unowned, free-roaming community cats in Alachua County since 1998. It's a cooperative effort among Alachua County Animal Services, the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, and local rescue groups.] Its reputation was impressive—250 cats sterilized in a single day! This, I had to see. After witnessing all of the volunteers in action one Sunday, I vowed to return as a surgeon, to do my part to help the community cats of Alachua County. Having been a participant for the past two years, I still look forward to the Operation Catnip Sundays. The satisfaction of walking out into the hallway at the conclusion of surgery, and seeing the hundreds of kitties recovering in their humane traps, is hard to beat. Thank you, OC, for letting me be a part of this great team effort!

*—Sarah Kirk, veterinarian
Operation Catnip
Gainesville, Florida*

Our most utilized cat-related program is Operation FFAT Cat (Feral Feeding Assistance Team). This is a comprehensive program that uses a team-based community approach to manage our local feral populations. Through our organization, the colony manager applies to become part of the team. The application includes the location of the colony and descriptions, including spay/neuter status, of all the cats in the colony. We then do a colony inspection to determine the needs. Then the team gets to work. Local veterinarians perform low-cost spay and neuter surgeries subsidized by us. Local builders provide shelters. As soon as the colony can be described as managed, more than 80 percent altered, and having sufficient shelter, our organization provides half of the necessary food to the caretaker. The food is provided to us by local team member merchants at a significant discount. In the six months since the program was established, we now provide food for more than 300 altered cats daily!

—*Gillian Wood Pultz, executive director
North Fork Animal Welfare League Inc.
Southold, New York*

We do cat adoption promotions to inspire the public to adopt and educate them on cats' needs in the home. We're getting ready for St. Patrick's Day, and we do Cinco De Meow, Feline Independence Day, etc. Adopters get discounted adoption rates, go home with cat care info, handmade cat toys and treats, plus information about our free cat-training classes and behavioral support line. For St. Patrick's Day, all their goodies are placed in a yellow litter pan, and they get a free "Pot 'O Gold," while Cinco De Meow's adoption fees are \$5 for adult cats and \$55 for kittens, plus adopters receive a free catnip taco. The holiday themes allow the shelter to also decorate, giving the public a new impression of the "gloomy, dark" animal shelter and cheering up our staff and volunteers through a festive environment!

—*Sam Lenser, cat behavior department
TAILS Humane Society
DeKalb, Illinois*

We started the Smarty Cats reading program. Kids can come out and pick a cat or cats that they would like to read to. We have a room with a couch and a bookcase full of books and of course a litter pan. Kids pick a book and read to the cat. Great opportunity to get to know the cat, practice reading, and keep all the cats social. This is something a person of any age can do. Works well for people who live in an apartment and can't have a pet of their own.

—*Ann Sanders, director
Humane Society of Saline County
Bauxite, Arkansas*

While it is better than being out on the streets, shelter life is not every cat's cup of tea. It can be very stressful with all the noise and activity and all the other cats. As a volunteer, I started a program called Cat Whisperers, which pairs experienced cat socializers/volunteers up with cats who are having trouble settling in or who have other issues such as shyness, short petting tolerance, or depression. The Cat Whisperers commit to working one-on-one with a cat for a minimum of a half hour two days per week (some even come in more often). It gives the cat a sense of security and someone stable in their current transitional life. Feedback from the Cat Whisperers also helps staff understand and address the cats' individual needs.

—*Linda Bailey, volunteer
Mary S. Roberts Pet Adoption Center
Riverside, California*

We partner with the St. Louis Blues hockey team to help promote our animals. David's Dogs started with Blues player David Backes. We then started Kelly's Kats with his wife. Each month we choose three of each, and they come out to have their pictures taken with the animals. The photos are then posted on the St. Louis Blues website and our website, along with other places. We also have a kitty stroller that we bring to events with an adoptable cat.

—*Kim Brown, executive director
St. Charles Humane Society
St. Charles, Missouri*

Congratulations to Kim Brown, whose submission was selected in a random drawing from those published in this issue. Her organization, the St. Charles Humane Society in Missouri, will receive a free coffee break: a \$50 gift certificate to a local coffee shop. "Bone" appétit!

Check out the latest Coffee Break question and submit your responses (150 words or less) at animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak or send them to Editor, *Animal Sheltering/HSUS*, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. **Your answer may be printed in a future issue of *Animal Sheltering*.** If your response is chosen for publication, you will be entered into a drawing to win a **free coffee break (valued at \$50)** for your organization. Responses may be edited for length or clarity; no donation or purchase is necessary to win. See animalsheltering.org for contest rules, or send an email or letter to the above addresses to request a printed copy.

HERE *for a Reason*

One dog's story should remind us to rally around all homeless animals, not just the ones with dramatic backgrounds

BY CARRIE ALLAN



The pup known as Wall-E was abandoned with his littermates at a tiny Oklahoma shelter. The litter was euthanized, but Wall-E survived and was found in a Dumpster the next day. Local animal rescuer Amanda Kloski took the pup in, publicized his story, and found him a home. That's one happy ending. ... Now, how to make more of them?

In Sulphur, Okla., last February, a puppy seemingly came back from the dead.

In doing so, he joined the ranks of the many animals who've briefly captured the public's hearts after a dramatic rescue or a harrowing case of abuse. You know these stories: A cat, thrown out a window by a vindictive boyfriend. A dog dragged behind a truck, nursed back to health by caring clinic workers.

And every now and then—as in Sulphur—the drama starts at a shelter, when an animal survives a botched euthanasia.

These particular stories make shelter directors cringe, primarily at the thought of the animal's suffering. They cringe, too, because the event typically means someone screwed up. Somewhere, a procedure wasn't followed, and an animal had a traumatic and possibly painful experience. Then, of course, there's the publicity, which can be a mixed blessing.

With a little publicity, an animal who's lived through a dramatic ordeal will almost certainly find a home. In this age of Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, these animals—the cat found yowling in a malfunctioning gas chamber, the dog who survives having been set on fire—often hit the Internet and media with the force of myth. They become celebrated icons of an indomitable will to survive, generating the kind of passion to adopt that shelter staff can usually only dream of gleaning for their animals.

In the Sulphur case, animal control officer Scott Prall found a litter of puppies left in one of the pens outside the shed that serves as the local animal shelter. They were underweight and looked sickly, and Prall was concerned about infecting the 18 dogs already being held in the shelter's 10 cages. With approval from his supervisor, Prall contacted the vet who works with the shelter, who came out to put them to sleep. The litter was euthanized along with one larger dog who'd been at the shelter for a long time; the veterinarian checked their hearts and verified that all were dead.

"We don't have any other place to put them, so they went into the Dumpster, and the Dumpster was supposed to be offloaded the next morning," says Prall.

But the next morning—it was cold that night, in the 30s—when he checked to make sure the Dumpster had been emptied, it hadn't been. "The dogs were still in there, and the baby dog was on top of the larger dog, just staring up at me," says Prall.

Miracle Dog

The puppy went back to the vet's office, and the veterinarian checked him out. He was wormy, but otherwise healthy. Amanda Kloski, a kennel tech at the vet's office who'd been promoting adoptions at the shelter, heard about what had happened, and was determined to save the puppy. Kloski took him in, nicknamed him "Miracle Dog," and began working with the small network of local animal lovers to try to get him adopted.

One of those people was Lorinda Mills, who'd been working with a shelter in nearby Davis, Okla. Mills and her daughter Michelle frequently take shelter animals to the local grocery store, hoping to connect them with an adopter. Mills agreed to hold the puppy at the grocery store while Kloski ran some errands; she hoped he'd find a home that day.

"We pray for all the pets that we do this for," says Mills. "We don't know whether this one is destined to find a home and this one isn't, but we pray anyway. And Michelle was holding the puppy and we had a little silent prayer for him, and Michelle said, 'Mom, I think this dog looks like a Wall-E dog.'" Both Mills and Kloski liked the name, taken from the Pixar movie about a little robot who's the last of his kind.

He didn't get adopted that day, but Mills recalls telling her daughter that she thought he would find a home—because he had such a great story.

Sure enough, soon after that, Kloski got Wall-E on Petfinder. An animal lover in Pittsburgh saw the post and started a Facebook page for the puppy. Then came YouTube videos and the news coverage, and applications to adopt the seemingly resurrected puppy poured in from around the country. At press time, Kloski had finally selected a family for Wall-E after wading through thousands of applications. She had finalists in Arizona, New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. One person applied from France.

He "may be the luckiest dog ever," said a reporter for *Good Morning America*, which covered the story.

Kloski has told several reporters that she thinks Wall-E is here for a reason. And perhaps he is. He's an adorable, friendly pooch, romping around in the videos that went viral on the Internet.

But while he may be the lone survivor of his litter, he is *not* the last of his kind.

Bittersweet Publicity

For every "miracle dog" like Wall-E, hundreds of animals are still coming into animal shelters, and many of them never leave. For every dramatic story that catches the eye of the media and the hearts of the public, there are thousands of others whose less dramatic, less "sexy," circumstances meet with ugly reality: high surrender numbers, bad luck, a failure to connect with a potential adopter, a lack of good foster and rescue collaborations, poor adoption promotions, a lingering bias against shelter animals, or any number of other setbacks.

Kloski knows this all too well. While she's been amazed and inspired by the interest in Wall-E, she says some applicants have been impatient about how long the process is taking. "So I put some things online saying, 'If you want a dog right away, we have all these other dogs that don't have even one person interested, and you could adopt them right away,'" she says.

lessons from Wall-E

While thousands applied to adopt Wall-E, other dogs at the tiny shelter in Sulphur waited for just one person to show interest. The stray dog problem in the area is significant, according to Amanda Kloski, and the shelter is overwhelmed. Local animal lovers are trying to raise money for a better facility.



THIS PAGE, PHOTO: AMANDA KLOSKI; ART: RON BURNS. OPPOSITE: AMANDA KLOSKI

She thinks, especially, of a dog named Sammy, a shepherd mix who was scheduled to be euthanized at the Sulphur shelter.

“She had been there for about a month and a half, and I kept trying to get her adopted. They ended up euthanizing another dog, so she got her second chance—not as dramatically as Wall-E, but it was a second chance,” says Kloski. “But I still couldn’t get her placed, and she ended up getting euthanized anyway. And, man, I wish her Petfinder site had taken off in the same way.”

It is dogs like Wall-E who make the news. But it is dogs like Sammy who represent the vast majority of the shelter pets in America.

They are the animals whose owners never threw them off a rooftop, who were never set on fire, who aren’t suffering from an aggressive cancer, who didn’t wake from a botched euthanasia to strike an emotional chord with fickle two-legged creatures who bore easily but love a great story.

They are the nice cats, given up because their owners moved and couldn’t find pet-friendly housing. They are the slightly rambunctious dogs who couldn’t adjust to life around kids, and the accidental litter of kittens out of which only one was wanted.

And while we understandably rally around inspiring, high-drama rescues and survival stories, it is mostly these “average” animals who continue to die in overwhelmed and underfunded animal shelters.

Weren’t they “here for a reason,” too?



Artist Ron Burns was inspired to paint the pup, and is selling prints of his portrait; 40 percent of the profits will go toward the construction of a new shelter for Murray County, where Wall-E and his littermates were abandoned.

Since Wall-E woke up, hundreds of animals have been euthanized at shelters around the country. Beyond some caring shelter staff and volunteers, no one will ever remember their names—because we as a society continue to generate more homeless animals than we adopt. Because, in some places, shelters and rescues continue to battle and snipe at each other rather than collaborating to save more lives. Because the animals didn't have a dramatic enough story, and so went to their deaths unnoticed and unclaimed.

The Human Love of Drama

Of course, it's only human to connect to a dramatic story, and shelters and rescues can sometimes use these stories to steer visitors who arrive hoping to adopt the latest celebrity toward pets with less dramatic—or simply unknown—personal histories.

In a 2009 interview with *Animal Sheltering*, Mike Arms, president of the Helen Woodward Animal Center, discussed a case at one of his former shelters: A pregnant cat had come in badly burned, and the publicity around the case had resulted in a "run" on her kittens. "We ended up adopting out close to 200 kittens because everyone came to the facility with the intent of taking home one of these highly publicized kittens," Arms said. "When people came in asking for these kittens, we just sent them to the kitten room. So many people left the facility believing they adopted one of Scarlett's kittens."

Deceptive? Maybe. Lifesaving? Certainly. Shelters that take in an animal with a dramatic tale would do well to learn how to use those singular stories for the good of the many.

But for all their necessity, these ways of turning the human love of drama into homes for more animals are still reactive solutions. They occur once the animals are already in trouble, already homeless, already in a shelter.

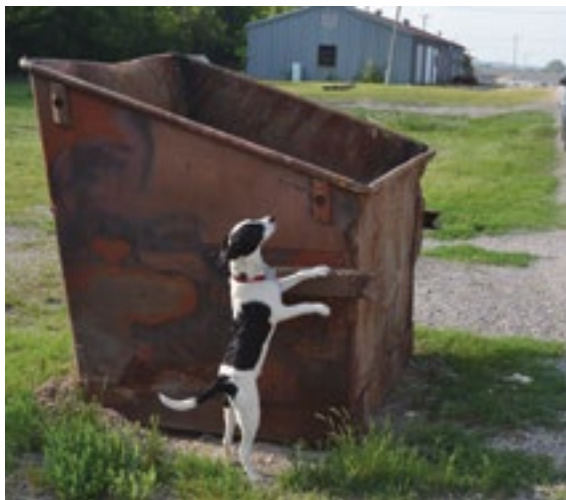
They don't get at the root cause. Animal welfare groups can't forever be playing catch-up, hurling thousands of pounds of cure at a problem communities need to prevent.

When we say that Wall-E is "here for a reason," we're thinking primarily of his survival of the euthanasia drugs pumped into his tiny system.

But what about the reason he was "here" in the first place?

Remember: Wall-E had littermates. All of them, too, were euthanized; none of them woke up.

All of them, too, were here for a reason: Someone, likely with no ill intentions, allowed their dog to breed, couldn't care for the pups, and abandoned them at an already overcrowded, overwhelmed animal shelter. A shelter where Scott Prall, the lone animal control officer for Sulphur, will see intake pick up steadily during the summer months. Where he not only handles field services but the care and feeding of all the dogs at the shelter. Currently, he says, even though "cats are overrunning this town," animal control can't even handle them unless there's an aggressive one attacking people in the community.



A healthy, soon-to-be-adopted Wall-E revisits the Dumpster where he was found by ACO Scott Prall the morning after he and his littermates were euthanized.

He's hopeful that the coming years will see a larger shelter built, one that the cities of Sulphur and Davis will share. In the meantime, he has help promoting adoptions from Kloski and the little network of animal lovers that seems to exist in every town—and is often one of the few sources of hope for those animals in municipalities overwhelmed by budget challenges and outdated attitudes toward animal welfare.

Kloski has a passion to make a difference, but even she admits that it's a hard slog dealing with the never-ending stream. "We got almost everybody placed last week. I was so happy—we had only two dogs left," she says. "Then Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday we got 18 dogs in. ... And I was so mad. And it's because of lack of spay/neuter; people don't do it. A lot of animals get sick and then [people] dump them because they didn't vaccinate them. And had Wall-E not been dumped in the first place, he would never have been put in that situation. So that's where I get upset."

If Wall-E is here for a reason, let it be this: To remind the public (and ourselves) that it's not just the rare and horrible cases—the feline burn victim, the canine Lazarus—who deserve attention and dedication.

We're here, too, for the Sammys—the good dogs and calm kitties who can't help the fact that they arrived in our care not by way of a psychotic abuser or a terrible house fire, but via plain old boring human failings and unfortunate circumstances: a lost job; a messy divorce; an *I'll-get-to-it-later* approach to spay/neuter that boils down to simple, tragic laziness.

These problems may not have the "pop" to make the nightly news and circle the world on YouTube, but they still make up a good part of the way we live—and the way our communities' animals die.

Providing resources and finding ways to address them must be our goal.

We, too, are here for a reason. **AS**



The ASV Guidelines in Real Life

Part Two: Serving Up Enrichment
to the Dogs at the Austin Humane Society

BY SANDRA NEWBURY, D.V.M.

In 2010, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) released a document several years in the making: *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*. Developed by a roster of veterinary experts, the standards are designed to “balance animal welfare science with practical and realistic recommendations for shelters,” and to provide a vision based on the needs of animals, which, the authors noted, remain the same regardless of how individual organizations’ missions and resources may differ. Here, we feature the second in a series of stories using real-life shelter examples to demonstrate how the ASV standards can be applied within the sheltering and rescue field to create better and more humane outcomes for the creatures we care for.



When you walk into the dog adoptions area at the Austin Humane Society (AHS) these days, you may notice a funny sound. If you’ve spent too much time in dog kennels, you may find this sound mysterious, and try to remember when you last heard it—or more specifically, *didn’t* hear it.

It is quiet. Nobody is barking. Almost every dog is sitting on their behind, looking at you expectantly.

This is a pleasant environment for humans and dogs. There are no discombobulated visitors, reeling back after approaching a dog’s kennel and being sprayed with water, or worse, from the flailing happy paws and other enthusiasms on the opposite side of the enclosure door. No one has their hands over their ears.

Many shelters’ dog areas are deafening. Why is this so different? Could it be possible there are only well-behaved dogs in Austin, Texas?

Obviously, that’s not the answer. The dogs in Austin are no more naturally quiet or obedient than they are anywhere else (in fact, if the city’s reputation holds, they may be a little weirder). The peace and quiet at the Austin Humane Society isn’t magical; it was achieved because shelter staff implemented practices that brought it into being.

Focus on canine enrichment

According to the ASV Guidelines, “Enrichment should be given the same significance as other components of animal care, such as nutrition and veterinary care, and should not be considered optional. At a minimum, animals must be provided regular social contact, mental stimulation and physical activity.”

Austin Humane Society is one of a group of shelters that have started a hand-feeding, enrichment, and training program for their adoptable dogs. Begun in 2009, theirs is based on the Open Paw program created by Dr. Ian Dunbar and Kelly Gorman. Leading the charge at AHS was animal care/facility supervisor Crystal Tysz, who had great support from the shelter director, administrators, and all the shelter veterinarians.

Better Times in the Kennels

Tysz had been watching behavior, animal and human, in the shelter. She realized that dogs seemed to get rewards only when they were outside of the cage.

The shelter was looking for “a way for volunteers to interact with all the dogs, even for new volunteers with

ALL PHOTOS: CRYSTAL TYSZ/AUSTIN HUMANE SOCIETY



As the ASV guidelines state—and the Austin Humane Society recognized—“Regular, positive daily social interactions with humans are essential for both dogs and cats. These interactions are crucial for stress reduction and are a powerful form of enrichment.”



Staff at the Austin Humane Society follow the philosophy that “a bowl of food is a wasted opportunity,” because staff, volunteers, and visitors could instead be using food to train the dogs.

limited training,” says Tysz. Austin Humane Society has a tiered-level dog walking program and, as happens in many shelters, the “easy”-level dogs were getting taken out for walks over and over while the upper-level, more challenging dogs—who may actually need *more* attention—often got less.

Tysz also noticed that dogs’ jumping and barking was a major turnoff for adopters, and that the dogs who were sitting quietly were more likely to get attention and more likely to get adopted. The shelter wanted to do something for all

the dogs to enrich the time they spend in their kennels as well as increase their “kennel appeal.”

As the ASV guidelines state, and AHS recognized, “Regular, positive daily social interactions with humans are essential for both dogs and cats. These interactions are crucial for stress reduction and are a powerful form of enrichment.” The ASV Guidelines also point to research that shows training programs for dogs and cats (e.g. to condition or teach basic obedience commands or tricks) also serve as an important source of stimulation and social contact. For dogs, such training has been shown to increase chances for rehoming.

Defining Programs and Setting Goals

Tysz had been to several conferences and trainings and done her homework on canine enrichment programs that others had outlined, implemented, and tested. She’d learned that “a bowl of food is a wasted opportunity”—because staff could instead be using food to train the dogs.

As recommended in the guidelines, AHS created a clear, written protocol that outlined the program and provided training for staff and volunteers to introduce the enrichment program before they began. They worked from the Open Paw protocol that was created by experts in the field and had been reviewed by veterinarians at the University of California-Davis Koret Shelter Medicine program. They realized because of all the great resources available, there was no need to re-invent the wheel.

The protocol identified several goals, explained the Open Paw model for the program, and included a set of FAQs anticipating questions from staff and volunteers. Their goals were to provide mental stimulation and decrease stress for shelter dogs; increase kennel appeal; help dogs form positive associations (for example, between the appearance of visitors and the presentation of snacks!); decrease length of stay by increasing speed of adoptions; maintain behavioral wellness for dogs who would be at the shelter for longer stretches; and prepare dogs to transition into a home environment.

The protocol for the enrichment program included information on how to answer potential questions from adopters. The shelter staff hoped that adopters would continue hand-feeding after the dogs went home; hand-feeding may help to cement the bond between a dog and his new person and provides just as many great training opportunities at home as it does in the shelter. The program helps counselors open a dialogue with adopters about human/animal bonding and the benefits of hand-feeding after adoption.

You Can Feed the Animals!

Allowing visitors to take part in giving treats provides positive reinforcement for the dogs, and engages the humans.

Here’s how it works: The daily food allowance for each dog is put into a bin at human-eye level on the front of each dog’s kennel. Signage instructs visitors, “Please feed the

dogs! It's OK to feed the animals here! Help us train our dogs. Toss a handful of kibble into the dog's cage." Staff and volunteers are trained to be part of the program, rewarding dogs with food when they come to the front of their kennels or whenever they perform a desirable behavior. Their protocol encourages everyone to participate, noting that everyone's responsible for making sure the dogs get enough to eat.

The staff make sure each dog gets an appropriate amount to eat every day. Volunteers may feed the dogs directly by hand, without tossing the food, but they are trained to sanitize their hands between dogs.

Since puppies may be more susceptible to infectious disease or compete with littermates for food, they are still fed via bowls. Sick dogs aren't currently part of the program.

While Tysz wants to do even more enrichment, the changes AHS has made so far have gotten wonderful reviews from shelter visitors. Adopters say they really enjoy the interactions with the animals. Kids especially love to be able to have a safe, fun way to interact with the dogs. The program seems to work well from the dog's-eye view as well. Shelter staff report dogs spend more time settled and calm during visitor hours, and those who are shy come up to the front of the cage more often.

Challenges

Some of the biggest challenges in getting the program on track have been about training, staff time, and acceptance of change. Getting staff and volunteers the training and the time they need is really important to getting things right with the dogs.

Shelter staff report that it can be difficult to get to all the dogs often enough during the day; it is a big responsibility on top of their other duties. Dogs on special diets require extra signage so the public doesn't take food from one bin and toss it in the wrong kennel. Also, the dogs still go crazy and happily lunge at the doors when volunteers come in to collect them for outside playtime. Excitement runs high for dogs and humans, and it takes a lot of patience to balance trying to get walks in for everyone with waiting for good behavior before opening that kennel door.

Some people were concerned that there would be too many germs on visitors' hands. Asking people to toss the food (rather than feed it directly) really helps prevent animal-to-animal spread. But if that doesn't allay your fears, at the University of California Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, we've been able to actually measure the amount of organic material on the hands of visitors compared to what's on the shelter staff during cleaning



Allowing visitors to take part in giving treats provides positive reinforcement for the dogs, and engages the humans.

or animal care. As we have long suspected, the viral load is usually volumes higher on staff and volunteers than it is on the hands of visitors. That makes good training on hand sanitation doubly important.


What's more, the shelter seems friendlier to visitors; signs saying "Please feed the dogs!" instead of "DON'T touch the dogs!" put out a welcome mat and engage visitors in the shelter's work. Some staff have raised concerns about dogs eating directly off the floor, so the shelter is going to try using bowls at the front of the kennel as a target.

What's Next?

Tysz wants to start a program for volunteers to enter the kennels and quietly read to the dogs, a practice that's been implemented elsewhere with great success. She has already identified some helpful resources for reading programs. Dogs in shelters get so accustomed to frenetic bursts of excitement and activity every time people show up—but most adopters (and most shelter staff) don't want that all the time. Sharing some down time with dogs gives them a chance to unwind and trains them that good things can happen even without all the rambunctiousness. **AS**

Resources

For info about the Open Paw protocol, check out openpaw.org/about/shelters.html.



Chris Schindler, manager of animal fighting law enforcement for The Humane Society of the United States, shares a happy moment with a dog seized from an alleged fighting situation. The old arguments against placing fight-bust dogs “just aren’t really justified,” he explains.

A NEW DAY FOR FIGHT-BUST DOGS

Advocates push the individual approach for dogs rescued from fighting operations

BY JAMES HETTINGER

BERNIE DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE: HE LOVES EVERYBODY.

Children, old people, tall people, short people. “He comes up and he leans in, and he looks up at you with his little eyes, and his adorable little black face, and then he opens his mouth like a pant ... and it’s like a big smile,” explains Marthina McClay, an animal trainer who founded and serves as president of Our Pack Inc., a pit bull rescue group in California. “And he’s just like, ‘Gosh, don’t you love me? I sure love you.’”

He gives more love now than he likely received in his formative years. Bernie is one of the “Ohio 200”—a group of pit bulls rescued last September from an alleged dogfighting operation in southeastern Ohio. Our Pack acquired him through the New York-based Animal Farm

Foundation Inc. (AFF), which assisted with the fight bust and its aftermath.

In California, Bernie became a certified therapy dog, and began visiting at-risk children during Our Pack’s humane education presentations at the Oakland Animal Services (OAS) shelter.

McClay says as a visual aid, he’s hard to beat.

She tells the kids where he came from and asks what they would have expected. Invariably, they’re surprised, and say they would have expected him to be aggressive or unfeeling. They’ll stare at him, McClay says, and start thinking about why someone would want to hurt such a loving creature, and whether they’d want to be treated that way.

"We've had some of them actually make the comment, 'I know what it's like to be in trouble. I know what it's like to be trapped and feeling like you can't get out,'" McClay says. "... Hopefully—I'm crossing my fingers here—we're making that connection with the kids, and providing a different future for the animals that way."

Our Pack has helped rescue several dogs from fighting operations, including one from the Michael Vick case in 2007. McClay—who's been working with animals since the 1970s—says the experience has amounted to a college for behavior. "One thing I learned is that you can't judge a dog by the property he's lived on, and you can't judge him by any breed profile," she says. "You have to judge him as an individual."

But these dogs haven't always been treated that way.

Years ago, many law enforcement officials viewed dogs from fighting operations not as victims of cruelty, but as evidence or criminal tools—"the four-legged equivalent of an automatic weapon"—and that mentality was pounded into animal control officers in training, says Mark Kumpf, animal control director for Montgomery County, Ohio. The dogs were deemed unsuitable for adoption simply by consensus, not by formal evaluation, Kumpf recalls, and many were euthanized. "It was simply, 'These are fighting dogs. They should never go back into circulation.'"

The Vick Case's Silver Lining

The Vick case challenged everyone—including the public, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, animal shelters, and animal control officers—to view dogfighting in a new light, Kumpf says. "Everybody got a wake-up call from the Vick case, and they said, 'Ooh, there are other options.'"

Media coverage of the Vick case spotlighted both the horrors of dogfighting and the rescued dogs' potential for rehabilitation, as several of them got adopted or became therapy dogs. Kumpf believes the Vick case helped make the status quo no longer acceptable. "The public is not willing to accept a broad brush that these dogs are all bad," he says. "Basically they end up suffering twice: once at the hands of the people who were cruel to them, and then the second time at the system that didn't even give them a chance to show that, 'I'm not a bad dog.'"

Shelter officials still face the challenge of convincing their bosses that adopting out dogs from a fight bust is a viable option—that a shelter can do it without getting sued, and that people won't necessarily get attacked, Kumpf notes. Peer pressure works to keep some communities' longstanding practices in place, he adds: Administrators look at what the next town over is doing, and don't want to do anything different.

But these dogs deserve better. In many ways, the dogs who come from fighting seizures are like those seized from hoarders, puppy mills, or other cruelty cases: They may have some behavioral and health issues particular to their

Lessons from Leo

Optimistic. Gregarious. Happy to see people. And "like a big, doofy puppy."

Those aren't descriptions traditionally associated with dogs raised in dogfighting operations, yet that's how Marthina McClay describes Leo, a pit bull rescued in 2007 from the notorious kennel in southern Virginia owned by football star Michael Vick.



Leo and a patient

Nearly four years later, Leo—now around 6—leads a life dramatically different from the one he had at Vick's Bad Newz Kennels. Adopted by McClay—a dog trainer who founded and serves as president of

Our Pack Inc., a California-based pit bull rescue organization—he's become a certified therapy dog who frequently helps spread cheer by visiting cancer patients at a treatment facility.

The Vick case helped change people's perceptions of fight-bust dogs, and opened the door for shelters to realize that there is support available, says McClay. Her group, for example, provides free talks in the community, adoption counseling and training, and helps with rescue efforts.

Leo is one of Our Pack's best ambassadors.

He gets excited when McClay puts on his clown collar and vest, a sign that they're heading to the cancer treatment facility. When they walk into the reception area, everyone calls him "Dr. Leo." The patients, some of whom have IVs in their arms, sit in a circle of reclining chairs as McClay and Leo make the rounds.

"We walk in, and of course I ask, 'Would you like a visit with Leo?' And usually they're like, 'Yes, that would be great,' because it takes their mind off of the chemotherapy," she says. "I had one patient say, 'You know, it's really easy to kind of feel sorry for yourself, and you feel sick, and you feel tired, and you're thinking about how horrible it is. And then Leo comes in and ... his big face just kind of brightens up the room.'"

Leo loves the petting and the attention. The work is his reward; McClay says she doesn't need to use treats.

When she tells people about the dog's history, they often act like they didn't hear right.

"I'll say, 'He came from the Michael Vick dogfighting case,' and they literally, their mouths open, their eyes open, they go, 'This dog came from *there*? No way did this dog come from there.' They're just shocked. That's actually changed so many people's minds."

To see a six-minute video of Leo visiting a cancer treatment facility, go to ourpack.org/leo.html.

Our Pack founder Marthina McClay says she initially considered placing Leo, but soon realized the two of them had bonded, "and I just really fell madly in love with him."



circumstances, but these issues can often be helped with time and TLC. And as with other kinds of cruelty cases, a shelter's ability to house, provide enrichment for, and adopt out the victims will depend on its resources and how well it's able to balance the needs of these abused dogs with the overarching mission to save as many animals as possible. Since the Vick case, Kumpf adds, some people assume shelters will be able to devote the same level of resources to animals rescued from other dogfighting operations. That's simply not realistic, he explains. The Vick dogs came with a stipend to offset the expenses associated with their rehabilitation; most seized dogs won't. Tight budgets often mean that shelters can't always afford to have staff trained in behavior assessment, much less have a certified behaviorist on the payroll.

But contrary to their reputation, says Chris Schindler, manager of animal fighting law enforcement for The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), many of the dogs seized from fighting operations don't have major behavioral challenges. For example, he's currently working with several seized dogs who—despite having been chained up in a yard for much of their lives—are perfectly housetrained and will be easy to place in homes.

Changing people's ideas of what these dogs are like won't happen overnight, but positive adoption stories can help prove to the higher-ups that the sheltering community shouldn't accept euthanasia by default. Many fight-bust dogs simply need an opportunity to demonstrate that they are "not necessarily these genetic monsters that everyone makes them out to be," Kumpf says.

A New Approach to Victims

That idea also took hold with representatives of several national animal welfare organizations who met at Animal Care Expo in Las Vegas in 2009 and formed the Victims of Cruelty Working Group, which discussed new approaches to dogfighting and other cruelty cases. The HSUS, altering its earlier position, adopted a policy about two years ago that all dogs seized from dogfighting cases should be professionally evaluated for potential placement.

The HSUS has since helped place close to 200 dogs from fighting operations, including more than 150 from the Ohio 200 case last September, says Schindler. All the dogs The HSUS has seized from organized dogfighting operations have been purebred American pit bull terriers with papers proving their pedigree, Schindler says.

The Ohio 200 case, in which The HSUS assisted law enforcement and other animal welfare organizations, "was a groundbreaking case in that HSUS took the lead, and they treated all the dogs as individuals," says Stacey Coleman, executive director of AFF, which aims to secure equal treatment and opportunity for pit bulls. "... They didn't look at the dogs as if they already



She now has a chance to turn the world on with her smile. Mary Tyler Moore, left, known as Momo, relaxes with her friend Creature at Animal Farm Foundation in New York after being rescued last fall from an alleged dogfighting operation in Ohio. In April, Momo got adopted by her foster family.

knew who the dogs were based on the environment that they had come from. They allowed the dogs to speak for themselves."

AFF, which helped evaluate the Ohio dogs, conducts a fairly short evaluation that's not pass or fail, but designed to put dogs in particular categories that will help guide their placement, explains Bernice Clifford, the organization's director of behavior and training. The evaluation includes seeing how long it takes the dog to interact with a person, and how comfortable he is having his teeth and ears checked, or being petted softly and roughly—interactions that might occur in a home. AFF also tests dogs for resource-guarding their food bowls and other objects, does a dog-to-dog introduction, and finally an arousal test, which gets the dog amped up to see how long it takes him to calm down. The dogs are graded because the different organizations that might take them have different skills, Clifford explains; if a dog isn't crazy about handling, AFF would want to make sure he goes to a rescue that has a training department.

The old arguments against placing fight-bust dogs "just aren't really justified," explains Schindler, noting that his own thinking changed after spending time with dozens of dogs rescued from dogfighters. "As we've all seen with the dogs that come from these cases, they're just dogs—like any other dog," he says. Like dogs from other cruelty situations, fight-bust dogs might start out scared and shy, in need of several months to relearn how to be a dog again, Schindler says. There will always be some dogs who can't be placed with families because of medical or behavior issues, for

placing fight-bust dogs

Once a captive at Michael Vick's Bad Newz Kennels, Leo has a new life as a certified therapy dog in California, where his activities include visiting schools to demonstrate positive reinforcement.



A seized pit bull stretches out to enjoy a friendly back scratch from Janette Reeve of the Animal Fighting Law Enforcement section at The Humane Society of the United States.

example, but not because they're a particular breed or come from a particular situation.

The HSUS is now recruiting groups from around the country to form a network to take in and potentially adopt out animals following seizures from dogfighting operations. The partners will be nonprofits and could include shelters, pit bull rescue groups, all-breed rescues, and sanctuaries. The application process for potential partners will help match the organizations' capacities to the dogs' needs. Some fight-bust dogs can go to any shelter that adopts out dogs, Schindler explains, while other dogs might require a shelter with a behavior department. The HSUS also plans to put a support mechanism in place so that the partner organizations can consult a behaviorist or trainer if the need arises, Schindler says.

"We want the sheltering community to see the positives," Schindler adds. Simply put, dogs rescued from fighting operations deserve the same opportunity as any other animal who comes through your door.

Considering Capacities

So how can you give them that second chance?

A key first step is to know your organization's capabilities. Select individual dogs who are likely to do well in your shelter. "They shouldn't just look at the dog," Coleman advises. "They should look at their

own organization, recognize what their strengths and weaknesses are, and then pull the dogs that they know they're going to be able to help."

"Don't go out and try 10 at once, but take one, and know your limits," agrees Sarah Barnett, a volunteer for the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation, a Washington, D.C.-area-based organization that took four dogs from the Ohio 200 case. Barnett, the online community manager for The HSUS, fostered one of her rescue group's Ohio 200 dogs for several months before he got adopted.

Most shelters don't have a ton of foster homes available, so they may be better off taking the more laid-back dogs rather than the more active ones who don't kennel as well, Barnett says.

It's also important to have an exercise regimen and enrichment program in place to prevent the animals from getting bored, says Schindler. Providing Kongs with peanut butter for dogs in kennels—or even bowling balls with their holes filled with the treat—gives dogs something to do to keep them from being bored. High-energy dogs can get great benefits from being allowed supervised time outside the kennel to race around a play area and stretch their minds and bodies.

It's a process Schindler's managing now at a temporary shelter for seized dogs in Florida. Staff ensure that enrichment is worked into the daily cleaning schedule; while they clean the kennels, dogs are let out to play in a makeshift yard,

Sweet Home Alabama

Mindy Gilbert didn't go to Ohio looking for love.

Gilbert, the Alabama state director for The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), answered a call for help at an emergency shelter in September 2010 after The HSUS helped rescue 200 dogs from an alleged fighting operation in Jefferson County, Ohio.

She headed to St. Clairsville, Ohio—where the “Ohio 200” were held—to help care for dogs being evaluated for possible placement as family pets. She was there to work, but one of the dogs cast a “hypnotic spell” on her.

Journey, shorter and more compact than a typical pit bull, was a beautiful female dog, but she was “beyond fearful,” Gilbert says. She didn't want to be touched. She cowered in the back of the pen. A sign on the front of her cage read “Staff Only.”

But the dog's pull proved irresistible.

Gilbert approached Bernice Clifford of Animal Farm Foundation, who was there doing evaluations, and explained that she was “strangely drawn” to the dog and wanted to take her home to keep, not to adopt out.

“She was very polite to me, even though I could see the question mark above her head,” Gilbert says. She recalls Clifford telling her, “You might be the one that would draw this dog out. [But] she's got so many fear-based issues that she won't really know who she is for several months.”

“Every rational fiber of my being was screaming, ‘This is a bad idea,’” Gilbert says, but she decided to not listen to that voice. Instead, she canceled her flight home, rented a car one way, and drove Journey home to Alabama. “And all the way home was telling myself, ‘Self, you know, this is just not a good idea. You're by yourself in a vehicle. You know this dog's got issues.’”

Beyond the immediate concerns—like how she would handle a flat tire—Gilbert wondered how Journey would get along with her other animals at home, an ever-shifting population that includes 15 dogs, most of whom are old and infirm. And Gilbert acknowledges that she is no dog trainer. “I have a lot of experience in *being* trained by dogs,” she says. “For example, I know what time I have to be home and put the food out.”

Gilbert suspects that Journey was put on a chain early in life and used for breeding; she also has a few scars, indicating she might have been involved in minor skirmishes. Her former life left her socially inept when it came to interacting with the other dogs, and she was terrified of human hands, which made it impossible to reward her by patting her on the head or giving her a treat.

But the dog improved quickly after a week or so in her new home. Gilbert initially crated her at bedtime, but one night when it was time to sleep, Journey jumped up on Gilbert's bed, then cowered in the corner of it, up against the wall. Gilbert, accompanied by some of her other dogs, climbed in, turned on the TV, and just left her alone. “That was the beginning of the end of her being totally fear-based,” Gilbert says, noting that Journey soon melted into a more relaxed creature. Now, hopping on the bed is her favorite thing to do at the end of the day.



Journey, one of the “Ohio 200” dogs rescued last year from an alleged dogfighting operation, was extremely fearful when adopter Mindy Gilbert first brought her home to Alabama. But Journey has learned to relax by spending time with Gilbert's laid-back menagerie of 15 other dogs.

Gilbert describes her other dogs as a relaxed bunch, and she believes Journey learned to follow suit. “She would find herself doing what they did without openly understanding why,” she says. Journey's resistance to being touched by hands persisted, but she would bump Gilbert with her hip or lean up against her.

Today, Gilbert reports that her home in Alabama is indeed very sweet. Journey, who never displayed aggression, has become very affectionate and gets along well with the other animals. Gilbert describes herself as “totally smitten.”

“It's been an interesting process, I think, for both of us,” Gilbert says, noting that she's gained a new appreciation for the challenges that fight-bust dogs face from not being socialized. While Journey is a strong dog, she remains a shrinking violet at heart; when strangers come to the house, she retreats to the guest room. She's also deathly afraid of thunderstorms; she knows a day ahead of time when one's coming, and it makes her so sick that she won't eat. “Imagine being chained up out in the weather 365 days a year with that kind of phobia—I can only imagine it'll drive you mad.”

Despite being a frightened victim of cruelty when she arrived at the emergency shelter, Journey exuded an appeal that left Gilbert as helpless as a lovesick teenager. “I just went to do my own four or five days, and help out, do whatever was necessary,” she says of her trip to Ohio. “And it was amazing how that dog put its tractor beams on my head.”





Dogs rescued from fighting operations—like Leo, center—deserve a chance to be evaluated individually. “They’re not all gonna be the same because they were owned by Michael Vick,” says Leo’s owner, Marthina McClay. With proper training and socialization, many can thrive as pets.

which helps them burn off some energy. It doesn’t require any more staff time than leaving them in cages, Schindler says, and it makes a huge difference to the animals.

The Lawsuit Myth

One of the main reasons shelters have often worried about placing dogs seized from fighting raids is because they fear getting sued should the animal end up biting someone. But according to Bonnie Lutz, a California-based lawyer who serves as general counsel for several large humane societies and SPCAs, while there’s no way to guarantee you won’t get sued over a bite, shelters don’t face any particular liability issues by adopting out dogs rescued from fighting operations.

Shelters could be liable if they retain ownership of the dog after adopting it out—“a big mistake,” according to Lutz—or if they’re found to be negligent because they knowingly adopted out a dog who was likely to bite. But Lutz says she would be comfortable defending a case where the animal welfare organization had a proper behaviorist evaluate the dog’s temperament, then documented the evaluation, and disclosed to potential adopters the results of the evaluation as well as the fact that the dog came

from a fight bust. “It’s all about disclosure. It’s all about testing,” she says. (For more about post-adoption liability, see *Humane Law Forum*, p. 47.)

Still, sheltering and placing fight-bust dogs poses a number of challenges, says Kumpf, whose shelter assisted with the Ohio 200 case and other fight-bust dogs.

For starters, the dogs can be a hard sell with potential adopters. Some seized dogs may require an owner to be more careful around other pets; others will be perfectly animal-friendly. Education of the adopter and full disclosure about the dog’s behavior will be key. And while some potential adopters may be put off by the remnants of the dogs’ sad beginnings—a missing ear or other scars and puncture marks—not all dogs from fighting operations have any visible scars; many have never actually fought. In large operations, many are simply breeding stock and will be perfectly attractive to the average adopter.

Space is another challenge. Each fight-bust dog requires his own kennel—a problem if you take in 50 of them and have only 50 kennels, Kumpf notes.

As with other animals seized from cruelty cases, fight-bust dogs often must be held as evidence while the criminal case against the dogfighters proceeds. When

cases get continued (as they typically do), courts can require shelters to keep animals not just for weeks or months, but years. They get sick or injured and require constant care, and the medical bills can pile up. Kumpf recalls a pit bull at his shelter who injured her abdominal organs, likely by constantly jumping in her kennel, making euthanasia necessary. The dogs might have issues with the staff or other canines; Kumpf recalls hearing about a dog at another shelter who climbed through a small hole to try to attack the dog in the next kennel. “In some cases, they eat the shelter. They’re not picky,” he adds. “They’ll eat kennel decks. They’ll chew water bowls off the walls.”

But Schindler points out that many of these “stir crazy” behaviors can be addressed through enrichment, such as the work HSUS staff are doing with the seized dogs at the Florida facility. Providing toys that make the dogs figure out how to get the treat from the middle, giving dogs who are a little shy some quiet time in the office with people, and keeping an eye on dog-to-dog relations are all helpful, Schindler says. “We use common sense in housing any dogs, and monitor how the dogs interact with each other in the kennel,” he says. Doing so allows staff to shift dogs around within the cages and find a setup where the dogs are less agitated. It doesn’t require any more time—just a little extra awareness, he says.

Some fight-bust dogs arrive at the shelter starved for attention, having forgotten how to be a dog, then they get stuck in a system that doesn’t give them a chance to relearn that—preventing them from becoming good adoption candidates, Kumpf says. “It’s almost a given that the adoptability drops as the stay extends, because you end up with more behavioral issues, more medical issues.”

But Kumpf does not paint an entirely bleak picture. “Lots of these dogs do well,” he says, pointing to the many Ohio 200 dogs who have been placed in homes.

His advice to organizations considering taking on the placement of fight-bust dogs is to look before you leap, and follow the model of organizations that are successfully battling the stereotypes about pit bulls and promoting the breed. Groups like Bad Rap and Hello Bully have factual information that can help you sell a proposed program up your chain of command.

Making Connections

McClay knows that Bernie is making an impact “by just being who he is, and putting out those love bugs everywhere.” Following his visits to at-risk kids at the Oakland shelter, she’s heard that they talk about Bernie all the way home, and one child expressed an interest in working with animals and pursuing an internship with the San Francisco SPCA. His teacher wrote to McClay, asking, “How cool is that!?”

In April, Bernie’s story took another positive turn when, after multiple weeks as one of Our Pack’s available dogs, he got adopted—a development that thrilled McClay.

It’s a happy ending that never would have happened had he been branded an unadoptable fight-bust dog—a message that isn’t lost on Megan Webb, OAS’s director.

Webb says her shelter frequently takes in groups of dogs from cruelty situations, including suspected fighting operations. The staff members often don’t know the dogs’ exact histories, and they take care to not lump them together and assume they’ll all behave the same. Some are dog-aggressive, while others are extremely social and friendly. “Some of the nicest dogs I’ve ever met have come from these large-scale dog groups that we’ve taken from suspected dogfighters,” she says.

Dogs who pass the temperament test are made available for adoption. The shelter takes precautions to make sure they don’t fall prey again to the criminals who initially abused them, Webb explains. In cases where the dog was taken from someone who’s known to be violent or has been arrested for abuse, for example, the dog would be sent away from Oakland for adoption. Volunteers working with such dogs might do so in the back of the shelter rather than the front, she adds, to limit their visibility.

OAS has learned to lean on outside groups for assistance. The shelter has used Our Pack to help counsel adopters, and several staff are slated to do internships at AFF. Such connections are crucial for municipalities, Webb says, because outside groups often have both expertise and time.

Those connections can help land dogs in unexpected places. Webb says she never would have considered placing a dog in South Dakota, but that’s what happened to Amarylis. The deaf dog was one of 33 pit bulls rescued last December from an alleged cruelty situation in an Oakland home, where many of the animals were housed in crates stacked on top of each other. “When I first got her out of the crate ... she couldn’t even stand up. She was covered in urine,” Webb recalls.

Thanks to OAS’s connections with Our Pack and volunteer Megan Alexander, arrangements were made to send Amarylis and another dog to the Sioux Empire Pit Rescue in South Dakota. The Friends of Oakland Animal Services picked up the transportation costs.

“She’s an amazing dog—just extremely stable with other people and other dogs,” Webb says. “If we had ... made assumptions about what she would be like, and didn’t test her, we would have never found her and gotten her placed.” 🐾

For information about aiding The Humane Society of the United States’ efforts to place dogs rescued from fighting operations, email Chris Schindler at cschindler@humanesociety.org.

Sanitation Simplified.

One step, Triple the clean!



Triple Two
CLEANER/DISINFECTANT/DEODORIZER

3 IN ONE ANIMAL SHELTER CLEANER

Diluted at 2 oz. per gallon. One gallon makes 64 gallons.
.27 cents per ready-to-use gallon. Safe for all washable surfaces
in animal shelters, humane societies, animal hospitals, pet rescues
and all types of animal care facilities.

KILLS DISEASES

Canine Cough, Canine Distemper, Newcastle's Disease,
Rabies Virus, Avian Influenza and works to control
Giardia in your environment.

Ask how you can Triple your Savings
with our Metered Dispensing System!



Health
HT technology
Professional Products

800.424.7536
www.htproducts.net



Her Eartip Says It All.

An eartip identifies that a feral cat
has been neutered and vaccinated
as part of Trap-Neuter-Return protocols.
Learn more at alleycat.org/Eartip.

 **Alley Cat Allies**

WWW.ALLEYCAT.ORG

Education • Advocacy • Action

Spot-Cleaning Cat Cages

These days, beating germs doesn't always mean a bleach bath

BY CARRIE ALLAN



If you have a particularly shy kitty, it's helpful to provide her with a nice hiding space where she can retreat while you tidy up.

If you've ever had a pleasant dinner party interrupted by a cat who wanders in, plunks himself down, and begins performing the most intimate cleaning in full view of the table—feet lifted well beyond his head in a kind of obscene yoga, licking with the kind of focused attention usually reserved for advanced calculus—you know: The ways in which kitties clean can make us humans uncomfortable.

Turns out, the feeling is mutual.

But whereas our discomfort usually lasts only as long as our awkward diversion of our dinner guests' attention (“Hey, how

about those brussels sprouts, huh?”), kitties stressed by traditional cleaning methods within animal shelters may experience the effects for much longer. And those effects may damage their health.

For years, the standard approach to cleaning a cat cage involved removing the cat, placing her in a nearby cage or carrier, and conducting a cleaning, scrubbing, bleaching, and otherwise dirt-obliterating routine within the cage she occupied. By the time the process was done, germs in the cleaned cage were (at least in theory) kaput.

But sometimes the kitty herself carried some germs on her paws or muzzle, and left them in the new spot, spreading them along the line. Sometimes the traditional cleaning didn't really reach every germ—it's incredibly easy for a microscopic particle to find a hiding place in the nook or cranny of a cage door or the lip of a food bowl. Sometimes harsh chemicals weren't rinsed adequately, causing cats to develop raw paws and muzzles from bleach.

More fundamentally, this process ignored the fact that kitties thrive on routine and fa-

miliarity. They like to know where they are. They like to have places to hide. And while a human nose might detect a little animal smell and find it offensive, to a kitty it can say, “That’s *me*. I’ve been here before. This is my house, my litter box, my mouse, and I feel great about it!”

The End of the Old School

Over the years, the strategy for cleaning cat cages has shifted—and experts believe that’s a good thing. “I think it’s because of more shelter vets looking at actual data and URI [upper respiratory infections] being so prevalent in shelters,” says Carolyn Machowski, manager of the Shelter Services program at The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). “And I think they really directed some research into seeing how come URI was so prevalent. It’s the development of seeing what stress, moving fomites on people’s clothes ... what kind of effect that had on the cat’s immune system.”

For years, Machowski notes, it’s been ingrained in shelter personnel that the biggest weapon against disease is disinfection. “And so it’s really hard to turn that attitude around. The attitude that with disinfectants, more is better. But the scents linger, and they can be irritants. I don’t think we were looking at what that overload of chemical smell was doing to the cats.”

For cats, stress can be a killer—and being moved out of one cage and into another, or being taken out and then returned to a cage that no longer smells the same, has proved stressful to kitties. It’s not that hard to understand: Imagine if you came back to your apartment one day to find all your furniture had been moved, your posters rearranged, and the whole place smelled like disinfectant ... and you had no idea how or why. And it happened the next day. And the next. Freak-out time!

Happily, this bleach-bomb approach to cleaning isn’t necessary—or rather, it’s not necessary to do it every day, to every cat cage. In fact, it shouldn’t be.

The New Way

Spot-cleaning is the method that should replace it. Rather than a full-on, deep-scrub, floor-to-ceiling blitz, spot-cleaning is more of an easygoing tidy-up. It boils down to the following simple steps:



Food and water bowls should be dumped out and refilled, but only given a thorough cleaning if they’re really a mess.

- Allow each cat to remain in the cage. Provide a paper bag or cardboard box for her to hide in if she’s particularly nervous or timid.
- If you’re working with a notorious escape artist and you must remove him from the cage to work, put him in a cardboard carrier during your quick cleanup. This cardboard carrier can be used throughout his stay in the shelter, and can go home with him—it shouldn’t be used for any other cats.
- Remove the litter box and replace the litter (or, while wearing disposable gloves, simply pick out the big clumps and discard them).
- Dump the bowl and provide fresh food and water. Wash bowls only if they are “gross.”
- Shake out towels and blankets into the trash, and then put them back where they were. Only replace bedding if it’s wet or visibly dirty. Clean cat toys can also stay in place.
- Wipe off any obvious stains or organic matter using a clean, wet rag or paper towel, but no disinfectant. (Keep in mind, if using a rag, that you’ll need a new one for any cage requiring wiping.)
- Only move the cat and do a full cleaning if the cage is really trashed and messy.
- Refrain from petting and cuddling cats as you work—this is a time to clean, and your goal is to minimize the amount of germs/virus the cat will shed onto you as you work, so that you won’t spread it to the next cages.

This probably sounds too good to be true. It does to many shelter staff—and it is a little more complicated, as you’ll see below. But these are the basic steps involved.

When she first tried to institute the practice at her former shelter, says Inga Fricke, director of sheltering initiatives at The HSUS, her staff understandably fought the change. Some said they’d never do it. They said it would end up killing every cat in the shelter.

“So we actually compromised,” says Fricke. “I said, ‘We’re going to do spot-cleaning six days a week, and one day a week you get to do full cleaning.’ And within three months I had the same people coming to me and saying, ‘This is stupid—why are we full cleaning one day a week?’ They saw disease transmission going down, they went from every single cat in the shelter is sneezing, every single cat in this room is sick, to the sick room being empty.”

Caveat Cleaner

So you knew this was coming. There’s got to be a catch.

And there is. In fact, there are three. But none of them should terrify you. If your shelter is doing a good job of segregating its population—keeping sick cats and healthy cats separated, maintaining isolation wards, protecting juveniles—the first caveat is nothing to sweat over.

You can’t just go row by row. The whole principle behind spot-cleaning, behind the idea that total disinfection is not necessary and may even cause harm, is that a cat’s own germs/saliva/mucus/secretions will not make that cat sick—but that it can make other cats sick. So when you’re making your cleaning rounds, you cannot simply go from one cat cage to the next. You have to clean the cages in an order that makes sense according to principles of disease resistance and immunity, starting with the animals whose immune systems are most vulnerable (for example, kittens), and ending with those animals who are most likely to be shedding virus (adult, healthy cats and especially pregnant cats).

“If you’re looking at a room where you have [a group consisting of] a pregnant, adult healthy cat; an adult healthy cat; a cat with a broken leg; an adult healthy cat, and a kitten who just came in ... the kitten in that room is going to be potentially the most susceptible to illness,” says Fricke.



While it may be tempting to cuddle the cats as you clean, remember: It’s important to keep contact to a minimum to keep germs from spreading. Roy Silguero of the Frederick County Humane Society works around the cat as he tidies up.

Increase Cat Adoptions with Fancy Feet!

“SoftClaws colored nail caps have proven to increase cat adoptions”

—reported by HSUS of Vero Beach, Florida, Sheltering Magazine July 2007



Shelter visitors easily become cat adopters knowing Soft Claws nail caps:

- ✓ Help protect them and their children from playful scratches
- ✓ Help protect their home furnishings
- ✓ Easy to apply and each application lasts up to six weeks



1. Trim nails

2. Apply adhesive to caps



3. Apply caps to nails

4. Observe for 5 minutes

To purchase contact:

Pet Edge - 800.738.3343

Ryan’s Pet Supplies - 800.525.7387

For special adoption programs call:

Soft Claws direct 800.762.7877 x508



Unless they're filthy, blankets and towels should simply be shaken out and then replaced in the cage.

The idea, she says, is to lessen the viral load. "If you just start from one side of the room and go around, then you're just adding fomites, adding all of the disease onto whatever you come in contact with, and by the time you get to that kitten, the viral load, the dose that they're getting, is going to be a little bit from everybody in that room."

That's just what you don't want.

Full disinfection should still be performed on any community areas. Again, remember the principle: Fluffy's germs won't make her sick, but they will make Tiger sick.

It's helpful to think of each cat cage as that cat's safe little "pod," and everything outside of it as "the danger zone." Every space in the shelter that gets contacted by *multiple* cats must continue to get the full disinfection treatment every day. That goes



Once you've removed clumps from a litterbox, it's critical to change your gloves before moving on to the next cage.

for visiting rooms, cages in your clinic, exam tables, and so forth. And any cage that is being emptied—when a cat goes to a new home, for example—must be thoroughly disinfected as well.

Community cat rooms are the exception to this "clean everything outside the cage" rule. Shelters that have community rooms should treat those shared areas the same way they treat other living spaces for cats, and spot-clean there rather than doing the full disinfection needed for areas where "strangers" regularly come and go.

Time saved should not be wasted.

You'll find that this process eliminates much of the time you've previously spent scrubbing cat cages. Don't waste it—use it to ensure the disinfection of the shared spaces (as mentioned above) and to invest in enrichment programs for your cats. Play soft music, supply catnip toys and cardboard scratchers, have volunteers engage them in interactive (but non-germ spreading) play with laser pointers and wands. Provide them with hiding places and perches within their cages.

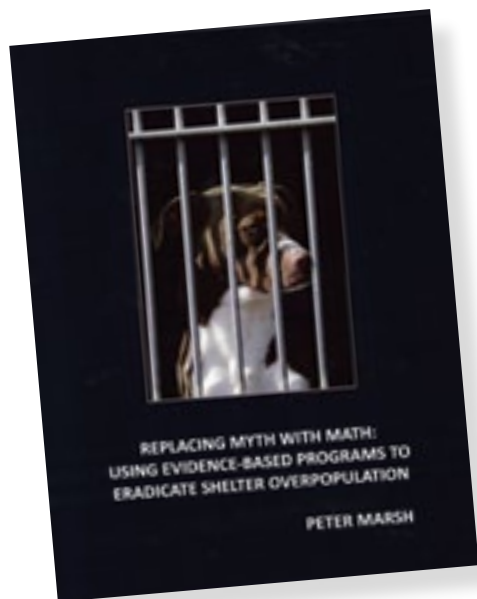
If you're trying to change outcomes for cats in your shelter, spot-cleaning—done right—is a good step to take.

"It's very counterintuitive to tell staff that you keep a population healthier by not cleaning as much. That just doesn't seem to make sense," says Fricke. "But that's why it's so important that you explain not just how you do it but why. Why it matters that cats are so connected with their territory, why it matters that just the least bit of change can cause stress, why it matters that, when you have a cat sitting inside a 2-by-2 metal box, that those smells are going to be trapped in there and be so much more exacerbated to them. Once you explain to people the why, it makes it a little easier to stomach and they go, 'Well, maybe.'"

This is part of an ongoing series of "how to"-oriented 101s featuring tips from The Humane Society of the United States' Shelter Services team. Let us know if there are issues your organization is struggling with—we may address them in a future article! Send questions to asm@humanesociety.org. AS

Battling Shelter Overpopulation—by the Numbers

Author Peter Marsh advocates a data-driven approach to reducing euthanasia



Peter Marsh says it's time for animal shelters to work smarter in the battle against overpopulation and unnecessary euthanasia.

A New Hampshire-based lawyer and longtime animal welfare advocate focused on ending shelter overpopulation, Marsh last year published *Replacing Myth with Math: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Eradicate Shelter Overpopulation*. The book, designed for shelter medicine classes, is chock full of data that tell a sobering tale: While the number of cats and dogs euthanized in animal shelters has dropped dramatically in the past four decades, that rate of progress has slowed in recent years.

Fewer animals are being euthanized nationwide because fewer animals are entering shelters, Marsh writes. Research shows that certain communities—such as those with high poverty rates—relinquish more animals to shelters. But Marsh says shelters aren't taking full advantage of such information by targeting their overpopulation programs to the people who need them most. "For the most part, researchers and people who put together

shelter overpopulation programs have lived in separate worlds, isolated from each other," Marsh writes. "As a result, program designers have rarely made use of research findings to effectively target their programs."

Marsh hopes to bridge that gap and promote a more data-driven approach to program development with *Replacing Myth with Math*. He plans to publish a companion volume—*Getting to Zero: Using Lessons from Successful Programs to End Shelter Euthanasia in the United States*—within the next year.

Marsh, who works with animal welfare organizations around the country, is a founder of Solutions to Overpopulation of Pets, which helped establish publicly funded pet sterilization programs that dropped euthanasia rates in New Hampshire. In this edited interview, he discusses his work with *Animal Sheltering* associate editor James Hettinger.

Animal Sheltering: What was your intent in writing *Replacing Myth with Math*?

Peter Marsh: One of them is to get people to recognize that information can be used to design much more effective programs than trial-and-error-, seat-of-the-pants-based programs. I've worked now in all 50 states over the last 20 years on shelter overpopulation issues. The most effective programs have been data-driven programs, where people pay attention to not only local shelter data, but research studies, plus information from other programs.

To be effective—especially if the mission is to end shelter overpopulation and end the putting down of animals just to make space in shelters for other animals—you need to use better information. Because it gets tougher and tougher as the euthanasia rate drops, and just working harder at some point isn't enough. You need to work smarter, too.



Peter Marsh, a lawyer and longtime animal welfare advocate, encourages shelters to look beyond conventional wisdom and develop targeted, data-driven programs to eliminate shelter overpopulation.

The book describes how shelters have traditionally operated in a "data-poor environment." Why do you think that is, and do you see that tide turning now?

There's been a lot of research over the last 15 years. But the real problem is that there hasn't been, in my mind, a real connection between the people that have done the research and implementation of the research into effective programs. I have sort of a shorthand equation in my mind, [where] I say, "Information minus application equals zero." If you have information, and it's not applied to develop effective programs, then it's of no value to you.

How would you say the failure to use data has hampered the efforts to curb overpopulation?

Oh, it's been huge. A core assumption of traditional shelters has been—really, going back to the '50s—that an open-door policy where no animal is turned away is essential. Because if shelters don't accept every animal that's presented to them—no matter what

[q&a]

The real problem is that there hasn't been ... a real connection between the people that have done the research and implementation of the research into effective programs.

the situation, and no matter if they're at capacity and had to put down another animal to make room—that enough animals would suffer “a fate worse than death” so that it would be intolerable.

Well, a number of shelters have questioned that assumption, because, really, there's no data to back that up—there never

was. And the shelters that have questioned that assumption have found that in many cases there are alternatives that are better for the animals, and better for the shelter.

For instance, a shelter worker from southwest New Hampshire made a presentation at [Animal Care] Expo in 2000 about a program they had developed called the Rehoming Service for Valued Pets—RSVP. When people contacted them about giving up an animal, they would counsel the person and do an individualized assessment. If you step back and think about it, we have adoption decisions that are individualized, depending on the specific situation of the animal. Euthanasia decisions are individualized. But the admission decisions—which really, in many cases, drive and control the later decisions about adoption and euthanasia—are not individualized at all.

This woman presented the data from their first year, and basically somewhere less than half the animals were admitted to the shelter. As I recall, about 25 percent of the people were able to place their animal with a

friend. Another substantial percentage were able to keep the animal with help, because in many cases it isn't the animal that needs help, it's the owner—whether it's a housing issue, or an education issue, or other issues. That's why the individualized assessment is really critical. And they look at urgency and decide, “Is this urgent for this animal to be admitted?” And another thing they look at is, “Would this animal do well in a shelter? Would it have any prospect of getting adopted?” Those are really key things.

The book presents data from both Jacksonville and Richmond, which have used this individualized approach, to suggest that hey, relook at this conventional wisdom—the fates-worse-than-death assumption—and look at information and develop data.

A second issue where data is really important is [this]: You've probably seen the traditional kitten-and-puppy pyramid, spay-neuter pyramid, that has a cat or a dog and then a mountain of offspring. The underlying assumption is that pets that remain intact their whole lives drive cat and dog reproductive rates, and that's not true. We now know that cats and dogs that remain intact their whole lives account for a small fraction of the animals that are born—less than 20 percent.

So why is that important? It's important because that 80 percent-plus of litters are born to people that sterilize their pets at some point, after they've had a litter or two. [They] typically do that with their own money—that's the low-hanging fruit. These are people who don't have to be persuaded. In many cases, they've just delayed, and that delay has been tragic. One of the things that they don't know is that pet mammary cancer kills more than 100,000 cats and dogs in the United States every year. That type of cancer is almost entirely preventable by timely sterilization. It's just a knowledge deficit that's really important to correct—and that's a lot easier, frankly, than convincing people that are resistant to sterilize their pets, or coming up with funding for spay/neuter clinics, or subsidies, or whatever.

There was a [national] study that Alley Cat Allies did in 2007 [of] household cats. And they found the most common reason people that have an intact cat gave for keep-

p.s. Here's a way to
MAKE MORE MONEY
for your Shelter

Profits for Shelters (**p.s.**) is a new retail program dedicated to helping animal shelters start a new retail section or boost the sales from their existing retail displays. You can make more money and put the profits back into saving pets!



“Without the incredible shelter prices PetEdge offers, we would never be able to save so many animals.”
—Shelli Skiados, Humane Society of South Mississippi

p.s. PetEdge
DEALER SERVICES

Call us today to find out more...
(888) 230-1555
visit PetEdgeDS.com/ps
or email shelters@petedge.com

ing the cat intact wasn't cost. It wasn't because they had any objection to sterilizing the pet. It's because they affirmatively believed that it would be better for the cat to have a litter before being sterilized. That's a mistaken idea that needs to be corrected.

If we don't deal with presterilization litters, we can never halt population growth of cats and dogs in this country. The bottom line is that [for] cats and dogs that are sterilized, the data we have shows that each of them, on average, has more than two kittens or puppies before being sterilized, which means that you could sterilize 100 percent of all household cats and dogs, and still not reach replacement rate [where population growth is zero] if you haven't reduced presterilization litters. It's a really important thing for us, for allocation of resources.

As somebody once said, if you keep on doing what you've been doing, you'll keep on getting what you've got.

One of the impressions I got from your book is that shelter overpopulation is an

education problem, and to some degree an economic problem, with lower-income families having lower sterilization rates for their pets.

Sure. Poverty is critical. Providing subsidies to poverty-stricken caretakers is really critical. The Alley Cat Allies study showed that in households with an income less than \$35,000, 51.4 percent of the cats are sterilized. Between \$35,000 and \$75,000, it was above 90 percent. In households above \$75,000, it was over 96 percent. So that's one of the things that tells us that it's absolutely critical to provide subsidies. When the subsidies are provided, they have enormous impact, like they have in Jacksonville and Tampa and New Hampshire and other places.

Did anything surprise you as you were writing and researching?

I guess one of the things that surprised me was the enormous importance of a lot of this data that had never been applied—that there were some really significant research findings. The finding about presterilization

litters? The first study was 20 years ago, by Dr. [Andrew] Rowan, who's now at [The Humane Society of the United States]. And nobody's done anything with it 20 years later. He basically said in his study that almost 90 percent of all the litters born in these four towns in Massachusetts that he studied were presterilization litters—a very significant finding that just has not been followed up on 20 years later.

Are you optimistic about the future?

I'm optimistic that we're gonna end shelter euthanasia in this country, and shelter overpopulation. Frankly, we've reduced it by 75 percent over the last 35 years with underfunded, unfocused programs, and I'm convinced that data-driven programs will play a significant role in the ultimate eradication of shelter euthanasia. [AS](#)

Visit shelteroverpopulation.org to download a free copy of Peter Marsh's *Replacing Myth with Math: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Eradicate Shelter Overpopulation*.

“Thank you so much for

making this program available to the New Orleans community. I am convinced that had this been in place prior to Katrina, many more reunions would have happened.

Live and learn, sometimes in the most painful ways. Regardless, learn.”

Shelly Patton
Events Coordinator
Louisiana SPCA



SAVE LIVES. RAISE FUNDS.

Learn how @ Help4Shelters.org or call 310-652-9838, xt. 2




24-Hour, Nationwide Lost & Found Hotline

FREE membership for your adopted pets

FREE membership for your staff and volunteers

25% of all renewals will be donated to your shelter or rescue





Mark Your Calendar!

Bet on a Sure Thing!

EXPO 2012 // May 21–24, 2012

**Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada**

Future Expo dates:

EXPO 2013 // May 8–11, 2013

**Gaylord Opryland Resort
Nashville, Tennessee**

Animal Care Expo is the largest international training conference and trade show for those involved in animal care and control, sheltering, rescue, and emergency services. Expo offers educational workshops and exhibit booths, providing training, services, and supplies that help animal advocates work smarter and better.

The conference also offers outstanding networking opportunities with attendees from animal welfare agencies and shelters across the globe. Plan now to join us next year for Animal Care Expo 2012!

For more information, visit animalsheltering.org/expo or call 1-800-248-EXPO.



Presents

ANIMAL CARE EXPO

After the Adoption

Are you liable for what happens once an animal leaves your shelter?

BY CHERIE TRAVIS



Animals come into shelters for all sorts of reasons. Sometimes they are found stray or abandoned with no known owner. Sometimes the owner can no longer handle the financial or physical challenge of caring for the animal. And sometimes, the animal has behavioral problems that force the owner to give her up.

The previous owner may warn you about a dog's temperament. You may see it for yourself while the animal is at the shelter. Or you may find out the hard way when a new owner complains that you gave him a dangerous pet!

In my last article ("Avoiding Adopter Roulette," March-April 2011), I discussed the duty of an animal shelter to ensure each pet is placed in a safe home with a responsible and caring owner. This column examines

the flip side: What responsibilities do animal placement groups have to make sure that the adopter is receiving an animal who will not harm him, his family, or anyone else?

This issue came up recently when a shelter president contacted me with great concern after an adopter threatened to sue the organization when her newly adopted dog bit her daughter. The shelter president was frantic that the adopter was threatening "a \$2 million lawsuit." So, this raises an important legal question: What liability does a shelter have after it has adopted an animal into a new home?

Though every adoption is unique, the determination of post-adoption liability can usually be broken down into three simple issues, listed in order of descending importance: (1) whether the shelter knew the animal was

dangerous; (2) whether the adopter knew of those behavioral problems before he agreed to accept his new pet; and (3) whether the shelter gave up actual control of the animal at the point of adoption.

The most important issue in this area of the law is whether the shelter knew that the animal had behavioral issues prior to placing the animal. You may learn that a behavioral problem exists if the past owner tells you about it at surrender. But you may often receive strays at the shelter, and in those cases there is no opportunity to speak with a past owner. You may also, during the animal's shelter stay, observe worrisome behaviors that could indicate a dangerous temperament. However, even the best shelter employee can miss subtle signs of behavioral abnormalities—so let's equip you with the knowledge to handle both situations.



Adoption No. 1: No Known Behavioral Concerns

Your shelter receives a cute, fluffy, little Pekingese who comes in as a stray. You follow all state laws and organizational policies, and the pup never shows any signs of bad tendencies. You find him a loving home with a responsible owner. You think everything is fine, until one day you get a call from the enraged adopter saying that this cute little dog bit the neighbor without provocation!

You feel bad about it, but is your shelter legally responsible? If your shelter finds a home for an animal who has never exhibited any behavioral problems before adoption, then it would seem unfair to hold you responsible for the actions of that animal after the adoption has occurred. Most courts would agree that a shelter is not responsible for the post-adoption behavior of an animal where there were no pre-adoption indicators of danger. Courts traditionally only hold a human responsible for the actions of an animal where that person has both (1) *control* over the animal, and (2) *knowledge* of the danger the animal poses. In most states, both requirements are necessary to find a party liable for the actions of a pet.

First, let's look at the control requirement. Since animals are considered property under the eyes of the law, it makes sense to use basic property law guidelines to determine these cases. In *Murphy v. Eddinger*, the Connecticut Superior Court explained that "courts are reluctant to extend liability when an individual does not exercise control over the property." Once you place an animal with a new owner, your shelter no longer has control over that animal. Even if you have procedures in place to monitor the post-adoption status of each animal, the post-adoption interaction will usually not be substantial enough to qualify as legal control or possession. Therefore, if you get sued for the post-adoption behavior of the animal, your strongest argument to the court is that you had no control over that animal. You can bolster this argument by adding language to your adoption agreement to make sure the adopter knows that the animal is now solely under his control and responsibility.

Now let's examine the knowledge requirement. As I said before, courts may impose liability where a party has knowledge of an animal's behavioral problems (but re-

member, this is usually only if that party also has control over the animal). In *Donchin v. Guerrero*, the California Court of Appeals discussed the knowledge and control elements in determining whether a landlord is responsible for the actions of one of his tenant's pets. In that case, the court said "a landlord who does not have actual knowledge of the vicious nature of a tenant's dog cannot be held liable when the dog attacks a third person." The court went on to say that if an attack is not reasonably foreseeable, then the landlord has no duty to prevent the attack.

The facts of that case provide some guidance as to how a court would determine the post-adoption liability of an animal shelter. The landlord in *Donchin v. Guerrero* was held responsible because he *knew* about the danger of the dog and *controlled* the premises where the dog and his owner lived. Both the knowledge and control elements were present, and the landlord did nothing to protect the other tenants. (He also lied and tried to cover up the fact that he knew the animal was dangerous—never a good idea to lie to a judge!)

Unlike a landlord, an animal shelter has absolutely no control over an adopter or his property. Thus, if your shelter has absolutely no knowledge of the animal's behavioral problems, then the court is unlikely to hold you responsible for post-adoption incidents. Practically speaking, it may be difficult to prove an absence of knowledge on your part. The best way to protect yourself is to include a daily log or report of each animal's temperament so that there is some documented evidence of the absence of any problem.

Adoption No. 2: Placing a Potentially Dangerous Animal

When you receive an animal into your shelter who exhibits any sort of aggression, your first duty is to fully evaluate the animal to determine whether it is suitable for adoption. Every shelter should already have safeguards in place to ensure that truly dangerous animals are not adopted out.

But what about animals who are not clearly dangerous, just potentially dangerous?

First, you should perform an internal audit of your evaluation procedures and make

sure that your staff is trained to identify and document both overt and subtle signs of behavioral issues.

Documenting all potential signs of danger before the adoption is one important way to avoid liability after the adoption, because when you know an animal is dangerous, disclosing that information to the new owner will likely shield you from any liability. In *DeLeon v. Commercial Manufacturing & Supply Co.*, the California Appellate Court stated "a duty to warn or disclose danger arises when an article is or should be known to be dangerous for its intended use, either inherently or because of defects."



Even though that case was referring to product liability (like exploding toasters or faulty chainsaws), the same rule can be applied to animal adoption. Normally, domestic pets—like toasters!—are not dangerous. If you know a specific animal has behavioral issues, it is just like a manufacturer realizing its toaster is dangerous. Once you disclose to the consumer (in this case the adopter) that the "product" (pet) has a malfunction (behavioral issue), then you are no longer responsible for their decision to accept that animal in its current condition. This is known under the law as "assumption of risk."

When a prospective adopter shows an interest in an animal with documented

behavioral concerns, that adoption counselor should go through the animal's file with the prospective adopter, including descriptions of all questionable past behavior. The adopter should be given an opportunity to fully discuss the animal's behavioral issues with the shelter's veterinarian and behaviorist. If the adopter still wants the animal, and the shelter feels it is a safe environment for both the animal and the owner, then it is acceptable to proceed with the adoption, and the adopter is "assuming the risk" of any future behavioral problems. The shelter may want to direct the adopter to behaviorists and trainers so that the adopter will continue to work on behavioral issues.

Disclosure is always a good practice, even to document an easily explained incident with the animal. For example, in my experience running a humane society, sometimes a cat may nip at or bite a volunteer who is trying to get the cat back into a cage. Most often, the volunteer will admit that the cat was growling and the volunteer failed to realize that she should wait for the animal to calm down before handling him. Regardless, my organization's policy is to disclose such incidents to the prospective adopter so there could never be a claim that we withheld information.

To ensure minimization of liability, your shelter should include two key components in the adoption agreement: (1) an acknowledgment on the adopter's part that he has fully read and understands the animal's history, and (2) that the adopter accepts all liability for any post-adoption behavior of the animal and "indemnifies" the shelter from any claims raised by third parties in relation to the animal's post-adoption behavior. Indemnification is a legal term that essentially means one party (in this case, the new owner) agrees to pay for or insure against any losses incurred by another party (the shelter). In situations where the animal is known to have bitten, following the aforementioned guidelines will provide the maximum safeguard against post-adoption liability.

"Rely on Ryan's"™



RYAN'S PET SUPPLIES®

Best Prices... Best Brands..

1(800) 525-7387
www.ryanspet.com

Kennel Leads

BULK PACKAGING **CUSTOMER BEST SELLER FAVORITE**

Gold Green Teal Aqua Royal Navy Purple Maroon Red Raspberry

AS LOW AS 48¢ ea.

Quality Counts

TOMLYN

SAVE UP TO 57%

AS LOW AS \$19.99

STOCK UP NOW!

KILLS FLEAS & TICKS ON CONTACT

Flea & Tick Shampoo - RTU

Paw Brothers® Polyester "Sheepskin" Mats And Rolls Unbelievable Quality at Unbelievable Prices.
Cut To Fit, And Save.



Call or Log on for your FREE catalog today!

SHOP ONLINE! **24/7** www.ryanspet.com

Find us on **Facebook**

©2011 G&G Distribution Inc. All rights reserved. Pricing and manufacturer specs subject to change. These prices good thru August 31, 2011

Go Green!



MonkeyNuts[®] The Green Laundry Detergent Alternative

MonkeyNuts are entirely green processed, with zero fossil fuel, air or water pollution emitted in processing. The reusable wash packets are good for 4 to 6 loads of laundry per packet, and leave no residues like typical detergents. MonkeyNuts are the perfect natural solution for all your Laundry needs with 90 plus natural washes in every box!



Alpha Tech Pet[®]
Environmentally Friendly Solutions for
Animal Care Facility Maintenance

800-222-5537 | alphatechpet.com

To summarize, the law will protect a shelter from post-adoption liability as long as the shelter is no longer in actual control of the animal at the time of the incident, and the shelter had no knowledge or fully disclosed the knowledge of a dangerous temperament before the adopter took the animal. So follow these steps to keep your shelter out of the doghouse: Make sure to keep a close eye on animals who exhibit minor aggression while they are in the shelter. Document any concerns and pass that information along to the new adopter. There's no harm in providing the adopter with everything you've observed so that they can make an informed decision.

Now, before any of you conclude that the safest path to eliminating liability would be to avoid any type of behavioral assessment, with the theory that "ignorance is bliss," know that that would be very unwise. Any good plaintiff's lawyer will make a compelling argument that shelters have a duty to evaluate animals placed for adoption. Since it is arguably now an industry practice to perform such assessments, a court could find that not doing so would constitute a breach of that duty.

If you are sued, hire experienced local counsel. You have heard this advice in my previous articles, but I can't emphasize how valuable an attorney with knowledge of local animal laws can be. [AS](#)



Cherie Travis is adjunct professor of animal law at DePaul University College of Law and Northwestern University School of Law, and was the associate director of the Center for Animal Law at DePaul before being appointed commissioner of Chicago Animal Care and Control. She is president and co-founder of PACT Humane Society.

Kitty in Their Hands

Bringing out the best behaviors in kittens

BY NANCY PETERSON



Fosterers have a big job when taking in kittens from a shelter or rescue group: They have to turn rambunctious little fur balls into emotionally and physically resilient young cats who will make fine companions. Nancy Peterson's foster kitten Jimmy (above) and his sister Twinky were adopted together in February, and went home with a young woman in Frederick, Md.

Theresa Foley's introduction to fostering started 15 years ago when she trapped feral cats and kittens on her street in old town Key West, Fla. Foley fostered several six-toed kittens—perhaps relatives of the felines who still roam Ernest Hemingway's property on the island—during the three years it took to trap one elusive mom cat. "I began fostering mostly out of necessity, because there were not that many people willing to do it or set up to do it," she says.

At the time, information about feline development and behavior was sparse, and Foley was lucky to find an experienced fosterer to mentor her. The woman who headed

Lower Keys Friends of Animals of Key West, which provided free surgeries to Foley's trapped felines, taught Foley about medications, record-keeping, and adoptions.

Foley was grateful for the help she received and became a volunteer for the organization. When she offered to help others doing trap-neuter-return (TNR), "it was like turning on a fire hydrant," she says. Requests poured in. Five years ago Foley founded Venice Street Cats—a nonprofit that promotes spay/neuter for pet cats and helps people get free or low-cost spay/neuter services for ferals and strays—in Venice, Fla., with a budget of \$3,000. In 2010, its \$40,000 budget came

from donations of \$1 to \$20 from locals. The work of Venice Street Cats is also supported by many volunteers mentored by Foley, including fosterers who socialize kittens.

Since behavior remains one of the leading drivers of euthanasia of cats, early socialization is extremely important. Kittens are less likely to be stressed or have behavior and training problems, more likely to be adopted and equipped to adjust to life in their new homes, and less likely to be returned if they are fostered by volunteers with an understanding of normal kitten behavior and socialization, the process that influences behavior through exposure to

[behavior department]

situations involving people, other animals, and new environments.

During kittens' first eight weeks of life, learning is enhanced—likely because their nervous systems develop most rapidly at that time. That's when they acquire an expectation of what's normal in their environment, an expectation that can last a lifetime. Although opportunities missed during those weeks can sometimes be made up later, learning may take much longer.

A recent survey by Healthy Paws Pet Insurance & Foundation—conducted with adoption groups, executive directors, and board members across the United States—found that a huge number of adoption groups are highly concerned with having enough fosterers for their adoptable animals.

A good foster network can be a major ally in saving animals' lives. But some people are reluctant to foster due to concerns about providing adequate time for kittens, and some organizations are hesitant to grow their foster programs out of concern that people may not have adequate time.

These are legitimate concerns, but they're generally overblown: According to John Bradshaw, founder and director of the Anthrozoology Institute, optimum socialization to people can be achieved when kittens are 3 to 9 weeks old with only 30 to 60 minutes of gentle interaction per day. Bradshaw, who has studied the behavior of domestic cats for more than 25 years, notes that the optimum type of interaction for most kittens is being stroked and talked to simultaneously.

But fledgling fosterers do have a lot to learn before setting out on their kitty-schooling mission. Many of the veteran fosterers interviewed for this article spoke ruefully of their early mistakes—from not introducing kittens to enough visitors to not confining kittens long enough—and wanted to make sure to pass on advice not only about what to do, but what not to do. Their practical knowledge and good and bad experiences are worth their weight in kitten chow.

Maybe you're a brick-and-mortar facility that relies on volunteers to foster kittens who are ill, too young to thrive in a shelter, or for whom there is no space. Perhaps you're an unsheltered adoption group relying exclusively on volunteers to foster kittens in their homes. Either way, this article will help fosterers and cat cuddlers turn your little fur balls



Handling kittens isn't just about direct touch. Foster parents can do them a great favor by getting them accustomed to wearing a collar and tags early in life. Getting them used to this sensation discourages them from trying to remove their collar later on in their adoptive homes.

into wonderfully behaved kittens and help your adopters turn those kittens into wonderfully behaved cats.

Containing Kittens

When starting out fostering in a private home, it's a good idea to keep your foster kittens in a small space—such as a cage, crate, or a small room with doors—that's easy to kitten-proof. Because kittens seem content with a small area until they are about 6 weeks old and fosterers find it easier to work with kittens in a space with few hiding places, fosterers wisely use this time to accustom kittens to gentle handling, using their litter box and scratching post, and playing nicely. Allowing kittens to roam too soon is the mistake that Jenny Schlueter, who fosters for Tree House Humane Society in Chicago, hears about most often. "Then the peeing and hiding issues ensue," she warns.

Keeping shelter kittens confined is not just a behavior issue: Health-wise, separating them from owned pets is smart, a lesson Schlueter learned the hard way when she allowed fosters free range too early, and her pet cats came down with upper respiratory infections.

Fosterers Cindy Schneller and her husband Brian McCall prepare kittens for adoption for the SPCA Tampa Bay in Largo, Fla.

They don't introduce fosters to their owned pets for 10 days, in case the kittens are incubating an illness their pets could catch.

New fosterers may dislike the idea of putting kittens in a cage, but "that is more about the human's emotion than the cat's needs," says Foley. She cages all kittens for periods of time so that they learn not to be afraid of the cage, and will run to the front for attention rather than retreating to the back in fear. When pressed for time, Foley moves the kittens' cage nearby while she does other things around the house. She can talk to them, and they can see her and watch her interact with her own cats.

Sarah Vicary, a fosterer for Mid-Michigan Cat Rescue in Grand Ledge, Mich., and Carol Gaul, who fosters for Black and Orange Cat Foundation in Plain City, Ohio, also put fosters in cages, making sure that they put the cages in areas the kittens will find nurturing. Vicary locates the cage off her living room and kitchen so kittens learn about typical household activities. Gaul locates the cage near a window, where kittens can look outside and enjoy sunshine. The spot also allows the kittens to see and hear TV, watch people and other animals in the house, and get a whiff of good smells wafting from the kitchen.

Schneller's and McCall's kittens are kept in a separate room, with baby gates placed so that they fill the entire doorway. "With

the baby gates, the kittens can hear, smell, and sometimes see what is going on in the house," Schneller says.

Adrienne Gallagher and her husband Barney, who foster for The Anti-Cruelty Society in Chicago, also initially keep fosters in a small room so the kittens have easy access to their litter box. After dinner, the Gallaghers visit the kittens' room to play and snuggle—with the kittens. "We find they are always happy with this setup because they have time to rest and are also happy to see us," Gallagher says. When it's time for bed, the Gallaghers close the door to the room. "Right away we're teaching them about sleeping at night," she says.

Keeping very young kittens in an extra-large crate helps Schneller teach them good potty habits; they don't really have a choice but to use it, she says. She provides several low-sided litter boxes and makes sure the litter isn't so deep that kittens sink into it. She cleans up accidents as quickly as possible using an enzymatic cleaner so that odors are reduced. If the kittens prefer eliminating on another surface, such as a rug, she removes the enticing item.

Beyond the Door

Kristin Ramsdell, who fosters for the Black and Orange Cat Foundation in Plain City, Ohio, believes that most kittens will let you



To encourage normal development, it's good to provide kittens with a space that offers the chance to scratch and climb, play with toys, look out a window and be exposed to sunlight, and get used to sounds like a radio playing soft music.



Giving up kittens they've raised is difficult even for longtime fosterers, but the separation pangs are worth it. They know once they've given one group of kittens a good start in life, they can open their homes to the next ones who deserve the same chance.

know when they're ready to explore. "They will tend to run out of the room as soon as you open the door," she says.

"Most kittens don't want to be isolated, and won't put up with it for long," says Gene Marault, a fosterer for Stray Feral Rescue in St. Paul, Minn. He hasn't had a kitten who didn't venture out at least to jump into bed with him at night.

When Diane Fairclough, who fosters for Forgotten Felines of Sonoma County in Santa Rosa, Calif., can enter the foster room and easily pick up a kitten, she knows he's ready to explore. She recommends the kitten's first experience outside his room take place when things are calm around the house. "If you have other pets, and he has not yet been introduced, put them in another room so he can adjust to a new environment first without dealing with a new critter too," she advises.

Some fosterers introduce their kittens to one room at a time for short visits, and many place toys, beds, and other familiar items from their room into the new spaces to help the kittens feel more comfortable. Foley places shy kittens in a carrier or cage to introduce them to a new area.

Chatka Ruggiero, who works with kittens from Animal Care League in Oak Park, Ill., accompanies kittens as they explore new areas so she can reassure them and help them deal with different situations. As kittens get bigger, and depending on how brave they are, the Gallaghers gradually allow fosters to be with them in other areas of their home. "Just remember," Gallagher says, "when they are little, you can't expect them to be able to manage too far from their litter box."

Ramsdell carries shy kittens and tries to get them to join their more adventurous siblings. "It's always helpful having the shy kittens see the more outgoing kittens playing outside of the room. It tends to spark their interest and helps them get past the shyness," she says.

If a kitten is uncomfortable in new areas, fosterers recommend returning the kitten to his safe room or cage so he can't hide in other parts of the house.

"Kittens that hide have generally been introduced too quickly to the household," says Fairclough. She adds that kittens should be comfortable with you and the noises of your household before leaving their safe place.



Getting kittens used to gentle human contact is an important part of socialization. Cuddling or cradling them, handling their ears and tails, pulling their lips back and touching their teeth—all this will increase their comfort with people, and prove helpful when they need to be medicated or examined by veterinary staff.

“Even after they are allowed out of their room, they still have access to that room as a safe place to run to if they get scared or uncomfortable,” Schneller says. If a kitten hides outside his room or cage, fosterers suggest enticing him with a wand toy or food on a spoon rather than dragging or flushing him out of a hiding place, which may traumatize him and cause him to bite or scratch.

Meeting the Rest of the Family

In the Marault household, as soon as kittens show signs of wanting to be integrated, they're allowed to and encouraged to. “It's important that they learn to be confident around other animals, and hopefully playful and interactive with them, because it makes life more fun for them all, and odds are there will be pets in their adoptive home,” he says.

Lori Riccio, who fosters for The Woburn Feral Cat Coalition in Woburn, Mass., spends at least an hour with her kittens in the morning and evening on workdays and more time on weekends. “As long as they have enough exer-

cise and interaction with humans, they usually do very well and socialize quickly,” she says.

Kittens who get along with other cats or dogs are especially desirable to adopters. Vicary notes that the transition into a new home is easier for such kittens and less stressful for adopters' pets. Foster parents should make sure that adopters get good information on how to introduce kittens to the people and animals in their households; an unsuccessful meeting can sometimes mean a returned kitten.

Donna Mlinek has fostered only one kitten due to her husband's allergies, but got more than her fair share of kitty wisdom when she served as feline program manager for the Dumb Friends League in Denver. She cautions against introducing fosters to owned pets unless you know the animals are good with kittens and won't hurt or frighten them. She advises letting the kitten decide to approach, leave, escape, or hide.

Rather than trying to control a scared kitten and risk being scratched or bitten, it's

best to control a dog with a leash, and it's wise to cut fosters' and pets' nails before introductions.

The Gallaghers don't have a dog, but invite cat-friendly dogs to visit their fosters. Such encounters are closely supervised.

Rita Bundas, who fosters for South Shore Felines in Sun City Center, Fla., lets her cats observe fosters through sliding glass doors that lead to the kittens' sunroom, so “the introduction to our cats usually goes very smoothly, and we observe the whole time when they initially interact.”

Ramsdell is a huge advocate of introducing fosters to her cats and dogs. “I put up a baby gate to allow the kittens to see my cats and dogs. I do this for a week or so, and then allow the kittens to come out to see the gang,” she says.

Schlueter's cats usually tolerate or ignore fosters, but because she lives in a small apartment, she returns kittens to their room if her cats get annoyed. Although Fairclough's adult cat is used to kittens coming and going, she makes sure to give him plenty of love when she's fostering.

Introductions to two-legged animals are important as well. Wendy Ross, a fosterer for Port Colborne Feline Initiative in Port Colborne, Ontario, Canada, knows the advantages that a well-socialized kitten has. “Sometimes people say they are looking for a certain type of kitten—a calico, tuxedo, or tabby—but they are often swayed by another kitten, the one that approaches them first in an inquisitive, friendly manner,” she says.

Kittens may initially be shy or scared when visitors come, so it's best to bring people into the fosters' room. If the kittens are out and about in other areas of the house, it's easier for them to scatter and hide.

People may seem less scary if they sit on the floor or a chair rather than looming over the kittens. “Let [the kitten] hear and observe newcomers, and don't rush handing him over to them,” says Fairclough. She advises letting kittens do the approaching and handing visitors a wand toy to break the ice.

Ruggiero's grandchildren handle and play with fosters so kittens learn to be comfortable with kids. “Children are totally different from adults as far as noises and quickness of movement,” says Ruggiero. “So kittens need to see that side of humans also.”

The Soft Touch

By pairing food with human presence, fosterers can help kittens learn to associate people with good things.

Mlinek suggests that fosterers practice—at different times—gently scruffing kittens, squeezing their feet, cradling them, pulling their lips back and touching their teeth, and handling their ears and tails while the kittens suck on a syringe filled with baby food or diluted kitten food. This also conditions kittens to being handled for medicating and being examined by veterinary staff, she says.

Schneller and McCall hold, hug, and handle kittens a lot—especially their paws, ears, and mouth. They sit nearby and gently pet the kittens while they're focused on eating. They pick them up for a short time when the kittens finish eating, and, once they can hold a kitten, they do so briefly several times a day.

Bundas puts baby food on a spoon—rather than a finger, so that kittens don't learn to think of fingers as food—and lures kittens to come get in her lap, where she talks to and pets them as they eat.

"I'm big on kissing their little heads at an early age so they become comfortable with closeness," says Fairclough. She also cuddles

them in a blanket and strokes them with a soft brush to mimic the soothing sensation of being groomed by a mother cat. "However, when a kitten is focused on play, don't force him to be held, or he will look at cuddling as a game where he needs to 'get away' from you," she warns.

In a litter of kittens, don't allow the dominant ones to become bullies. And don't neglect your wallflower kittens—give them all equal time, says Fairclough. "You will naturally gravitate toward the kitten that is more comfortable and social, but don't forget to spend quality time with your shy or scared kitten," she says. Giving a shy kitten some time away from his siblings allows you to work with him without distractions, and can give him confidence, she notes.

Wrapping scared kittens in a soft towel can help them relax. Fairclough faces the kitten away from her. "Looking directly at him can be threatening. He'll look up at you when he's ready, and soon you'll become his friend, comfort, and food source," she says. When a kitten is frightened and prefers to hide and not be held, Riccio knows she'll need to make more time for him. She also wraps a scared kitten and only exposes his head so he feels more secure and can't escape. While watching TV, she

Resources

Free tip sheets from The Humane Society of the United States can help prevent and resolve normal cat behavior and make great handouts (humanesociety.org/animals/cats/tips).

The Anti-Cruelty Society in Chicago sought input from its fosterers for its excellent *Foster Volunteer Manual*, available at bit.ly/1o2QJ9.

The San Francisco SPCA has an extensive guide to fostering (bit.ly/jwkhPL).

gently touches him until he relaxes. She notes that having the TV on low volume, as well as the radio and CD player, exposes kittens to normal sounds they'll encounter down the road.

Handling isn't just about direct touch—you can do your kittens a great favor by getting them accustomed to wearing a collar and tags early in life. Letting them get used to the sensation will help discourage them from trying to take off their collar later on in their adoptive homes.

Time to Play, Things to Scratch, Food to Munch

Fosterers also teach kittens to play nicely. Using a wand toy works well; it keeps your hands far from sharp kitten teeth and nails.

Schneller and McCall never use their hands or any toy that resembles hands and also stop playing when kittens get rough. They say they usually find that siblings and playmates are great to teach kittens to play nicely.

Fairclough never plays roughly or too energetically; that can cause playtime to get out of hand, and roughness can become an issue. If a kitten bites her, she redirects him to a toy. If he continues to nip, she stops playing and walks away.

Marault encourages rowdy kittens to play gently. "If they play too rough, biting and scratching, we whimper and draw back until the kitten understands he's caused pain, which is usually not their intent at all," he says.

Scratching objects is normal behavior, and kittens start early, so teaching them to scratch appropriately is another important



Keeping kittens confined in their own space early on, or during portions of the day, is a better strategy than allowing them to "free range" in the fosterer's home. There are far fewer hiding spots where they can get stuck, and they can't stray too far from the litter box. Nancy Peterson of The HSUS put her foster kittens in the laundry room of her home at bedtime.

[behavior department]

job. Schneller and McCall make sure there are plenty of scratching items available. If a kitten scratches inappropriately, they distract the kitten by clapping their hands or offering a toy. When possible, they put enticing scents on appropriate scratching items.

It's not a good idea to hold a kitten's paws to teach him where to scratch. Dragging a wand toy near and on the scratching post or box will achieve the same objective without scaring him. Providing a stable scratching post is important because kittens may be reluctant to return to one that has fallen over and frightened them.

Cats are often portrayed as finicky eaters—and some are. Schlueter warns that kittens tend to fixate on the food they are used to. Feeding a variety of flavors and textures ensures a cat with a more varied palate who will more easily adjust to whatever diet his adopter prefers in the new home, she says.

Many organizations, like the one Foley fosters for, rely on food donations. She mixes three kinds of dry food so kittens don't get

an upset stomach if an adopter changes food. Ross always provides adopters with the food her fosters have been eating so that any diet changes can be done gradually, and informs adopters if a kitten has any problems with a particular type of food.

Transporting Kittens

Owners often mention their cats' stress and fear and the difficulty of transporting them as reasons for not taking their cat to the veterinarian. Acclimating kittens to carriers makes life easier for everyone, and can help ensure that adopted kittens will get medical care when they need it.

To get kittens used to carriers, Schneller and McCall prop open the carrier door, put something soft on the bottom, and place a toy inside so kittens can explore and play in, around, and on the carrier. That way the carrier becomes familiar, not just a scary thing that appears when it's time to go somewhere. Marault leaves carriers out so kittens can hide out and nap in them and not be afraid of them later. Bundas and Gaul bring out the

carrier a few days before a car ride and place some familiar, well-liked objects inside.

When transporting kittens, fosterers put a towel or something absorbent on the carrier's floor and bring extra bedding and cleanup materials in case the kittens have an accident. Covering the floor with something soft that has the kittens' scent on it may also serve as a security blanket. Fosterers cover the carrier, except for the end facing them, with a towel or sheet and place the carrier in the car so the kittens can see them. If possible, they secure the carrier with a seat belt. Some fosterers play soft music, and others talk to their kittens. "We have found that some kittens like classical music," Gallagher says, "and almost none want any rock 'n' roll."

Sending Them Home

Gallagher and her husband work on a schedule so fosters are ready to return to the shelter when they weigh just more than 2 pounds. "At that point, we hug them and write up a profile so the potential families can read about the kittens they are looking at and learn what personality it has and what it likes and is used to," Gallagher says.

It's in a kitten's best interest to have a profile, even if your organization doesn't require it, Fairclough says. She recommends that fosterers be truthful when sharing their kittens' personalities with the organization's staff. "If you portray a kitten as outgoing and he is not, the adoption could fail."

Lynn Campisano, who fosters for HopeOhio in Columbus, Ohio, cautions adopters that kittens will need time to warm up, come out, and feel safe. She tells adopters that two weeks seems to be the magic number for kitties, so adopters shouldn't go home and expect the kitten to be cuddly right away. Patience is key.

Giving up kittens they've raised is difficult even for longtime fosterers, but Fairclough says the separation pangs are worth it. "As hard as it can be to give them up, I know that I have given these little ones a good start in life, and I can now open my home to the next little ones deserving the same chance." **AS**

Nancy Peterson is the cat programs manager at The Humane Society of the United States. She recently fostered her first litter of kittens.

CRIOJO PET PRODUCTS, LLC

A revolutionary enrichment solution in humane animal housing...

Crijo Kitty Crib™

Patent Pending

Reduces upper respiratory issues.

Easy to clean.

Reduces surgical site infections.

only: **\$109.99***

Improve your adoption rates. For more information on "Kitty Crib" benefits & promotions visit: **CrijoPets.com**

*Quantity Discount Available (Minimum order of 1)

30% Discount for all Shelter Partner Members

Crijo Cat Adoption Rooms

Custom computer assisted designs for rooms

All units are mobile, attractive and sturdy

Disinfect with standard recommended cleaners

Visit www.crijo.com for details

For a free quote call 404-226-3835



FROM ISLAND BUSINESS GROUP
 Phone: (631)-288-6031
 email: info@islandbusinessgroup.com
 On the web: www.islandbusinessgroup.com



Adopt-A-Friend supports all of these functions

- ▼ Adoptions
- ▼ Fund Raising
- ▼ Animal Control
- ▼ Animal Health/Pet Care
- ▼ Fiscal Management
- ▼ Point Of Sale
- ▼ Lost and Found Pets
- ▼ Mailing Lists
- ▼ Wait List
- ▼ Web Integration with **Petfinder.com** ADOPT A HOMELESS PET



CALL FOR A FREE DEMO CD!



DEVELOPED WITH



Vehicle Fleet Management & Equipment Financing for your Shelter's Basic Needs



For more information on our programs.... Contact Brent Baron
 Toll Free: 1.800.223.4885 local: 410.363.6500 bbaron@allstateleasing.com



ALLSTATE LEASING
 9428 Reisterstown Road, Owings Mills, MD 21117
 AllstateLeasing.com



Your Total Pet Loss Solutions Provider



Equipment



Urns



Service



Supplies

For over 50 years, Matthews Cremation has been the leading manufacturer of crematory equipment, supplies and service. Today we are witnessing the fastest untapped service trend in the veterinary industry... **Pet Loss Memorial Care**

Partner with the industry leader and integrate a full cycle of care for pet owners.

Matthews Cremation Division | 2045 Sprint Blvd. | Apopka, FL 32703
 (800) 327 - 2831 | (407) 886 - 5533 | www.matthewscremation.com

Swab ARF Series

Solid Fiberglass Animal Transports

Standard Features:

- ☛ Solid fiberglass construction
- ☛ Fresh air system
- ☛ Auxiliary four way flashers
- ☛ Extra large 6" stainless door handles
- ☛ Rear step bumper
- ☛ 2-year warranty



Swab Conversion Van Now Available



Model ARF-95
 Nash County, North Carolina

Swab Wagon Company, Inc.

P.O. Box 919 | 44 South Callowhill Street | Elizabethtown, PA 17023
 1-800-834-3922 | FAX: 717-362-4579 | Web: swabwagon.com

"Designed with the Humane Treatment of Animals in Mind"

JACKSON & RYAN ARCHITECTS
 Martha Seng, FAIA • www.jacksonryan.com • (713) 526-5436

HE SPEAKS. WE LISTEN.



BACON GROUP, INC.
ARCHITECTURE

DESIGN FOR THE ANIMAL
CARE COMMUNITY

(800) 961-1967 | www.bgarchitects.com
AAC002095

LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT HE'S SAYING.

**FREE ADOPTION
GIFT BAGS**
FREE SMILES. NO HASSLES.



FREE Friends Fur-ever Adoption Gift Bags for each of your adopters includes FREE shipping!

Learn more or sign up at:
www.adialogue.com/shelter
or call (800) 972-7994


MANAGED BY THE DRACOLE COMPANY, INC.

**[ANIMAL
Sheltering]**
The Magazine for Animal Care Professionals and Volunteers

Visit animalsheltering.org!
Your **No. 1** online resource for everything related to animal care, control, and sheltering!

**SAVE LIVES
RAISE FUNDS
for free.**



Learn how @ Help4Shelters.org

**Tomahawk
Live
Traps and Eqpt**

Mfg Animal Equipment Since **1925**
www.livetraps.com


- Order Number: 800-272-8727
- Fax Number: 715-356-4611
- Customer Service: 715-356-4600

Tomahawk Traps are Government Used and Approved

100's of Animal Traps & Cages
Feral Cat Dens & Muzzles
Cat Graspers & Restraint Poles
Nets & Kevlar Gloves
Leashes & Collars

Mention Ad to Receive Additional Discount



Looking for Your Dream Job?

Visit animalsheltering.org/jobs TODAY!



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES



The NATIONAL FEDERATION of HUMANE SOCIETIES

*"There is a strong voice for animals
when we all speak as one."*

- The *only* federation created for and by the members
- Membership open to all nonprofit humane organizations and animal care and control agencies
- Advocacy for public policy, corporate policies impacting animals, and industry best practices
- Every member organization has a voice in federation initiatives

Visit us today for more information

humanefederation.org

703-242-3675



Quality products designed for
safety, sanitation and convenience

Pet Carriers
Collars/Leads
Slip Leashes
Surgical Instruments
Disposal Litter Trays
Animal Handling Equipment



Fund Raising
Food Serving Trays
Cremation Urns
Identification Systems

Call for a FREE catalog or visit our website

800-234-5330

www.cspecialties.com

PO Box 68591 Indianapolis, IN 46268-0591

Animal Shelter Architects



ANIMAL ARTS

architecture • animals • people

1.800.332.4413

www.animalarts.biz

Loyal. Reliable. Ready to print.

Office-trained, Earth-friendly disposition, good with all ages personnel.

With Xerox FreeColorPrinters you can bring color printing in-house. Join the growing list of over 41,000 customers and 500 animal care organizations who've given Xerox FreeColorPrinters a good home.



To see if you qualify, apply online at
www.xerox.com/fcp-HSUS-AS2 or call **1-800-201-7868**.

Use referral code HSUS-AS2.

There is no cost or obligation to apply.



ColorQube® 8570
Solid Ink Color Printer



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES
| Shelter Partners |



Visit www.xerox.com/fcp-HSUS-AS2 for details. ©2011 Xerox Corporation. All rights reserved. XEROX®, ColorQube® and Xerox and design® are trademarks of Xerox Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries.

Going Mobile

New smartphone app lets people connect with a Kansas City shelter wherever they go

BY JIM BAKER



Nick the dog found a new home when Marla Svoboda, vice president of marketing and development for Wayside Waifs, showed her friend Marsha Reynolds (right) some of the shelter's adoptable pets on a new smartphone app.

Marsha Reynolds wasn't ready to adopt.

She'd lost her old dog Henry, who was more than 17, not long ago, and she was still grieving. But that didn't stop her longtime friend Marla Svoboda from keeping an eye out for a potential furry friend.

Svoboda's job as vice president of development and marketing for Wayside Waifs, an animal shelter in Kansas City, Mo., keeps sweet, furry faces in her view all the time. But when she whipped out her smartphone at lunch to show her friend the shelter's new adoption application (or "app," software designed for handheld devices and mobile phones), Reynolds saw through the bells and whistles.

"I said, 'Look at our cool, new app. It does this, and it does this, and you can even donate. You want to look at some animals?'" Svoboda recalls. "She was just window shopping, and she looked at a little dog whose name was Potter, and she just got tears in her

eyes. She said, 'This is the one.' It's amazing that it would happen on a 4-inch screen, but it did. She stopped in her tracks and said, 'I have to meet this dog.'"

Using her smartphone, Svoboda, who has administrative access to the application, put a hold on the dog right then. Two days later, Reynolds, who lives in Topeka, drove 60 miles to the shelter to adopt her new dog.

The interaction—and the resulting adoption—went exactly as shelter staff and the app developers had hoped. Having real-time information about adoptable pets on a mobile device, Svoboda was able to use a random moment to help forge an instant connection.

That opportunity would likely have been lost if not for the new app, which Wayside Waifs launched last winter. If Svoboda had simply suggested that her friend go home and check out the adoptable pets on the shelter's website, the idea might have been put on a back burner. "It was during the Christmas holidays, I was busy, and chances are that I would not have gone home [and checked the website]," Reynolds says.

The app, which cost about \$6,000 and took six months to develop, offers more than a constantly updated stream of photos and details of adoptable pets. It features almost all the content and functionality of the shelter's website, optimized for a small screen. "It's the best pieces of their site, in an app environment that makes it totally friendly to the mobile phone user," says Eric Jacobsen, vice president of media development for Ascend Integrated Media. The Overland Park, Kan.-based company worked with Wayside Waifs to develop the app.


People can use the app to learn about the shelter's adoption process, so they know what to expect when they come to look for a pet. They can find out about volunteer opportunities, explore the services the shelter offers, follow Wayside Waifs on Twitter, read updated blog posts, donate money right from their phones—and see all the adoptable pets, of course.



The smartphone app allows visitors to access online content even when they're not around their computers.

Since nearly 75 percent of people who come to Wayside Waifs to adopt an animal visit the shelter's website first, Svoboda says, staff members want them to be able to access the online content even if they're not around their computers. The goal is three-fold: increase adoptions; promote awareness of the shelter and its mission; and attract donations.

The app, which is free to download, works with all smartphone platforms, including iPhone, Blackberry, and Android. (At press time, the app had been downloaded more than 2,000 times.) There are no other nonprofits in the Kansas City area that have anything like it, according to Svoboda and Jacobsen.

Reynolds, meanwhile, is thrilled with the pup—now called Nick—she found. "He's wilder than a March hare," she says, laughing. "My goodness, you have no idea. And he's just changed my whole life. Half the time I'm going nuts, and half the time I'm looking at him thinking, 'I don't know how I ever got along without you.'" 

To download the app, go to wayside.mwap.at on your mobile browser, or search for "Wayside Waifs" in your app store. And let us know if your group is developing an app of its own!



Quality Designs That Work

Design a higher level of care: Animals can feel it. Clients can see it!



Durable
Easy to Clean
Warm & Quiet
Better Looking
Custom Designed



800/422-1932 www.snydermfg.com

The Leader in Laminated Animal Care Enclosures

Innovative Animal Enclosure Solutions

An Exclusive Mason Innovation



Problem?

How to house multiple cats in a **stress-free environment** while also preventing litter odor and upper respiratory disease spread?

Solved!

Mason's Raintree™ Cat Condo is made from attractive medical-grade cabinetry with built-in resting shelves and separate litter box areas. A central exhaust fan can be added to slowly draw air from the room through the cage and vent odor and contaminants outside.



Innovative Animal Enclosure Solutions

One more innovative solution with extraordinary value created by Mason's team of talented design engineers.

800.543.5567 | www.MasonCo.com | info@masonco.com

Don't worry about making a big mistake when building a new facility; go to www.MasonCo.com for their new guide on "How to Avoid the 7 Biggest Mistakes When Building a New Facility."





THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

2100 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20037

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PITTSBURGH, PA
PERMIT NO. 5605



After a disaster,
everyone needs help.



Help is here.



The Emergency
Animal Sheltering
Solution

Products that come to the rescue
either separately or all together!

Get an **AnimalSafe** habitat
or use the whole **AnimalSafe**
sheltering system!

(866) 928-5710

www.AnimalSafe.co

Thank you, HSUS!
Animal Care Expo 2011

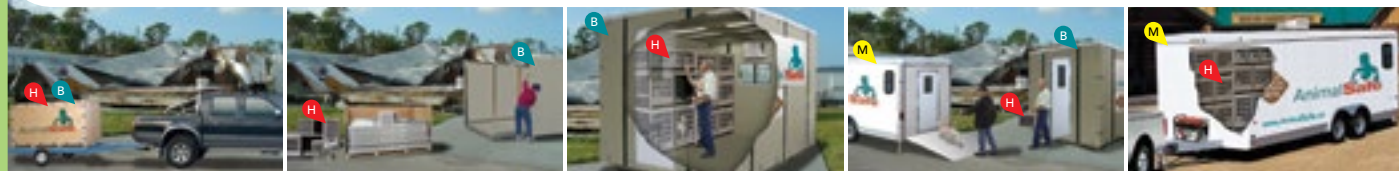
H STACKABLE
AnimalSafe
Habitats

B COLLAPSIBLE
Versi-Building

*Holds up to 75
small animals!*

M **AnimalSafe**
Mobile Unit

*Holds up to 120
small animals!*



Companion Habitats, Inc.®

www.companionhabitats.com