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Mourning a Great Friend, Champion

The world is a sadder place with the unexpected death of Dennis White. Dennis, SWRO director for the past six years, passed away in October.

In the 30 years he devoted to animal protection, Dennis was responsible for developing and implementing standards for animal shelters, arranging relief services for animals, and organizing The HSUS Animal Care Expo, an annual trade show and educational conference that has become the largest of its kind for animal care and animal control professionals.

Dennis was also the driving force behind the opening of The HSUS Spay Neuter Clinic and Animal Wellness Center in Dallas. We could give a long list of professional associations he worked with as a board member or director, but we'd rather focus on Dennis the person.

As Melissa Rubin, HSUS vice president of field and disaster services, described him at a memorial service, Dennis was part of our staff, part of our community, continued on page 2

Clinic Vet Helps Native Nations

Even though days at The HSUS's Spay Neuter Clinic and Animal Wellness Center in Dallas are usually packed with surgeries—sometimes in excess of 50 per day—outreach efforts continue so that we may provide as much assistance as possible to those who need it most. One of The HSUS's most innovative programs, our native nations program, has focused on just such a need by teaming up with the University of Tennessee's Remote Area Medical (RAM) veterinary outreach program. This partnership has provided no-cost spay/neuter surgeries, minor medical procedures, and humane education programs to the pets and people of native America since 1994.

Accompanying the RAM veterinary team as it travels to the Zuni reservation in 2002 will be The HSUS's accomplished veterinarian Dr. Kelly Bruner. Her skills as a surgeon at The HSUS Spay Neuter Clinic and Animal Wellness Center are in high demand for projects such as this. She will be involved in the spay/neuter clinic on the reservation, instructing a group of veterinary students from the University of Tennessee and other universities from all over the country. Vet students, like many of the licensed vets who oversee the surgeries, volunteer their time and pay their own expenses. Students are eager to learn about high-volume spay/neuter surgery and the veterinary techniques being developed almost daily. They are eager to work with licensed, practicing veterinarians such as Dr. Bruner, who is familiar with high-volume surgery and state-of-the-art veterinary techniques.

The chance to work side by side with them as they perform spay/neuter surgeries on reservation pets is the chance of a lifetime.

The need for veterinary skills on reservations is critical. Animal overpopulation has resulted in near-epidemic proportions of dog bites, with one native community reporting almost 70 percent of its children having been bitten or attacked by roaming dogs. Veterinary services are a luxury for most reservation pets. Many animals never receive basic vaccinations. Those animals who survive parvovirus, distemper, and other diseases often lead continued on page 2
The people of Arkansas have launched a grass roots ballot initiative campaign to make extreme animal cruelty and all animal fighting a Class D felony. Arkansas has taken animal cruelty very seriously, not only because of the love and concern they have for their animals, but also because of the large body of evidence linking animal cruelty to child abuse, domestic violence, and even serial murder.

Several efforts have already been made to strengthen the Arkansas anti-cruelty statute through the traditional legislative process, most recently in the 1999 and 2001 sessions. Rep. Jim Wood sponsored several anti-cruelty measures that would have made Arkansas on par with the 34 other states that already have felony-level penalties for extreme cruelty. Despite widespread public support for the felony cruelty bills, legislative votes fell in favor of large corporate agricultural interests. These groups lobbied aggressively against the anti-cruelty legislation, despite specific language in the bills exempting routine, accepted agricultural practices.

Ballot measures are decided directly by the voters, and proponents believe that the common sense and compassion of the Arkansas people will win the day over the dollar-driven politics of special interest. But first there is work to be done, and your help is needed. Seventy-five thousand signatures must be gathered statewide by the end of June 2002 in order to place the measure on the ballot. Volunteer signature gatherings are needed in every county. Please contact Citizens for a Humane Arkansas to find out how you can help support the Arkansas Animal Cruelty Act. Reach them at P.O. Box 30340, Little Rock, AR 72260; www.humanearkansas.org; e-mail staff@humanearkansas.org; phone: 501-455-9661; fax: 501-455-2269.

Arkansas's animals need better protection from those who might harm them. You can help by gathering signatures to place a felony animal cruelty measure on the November ballot.

Arkansas Launches Campaign To Make Animal Cruelty a Felony

Joining Forces to Stop Pet Overpopulation

Since assuming management of the Dallas-based HSUS Spay Neuter Clinic and Animal Wellness Center one year ago this January, The HSUS has made dramatic changes in outreach and customer service procedures.

Knowing that there is no better form of advertising than satisfied clients, SWRO Director Lou Guyton has spearheaded innovative ways to expand and improve clinic services. Taking advantage of existing working relationships with area animal rescue groups, humane societies, and municipal animal control agencies, Guyton has spent many hours developing a plan that addresses the needs of everyone.

Each rescue group and agency come in contact with individuals who are seeking veterinary care and spay/neuter services for the animals they are helping. By providing an easy-to-use program and top-quality services, the clinic has become a critical link in this partnership program that saves lives through prevention.

You can see an example of the positive changes “in the numbers.” A local, well-established cat rescue group, KittyCo, has been one of the first agencies to take full advantage of the program. In just six months, nearly 600 spay/neuter surgeries have been performed on KittyCo-rescued cats. These animals will never contribute to the devastating overpopulation problem that has become a death sentence for unwanted kittens.

“Communication and customer service are the keys to saving animal lives,” says Guyton. By understanding the needs of each client who comes through the clinic doors, and by tailoring veterinary services to address those needs effectively, The HSUS has become a leader in ensuring that animals lead longer, healthier lives.

Oklahoma: Stop Cockfighting and Protect the Animals with a Vote in November

V ote “Yes” to support State Question 607, the petition to amend Oklahoma statutes for the purpose of banning cruel cockfighting in the state. Vote “No” to oppose State Question 608, a counter measure placed on the ballot by cockfighters and their political allies that would nearly double the number of signatures required to place any animal welfare measure on a future statewide ballot.

Oklahoma banned cockfighting from the latter part of the 19th century through 1963, until an Oklahoma Court of Appeals judge declared that chickens are not animals and thereby are not covered under the state ban on animal fighting. In the wake of this ruling, the Legislature has failed to act on a series of bills introduced to restore the ban on cockfighting during the last three decades. This petition seeks to reverse the long-established policy of the state to criminalize the instigating of fights between animals for amusement or illegal gambling purposes. In addition to Oklahoma, cockfighting is legal only in Louisiana and New Mexico.

Cockfighting is inhumane and barbaric, and has no place in a society committed to an ethic of respect for animals. Cockfighters frequently drug birds to heighten their aggression, affix knives or ice-pick-like gaffs to their legs, and place them in a pit to fight to injury or death—all for amusement and illegal wagering of handlers and spectators, which often include children.

Using charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts, you can significantly reduce your federal income taxes, receive lifetime payments, and assist The HSUS in achieving its goals. All of these plans allow you to give a significant amount of money while retaining a portion of your gift for your lifetime. To find out which plan is right for you, please contact The HSUS at 1-800-588-6096.

I want to learn how I can help my animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Using charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts to support The HSUS. Giving The HSUS a gift of stock. Planning my estate and giving to The HSUS. Providing a bequest to The HSUS. Using my IRA to support The HSUS. Using my life insurance policy to support The HSUS. Planning my estate and giving to The HSUS.

Please send me information about: Making a memorial donation to honor the life of a pet, friend, or relative. Providing for my pets in my will and in case of separation. Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS. Promoting the protection of all animals.
and supplies. In the aftermath of this horrific tragedy, we were all left with a renewed sense of purpose as we sat back and considered the important role our pets fill as part of our personal, as well as national, family. Undoubtedly, you reached out to your families and held your own pets for security and comfort.

On October 20, 2001, the animals and those of us who work on their behalf suffered a tragic loss when Dennis J. White, our regional director, died. We share the sadness and shock of the events that have touched our nation, just as we share the sadness and shock of our personal loss of Dennis. Dennis was devoted to his family, the many causes of animal welfare, and to you: the people who shared his life’s work of caring for animals. Whether at work or at home, Dennis was surrounded by family.

With these challenges, our office will continue Dennis's legacy of support as we expand our efforts to protect all animals. In November, I accepted the appointment of SWRO director with a mixture of sadness, enthusiasm, and honor and respect for Dennis, who was a most valued mentor. As part of our planned growth, we announce the addition of SWRO Regional Coordinator Jay Sabatucci, formerly of The Texas Department of Health. This office’s winning team, often known as the “Super Region,” is poised to assist you and the animals.

As we assess the impact of recent losses, we can take comfort that our work in animal protection is realized at national, state, and local levels. Likewise, you are reassured that the Southwest Regional Office will continue to represent you on behalf of the animals. Dennis was proud of the dramatic changes we have made and resources we are able to provide. From where I am sitting, he still is.

The SWRO Regional News is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, Southwest Regional Office, 3001 LBJ Freeway, Ste. 224, Dallas, TX 75234; 972-488-2964. Lou Guyton, director. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on federal holidays.

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