Christmas pets and pets at Christmas

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM SHELTER SENSE -- May your holidays be spent before warm hearths in the company of good friends. (photo by Bonnie Smith)

Cuddly puppies and kittens under the Christmas tree are great on greeting cards -- but bad in real life, for pets and people.

When people come to your shelter to adopt a new pet for a holiday gift, urge them to announce the gift with a card and pick up the animal after Christmas day is over. Or suggest they take the new pet home a few weeks before Christmas, and have the fun of opening pet toys on the holiday.

The bustle and excitement of holidays make the wrong atmosphere for introducing a new animal to a home and...
beginning its training as a good pet. The animal could be inadvertently mistreated, injured or simply terrified -- as when enthusiastic givers wrap the little fellow as a "gift."

Also, remind area residents with pets that Christmas decorations can become dangerous playthings for curious animals -- nibbling poinsettia can poison a pet. Eating tinsel can result in impaction, and chewing electrical wiring can be hazardous to both pet and owner because of fire.

The holiday season is a good time for fund-raising for your organization -- check with local stores selling pet toys and other supplies to see if you can set up a canister for donations near the pet shelf. Stores may donate a portion of holiday sales. You can also issue press releases asking residents to contribute to your organization the same amount they spend on toys for their own pets.

By informing your community about responsible pet ownership, you can make the holiday season better for pets and people.

The HSUS accreditation program for humane societies and animal control agencies is being expanded with the addition of two accreditation associates.

Leslie Eustace, who comes to The HSUS from ASPCA in New York, will serve the western states and maintain an office in the new HSUS Rocky Mountain Regional Office in Denver. This office serves Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and Arizona, and the director is Don Cashen, formerly of the Indianapolis Humane Society. The address is 3780 South Bellaire St., Denver, CO 80222 - tel. (303)759-8880.

Accreditation associate Hurt "Bill" Smith is based in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and can be reached at 4831 Springhill Dr., Tuscaloosa, AL 35401 - tel. (205)553-8665. Smith is well known throughout the southeast for his many years of work devoted to improving animal shelters in the region.

HSUS accredits humane societies and animal control agencies that meet certain professional standards of operation. Complete information on accreditation requirements are available from HSUS Accreditation, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

The federal Animal Welfare Act has the potential to be an effective tool for every humane society and animal shelter investigating certain cruelty cases.

Through the Act, the U.S. Department of Agriculture regulates animal dealers, research laboratories, zoos, circuses, and other forms of animal enterprises such as pet stores that sell wild animals, and common carriers.

The Act does not affect such groups as hobby breeders, retail pet stores that do not sell wild animals or dealers selling only to individuals and not to research laboratories or on the wholesale level.

The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service through its regional offices, enforces regulations for the humane care, handling, treatment and transportation of animals. The Department can order facilities into compliance, and in extreme cases, levy fines, suspend or revoke licenses. The Animal Welfare Act can be used to supplement but not to replace cruelty prosecutions. In some instances where criminal prosecution has not been successful, action through the Act may stop the cruelty.

All too often, however, violators of the Act are simply warned. Animal Welfare Act cases can drag on for several years and the cruelty continues unabated. This commonly occurs when a cease and desist order or a 21-day license suspension is not sufficient incentive for the violator to comply fully with the Act.

Dr. Dale Schwindaman, head of the Animal Care Staff which administers the Act, says USDA finds it useful to work with local societies and law enforcement agencies which investigate cases.

A word of caution ... in the past, USDA inspectors have been derelict in their duty to enforce the Act, and have filed misleading reports ignoring violations. Last year, The HSUS lost a cruelty case in which we considered the evidence very strong. The judge cited the fact that USDA had approved the facility.

We hope similar situations won't continue to occur and have been monitoring USDA's enforcement of the Act. APHIS officials have been conducting training programs to teach their employees in the specific of the Act and the proper way to conduct investigations.

You can help the USDA by informing them of violations. Animal Welfare Act enforcement is over-burdened and under-staffed. The funding provided by Congress is inadequate to assure that USDA can do an effective job.

Currently, USDA can inspect a facility on the average of twice per year - six times should be the minimum. Therefore, USDA relies on reports of abuses and will schedule special inspections to investigate specific complaints. Dr. Schwindaman has said that he places great value on the reports of those professionally involved with animals.

In what is termed a "new approach," APHIS has assigned several employees to work only on the Act. Previously, all APHIS regional employees had been assigned to work on all

The Animal Welfare Act and you

by Margaret Morrison

Morrison is HSUS Animal Welfare Act Coordinator.

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APHIS activities, and the Act is only about 5% of APHIS

total responsibility (it is mainly concerned with livestock,

and most APHIS employees have greater expertise in livestock

industry). This "new approach" was to include the hiring of 200-300

part-time employees to make inspections. APHIS officials had

hoped to draw these from the ranks of those with "dog and

cat" experience, such as humane society workers. Unfortunately,

because of political pressure to balance the Federal budget by

1980 and reduce the total number of federal employees, this

plan could only be implemented by reducing APHIS staffing in

another area. USDA officials say they cannot reduce their

other efforts, so the hiring plan has been postponed, at

least temporarily.

Copies of the Animal Welfare Act and its regulations are

available by writing the Animal Care Staff, Animal and

Plant Health Inspection Service, Federal Building, Hyattsville,

MD 20782. Ask for the names of the USDA officials who

investigate complaints in your area. You will find it helpful
to establish a working relationship with them.

The HSUS monitors enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act,

and would like to hear from you about your dealings with the

USDA.

THE FOLLOWING ARE COVERED BY THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT:

● dogs, cats, guinea pigs, rabbits, most wild warm-blooded

species.

● animal dealers, brokers, breeders selling wholesale via

pet stores; pet stores that sell wild animals; zoological

parks; circuses; research laboratories; animal acts (such as

animals used for TV and movies); animal auctions that sell

dogs or cats; common carriers (airlines, railways, trucking

companies).

Federal government establishments are required to conform to

the Act standards, but are not subject to inspections.

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT COVERED BY THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT:

● cold-blooded animals (fish and reptiles), marine mammals,
rats, mice, birds, horses and ponies, domestic farm animals.
● auctions that do not sell dogs or cats; boarding kennels;
pounds and shelters; direct sales breeders; retail pet stores
that do not sell wild animals; game and hunting preserves.

High-altitude decompression for the destruction of surplus

dogs and cats has been outlawed in the state of California.

Alternate methods of euthanasia must go into effect January

1, 1979.

The HSUS advocates sodium pentobarbital injection as the most

humane euthanasia method; the pamphlets "Legal Steps for the

Procurement of Sodium Pentobarbital for Euthanasia of Cats

and Dogs" and "How to Administer Sodium Pentobarbital for

Euthanasia of Cats and Dogs" are available from The HSUS,

2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

Chamber

outlawed

If your shelter has had experience with foster homes --

that is, placing animals temporarily with individuals until

permanent homes can be found -- please write SHELTER SENSE

about your program and how it has worked. Send complete
details to SHELTER SENSE, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC

20037.

New HSUS

material

S

ooner or later most animal facility workers make a trip to

the local schools to make a presentation to an

elementary class. What do you do that hasn't been done

before? How do you catch the interest of the children and

enlist them in your efforts to control pets?

The HSUS's National Association for the Advancement of Humane

Education has the answer in their recently issued Sharing

Units. Each unit consists of a cassette tape and filmstrip, spirit

masters, and a teacher's guide. Pets, Wildlife in

Your Community, and Animals of the Forest are the titles of

the three separately packaged units. Naturally, the Pets

unit serves the purposes of the animal facility worker best.

You can show the filmstrip as your presentation and use
the spirit master book and teacher's guide for the teacher

to use in follow-up activities. The teacher will appreciate

the materials because reading and language skills are nicely

blended in with the pet ownership responsibility theme.

The Sharing units can be ordered through: Mind Media, One

Kings Highway, North, Westport, CT 06880.

The kits are $25 each or all three for $70.

WANTED -- Animal Control Superintendent. Salary $16,000

- $20,000. Work involves overall responsibility for

administering the animal control function and supervising

subordinate staff. Thorough knowledge of the safe handling

general welfare of small and large, wild and domestic

animals. Ability to establish and maintain an effective

relationship with local humane societies and veterinarians.

Ability to train and direct the work of subordinate

personnel. Prefer degree in business management or

veterinary medical technology. Send resume to D.M. Lawing,

Personnel Dept., City of Charlotte, 600 E. Trade St.,

Charlotte, NC 28202. (Equal Opportunity Employer).

If you have a new way to use the Sharing

units, let us know! Send details to SHELTER SENSE, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.
Investigative
photography
by Frantz Dantzler
Dantzler is director of field services and investigations for HSUS.

In many cases, a good photograph can make the difference between a successful animal cruelty case and one that ends in favor of the defendant. Perhaps it is time to believe the phrase that "a picture is worth a thousand words" and look at some of the ways you can make this powerful medium help you in the courtroom.

While almost any type of camera can be used effectively in cruelty cases, there are two types preferred for most applications. One of the most common cameras in use today by investigators is the "instant picture" type made by Polaroid and Eastman Kodak Co. These, like all systems, have both advantages and disadvantages in field operations.

The advantages are obvious: a finished print within a few seconds can be a tremendous asset to you when you attempt to convince a judge that probable cause exists for a search warrant, or when you are presenting the facts of the case to the district attorney to get a complaint issued.

The major disadvantage is not having a negative for the instant print. You can send the print to a photofinisher for extra copies, but you may find the quality of the print has been reduced or that enlargements lack the sharpness other systems can offer.

The 35mm single lens reflex (SLR) camera is perhaps best suited for investigative photography. Not only is it possible to change lenses from a wide-angle to perhaps a telephoto to bring subjects closer, but you also have a wide range of film types to work with and the photos can be enlarged to show more detail.

By using the camera's normal lens (50mm) and by getting close to the subject, this item of evidence was recorded on film during a recent cockfighting raid. The author uses high-speed BW film (Kodak Tri-X) to cope with a wide range of lighting conditions.

The Kodak Guidebook "Using Photography to Preserve Evidence" is available for $2.50 from Advertising Distribution Dept., Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, NY 14650.

There was a time when many potential users would avoid a camera with adjustments to set, since they believed it would be too technical. With the past few years, however, camera equipment has changed considerably, and it is now possible for anyone to get excellent results by simply following the instruction manual included with the camera. Most SLR cameras have built-in light meters and other features that eliminate the guesswork.

Equipment does not have to be expensive, either, to produce good results for the investigative photographer. If the cameras mentioned above are not within your price range, talk to your camera dealer about your photographic needs and finances to select the most appropriate equipment.

The use of a wide angle lens (24mm) helped to include all the area in a single frame. Also the use of B&W film more accurately conveyed the grim mood of this photo of wild horses that were killed or died under government's supervision.

What about films? Color prints, slides or black and white prints? There are occasions when color prints are better than black and white prints. This particularly is true if you are trying to show cuts and wounds that only color would properly illustrate to the viewer. Remember that dark reds, blues and greens will normally appear as black or dark grey in a black and white photo.

Color also has its disadvantages. Frequently, it has the tendency to give the viewer the impression that things are not as bad as you had described. Take a photo outside on a dark, dismal, cloudy day and after having it processed, look at the result. You may be surprised to see what appears to be a much brighter, more colorful scene than you had remembered.
Black and white prints, however, do not have this disadvantage. Frequently, you will find that black and white will render the subject matter in a mood that more accurately reflects the seriousness of the situation. In addition, the processing charges for black and white are less, and you will find that frequently you will find that black and white will render the subject matter in a mood that more accurately reflects the case more difficult and complicated for you.

In the next issue of SHELTER SENSE, I will discuss techniques for good investigative photography, and how to learn to see as the camera "sees" to get the best results with your equipment.

SHELTER SENSE has available samples of pet care literature from major pet product manufacturers, along with details on how quantities of the booklets can be obtained.

The booklets include "How to Bathe Your Dog" from Beecham, Inc., "The Borden Guide to the Care and Feeding of Orphan and Rejected Kittens," and "How to Care for, Train, and Feed Your Puppy" from The Quaker Oats Company.

Request your free sample packet from SHELTER SENSE, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

(Please note that The HSUS does not endorse commercial products; these pamphlets are provided solely as an information resource for SHELTER SENSE readers, and should not be construed in any way as an approval or endorsement of any of the manufacturers' products.)

Bowling Green-Warren County Humane Society (Bowling Green, KY) has had a successful spaying program for 10 years, which includes these provisions:

- six veterinarians in the area are cooperating in a low-cost surgery program.
- a time payment plan is available to pet owners for the cost of the surgery.
- no puppy or dog leaves the shelter unless neutered.
- when female dogs are picked up for licensing infringement, the impoundment fee is waived if the owner will have the dog spayed.
- the society receives the names of persons who purchase dog licenses in the city and county, and these pet owners are telephoned and encouraged to have their pets neutered.
- persons placing advertisements for 'free puppies' are telephoned and encouraged to bring the puppies to the shelter and to have the mother dog spayed.

The following cases have been brought to our attention over the past several months. If your society or agency has successfully resolved an animal problem, write SHELTER SENSE about it. Please remember to include details on how you solved the problem so other animal groups and agencies can make use of the information.

A resident of Edgewater, MD, has been found guilty of cruelty to animals for not caring adequately for 13 horses and a mule.

The charges were filed when the SPCA of Anne Arundel County impounded 12 of the animals. The maximum fine is $1,000 and up to 90 days in jail.

The woman convicted owned all the animals but four, which she was boarding for a fee. She blamed the animals' condition partly on inadequate care from two teenagers whom she had hired to water and feed them -- the judge pointed out that she was still the responsible party.

The tenant on the farm where the animals were kept complained to the SPCA that they were undernourished. Humane officer George Wilkins spent an entire day at the farm as part of his investigation, and also came to feed and water the animals when Wilkins did so himself. He said the horses were tied and unable to get to water.

The judge said his verdict was based on a veterinarian's testimony, and also on the significant weight gains and improved condition of the animals while they were being cared for by the SPCA. He is quoted in an area newspaper as saying, "If the SPCA could put on weight in that time, I don't know why that couldn't have happened under (the defendant's) care." (SPCA of Anne Arundel Co., 1815 Bay Ridge Ave., Annapolis, MD 21403)

An East Palo Alto, CA, woman was sentenced to four months in jail with three years formal probation and fined $630 for animal cruelty. The Santa Clara County Times reported the sentence as the harshest ever given in San Mateo County for animal cruelty.

The woman placed a flea collar on her German Shepherd dog when it was three months of age and left it on for six months. It became embedded in the animal's neck, resulting in an open sore. The woman was quoted as saying she did not realize the seriousness of the wound.

In passing the sentence, the judge commented, "The veterinarian indicated that she felt the dog was in pain for four months. So I thought (the owner) ought to be in jail for four months." One appeal for a reduced sentence was denied; she has since been released pending another appeal. (Peninsula Humane Society, 12 Airport Blvd., San Mateo, CA 94401)

Patches is a Shetland pony who was rescued from neglect and near-starvation by the New Hampshire Humane Society. The owner protested that he had been well cared for, but quickly surrendered him when threatened with legal action. "Before" and "after" photos (taken with society employees and some small friends) show his improved condition. (New Hampshire Humane Society, PO Box 572, Laconia, NH 03246)
Telephone tips

Each telephone call your agency or society receives is an opportunity for you to reach out into the community. Providing information and service by phone should be a major part of your overall plan to solve animal problems in your area.

- Your receptionists should be courteous and pleasant, and they should be information "generalists." As an animal control facility, you should provide direct and informative answers to as many questions as possible -- if you do not have the information or if the caller should be talking to another agency or group, then refer him or her to another source.

- You can speed calls along by providing receptionists with answer sheets for the commonly asked questions. Include information or the numbers of other parties to be contacted on questions about trapping, dead animal pickup, adoption policies, animal control laws, child abuse, welfare services and the other topics that generally come up.

- You may wish to prepare a paragraph on exactly what your agency or organization does that can be read quickly to a caller or mailed out. This saves the receptionist having to create an explanation of your purposes for each call.

- Keep a telephone log of each call and how it was resolved. Keep track of how many calls concern dead animal pickup, services for people, pet care -- then you will have an idea of the information the public needs from your community education program. (Such a log can also help with budgeting decisions.)

Fairfax County (VA) Animal Control has found that often citizens who telephone to complain about animal problems are not at home by the time the warden visits them to follow up on the call. Wardens now carry a supply of the card reproduced here, which they can fill in and leave in the complainant's mailbox or mail to them. Director Richard Amity says the card has helped cut down on the number of calls from complainants with questions on how their complaint was resolved.

In response to your recent request for assistance regarding an animal problem, the following action was taken:

The case was investigated by an Animal Warden.
Your area was patrolled.
Legal action was taken against an animal owner.
Animals were impounded.

Your comments or suggestions are welcome.

Richard F. Amity, Director
Department of Animal Control
Phone 830-3680

SHELTER SENSE reproducible

Does your pet know your name and address?

A continuing feature to provide animal control agencies and humane societies with material that will help educate the public on community animal control and responsible pet ownership.

You can teach your child your name and address or tuck a note with the information into his or her pocket... but your pet can't tell a police officer your address or pull out an ID card.

The only place your pet can carry the information that will get it safely home is around its neck.

A collar with your name and address and an up-to-date license from your local animal control department can help get your pet home safely.

Safeguard your pet with a collar, tag and license.

This space for your organization or agency's name and address

The message above can be clipped out and reproduced in quantity by your local printer, for you to distribute at schools, shopping centers, libraries and other community locations. Remember to add your organization's name, address, and telephone number in the space by typing, typesetting or affixing your group letterhead. You can also purchase advertising space in your local newspapers for the reproducible or use it in your organization's newsletter or magazine.
When the public questions the insistence of animal control professionals that pets be spayed or neutered, you can point out that pet sterilization benefits just about everybody.

The pet owner -- Although many pet owners still believe sterilization causes laziness and weight gain, neutering is clearly a benefit to the pet and pet owner in reducing roaming, fighting and other restless behavior and eliminating many diseases associated with reproductive organs. Pet owners must realize that sterilization improves pet health and behavior, and that an overweight pet is generally an overfed pet.

Animal control agencies and humane societies -- 2,000 to 3,500 dogs and cats are born each hour in the U.S. The job of animal control will become more and more massive unless each town and county takes steps to reduce animal reproductivity.

The City of Los Angeles has demonstrated that a program of city-sponsored neutering clinics teamed with public education and strict law enforcement can reduce the number of animals destroyed at city shelters -- from 111,000 in 1970-71 to 69,419 in 1977-78. A similar comprehensive program operated by the Vancouver Regional Branch of the British Columbia SPCA, including a sterilization clinic, has resulted in a 27% decrease in surplus animals destroyed by participating municipalities. During 1977, bitings by aggressive dogs were reduced by 41%.

The citizen-taxpayer without pets -- Non-pet owners may be the least aware of the benefits to themselves of pet sterilization. Reducing the number of animals processed through shelters helps stop the escalating costs of animal control. Better animal control also relieves all citizens of some of the problems of lawn damage from strays and the hazards of animals in city traffic.

People domesticated the dog and cat, and current overpopulation problems are long-range results of our activities. If your public argues that sterilization is "unnatural," explain that we are simply carrying out our responsibility as caretakers for the dogs and cats that we made a part of our culture.