

A Word From Us

Moving animals out of your shelter into new, loving homes is always a sweet accomplishment, but here's something just as rewarding: keeping them out of the shelter in the first place. Two stories in this issue explore ways to reduce relinquishments.

Life Preservers (p. 35) describes how the Richmond (Virginia) SPCA is challenging the traditional notion that making surrenders more difficult causes more owners to simply abandon their pets. The shelter switched to an appointment system for surrendering animals, and also initiated a series of programs and services aimed at lowering the number of relinquishments—all in the hope of creating a philosophical shift in the community toward more responsible pet ownership.

If you've ever worked at the intake desk at an open admission shelter, you've probably encountered someone who surrenders a pet and asks about the chances that the animal will be euthanized. Our "What Now?" feature (p. 26) shows how shelters can tackle that question tactfully but truthfully, while also providing information and alternatives that might make the surrender unnecessary.

Elsewhere in this issue, you'll find our usual mix of stories designed to inform and uplift people who work in the sheltering and rescue fields. Beyond the Shelter (p. 54) provides a glimpse at great rescue/shelter relationships, while offering useful information to rescue groups on combating the fears some shelters still harbor about working with placement partners. If you're a rescue, look here for tips on how to make the case that your track record qualifies you as a worthy ally. And for useful info for any group trying to find homes for pets, check out our 101 Department (p. 41), which delves into the ways to make "mega" adoption events work well, finding good families for more animals.

While we try to anticipate every story you might need, we can't think of everything! We'd love to hear from you. We're conducting a reader survey aimed at guiding our content for 2013 and beyond. Please visit surveymonkey.com/s/FKXKPB7 and tell us what you like, what you don't like, and what you want more of. And check out our Facebook page at facebook.com/animalshelteringmagazine to keep up with the latest happenings and post comments. We aim to be your magazine, and we welcome your input.



The Cat's Meow

For me, every *Animal Sheltering* is instructive and enjoyable. But as an unmitigated ailurophile, I found the coverage of cats in your March-April issue outstanding.

As your report on the admirable Erie County, N.Y., rescue coalition reminds us, one reason cat adoptions from shelters lag so far behind dogs is that "among the general public, dogs seem to be perceived as the proverbial 'man's best friend,' while cats are relegated to second-class citizens." (So true! So true!) Your story on the Save a Kitty Feral Cat Program in West Virginia is inspiring, as is the behavioral piece explaining "A Gentle Kind of Cat Care" to reduce stress and upper respiratory infections in shelter cats.

But most valuable of all, I think, is your thorough treatment of colony (group) housing for cats and kittens. Fascinating! I'd immediately send this to every shelter director in my area—except that they already subscribe to the magazine.

Special as cats are to me, I also much enjoyed a couple of canine-focused features in the same issue, about dog photographers Linnea Lenkus and Teresa Berg.

Congratulations, and thanks for your continuing first-class publication.

—Susan M. Seidman
East Hampton, N.Y.



Editor's note: Thanks for the compliments! And readers might be interested to know that Seidman writes more than letters. To learn about her book, *Cat Companions: A Memoir of Loving and Learning*, check out this issue's Culture Corner on page 39.



Facebooker **Meta Fahrenfort** gave us the following thumbs up: "Just read the May/June issue today (I live outside the States) and loved it. Keep going!"

Susan Taney wrote, "Thank you for your article 'Helping Hounds: Hunting Dogs Need A Fair Shake.' They are the forgotten breed ..."

