(No. 44) -- H.I.S. Death of President Thomsen

Humane Information Services, Inc.
Ninth Avenue North, St. Petersburg, Florida 33713

REPORT TO HUMANITARIANS

Number 44 — June, 1978

Published quarterly by

HUMAN INFORMATION SERVICES

INCORPORATED

A NON-PROFIT HUMAN INFORMATION SERVICE

FOR THE PREVENTION OF ANIMAL SUFFERING

EDITOR:

Miss Emily F. Gleckner

4495 Ninth Avenue North

Dues and Contributions Tax Deductible

ST. PETERSBURG, FL.

HUMANE INFORMATION SERVICES

MOURNS DEATH OF PRESIDENT THOMSEN

Dr. Frederick L. Thomsen, Ph.D., president of Humane Information Services, Inc., and its sister society, the National Association for Humane Legislation, Inc., both headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida, died on April 3 at the age of 79.

"Doc," as he was affectionately known, had been in hospital for some months but had put off a medical checkup because "we have too much work to do." Around the beginning of the year his health worsened. On February 27 he entered the hospital in agony. Tests revealed a malignant tumor of the colon. Three major surgical procedures during March failed to save his life, and death came following much suffering and several days in a comatose state. His body was cremated, in accordance with his wishes.

Doc was born in Newport News, Virginia. He was a veteran of World War I. He received his doctorate at the University of Wisconsin in 1925, at the early age of 27. His distinguished career included positions as professor of agricultural marketing at the University of Missouri and head of several divisions in the United States Department of Agriculture.

He was the author of numerous research publications, journal articles and anthologies. Among his general textbooks published by McGraw-Hill Book Company, including Agricultural Prices (First Edition) and Agricultural Marketing.

For many years Doc was active in animal welfare work and served as a director and officer of local, state and national human societies, including the Humane Society of the United States. In 1965 he founded Humane Information Services, now recognized as one of the largest national humane societies in this country. In 1970 he incorporated a second organization, for legislative purposes, and served both societies without remuneration.

Those who knew him personally and worked with him have indeed been privileged with his knowledge and dedication, his intelligence and ingenuity, and his patience and indefatigability were a source of wonder and inspiration to all.

Doc was a giant among humanitarians, a very special person. He is sorely missed, but his influence on the humane movement will continue.

Appearing in this issue are just a few of many tributes to Doc for his countless contributions to the relief of animal suffering. It is for these contributions that he would want to be most remembered.

Doc Thomsen leaves a legacy of kindness

By LOIS STEVENSON

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Doc Thomsen is gone. He will be greatly missed by many humanitarians.

It was an indication of the fond regard in which he was held that everyone was privileged to call him Doc. He, Frederick L. Thomsen, Ph.D., had a distinguished career in economics, and in literature, and in research, and in teaching, and in publishing.

In his quarterly "Report to Humanitarians," he emphasized the many facets of cruelty. His logical and knowledgeable intellect always stayed within the confines of good taste and good manners. He was an argumentative scholar but made no issue of what might disagree with him.

Animals and People

He wrote about rodeo, bow and arrow hunting, the unpleasant trapping of wildlife, the surplus animal population, euthanasia, fishfarming, greyhound racing, food animal suffering, and human-like suffering, in scientific articles and popular publications.

He was a member of the American Humane Association and a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Despite his deep emotional commitment to the cause of animal welfare, Doc kept his protest and well-reasoned arguments that others presented. Problems presented in his publications were followed by carefully thought-out sensible remedies. He spoke articulately and rationally at conferences and meetings, and Doc took no remuneration from his organization, and was friedg with many money denying. His accepted end of the many pleasant evenings and frequent requests for help that came to him, and never took credit for the many accomplishments that resulted. He believed that anything done for the good of animals was done enough in itself.

The usually busy office here in St. Petersburg is silent today, as the people who have worked so closely with Doc absorb their loss and pause for a while before resuming the task they will carry on for him.

The new person who will take over the work Doc has done so magnificently for the past 2 years will have a sturdy base on which to build. The organization plans to implement many of the actions Doc advocated, and to fulfill his dream, "the mobilization of human resources into programs dealing with the most pressing animal problems."

OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Many communications we are receiving indicate concern about plans for the future of Humane Information Services or whether, indeed, it will continue at all. They ask, Will Report to Humanitarians be published as usual? We assure you, most emphatically, that Human Information Services is continuing in operation and will continue to operate as heretofore. Its headquarters will remain in St. Petersburg; at least there are no present plans to move elsewhere. And it will strive to maintain the high standards which have earned us our many friends, and to carry on in the spirit of our late president. Our acting president is John D. Fite, of Clearwater, Florida, a very prominent attorney. Letters addressed to our headquarters office, 4495 Ninth Avenue North, St. Petersburg, Florida, will be answered as before.

Doc's research always was meticulous. He went directly to the sources, never depending on hearsay. For example, he visited dozens of slaughterhouses throughout the country before he wrote: "By far the greatest cruelty inflicted upon animals is in the production, transportation and slaughter of meat animals. The worst of all is done in the slaughtering plants, when they crush and cut the necks of animals. This sound to you as an exaggeration. Frederick L. Thomsen, Ph.D., had a distinguished career, and was executive president and re-
MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

have been received from...


Mrs. Reidin Atkinson, Sarasota, Florida, "as a tribute to Dr. Thomsen. His dedication will be with us forever."

Mrs. Bernice Williams, Bain, Oregon, "in memory of a wonderful eleven-plus relationship with my beloved black cat Clyde, who crossed the road in front of a speeding car."

Burton M. Parks, Pinehurst, North Carolina, "How I wish it could be many times longer."

Ms. Nancy L. Salarr, Mountain View, California, and Latverne and Glenn Ellis, 2910 Illinois, "in memory of Arline Salarr, who passed away April 11, 1978. She loved animals very much."

Miss Virginia D. Sheffick, Menlo Park, California, "in memory of Dr. Thomsen."

Miss Ruby D. Smith, Sarasota, Florida, "in memory of Dr. Thomsen."

Mrs. Doris Tabackman, Paris, France, "in memory of Renate Tordosky, who helped him so much."

Memorial contributions may be sent in care of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 225 East 57th Street, New York, New York 10022.
WHAT MAKES A HUMANITARIAN?

One thing on which Fred and I had great disagreement was what I considered the central subject of what makes a humanitarian a humanitarian. I had thought, and still do, that intimate experience with animals was essential, that in some way the human experience that makes a humanitarian. One rarely if ever becomes a humanitarian as a result of abstract reasoning, or taking a job with a humane society. It is the emotional experiences connected with constant association with individual animals that are loved and which make a humanitarian. Just being around animals, as a zoo keeper, a cow-boy, a laboratory animal technician, a shearer, a butcher, a packinghouse worker will not create a humanitarian. On the contrary, such constant contact with the messy side of animal existence may lead to callousness and hardening of the arteries of the heart.

And what personal experience with animals makes a great humanitarian must be to pledge oneself in a person that love and respect for them which turns an ordinary animal lover into a humanitarian? I think that it the experience of having a loved female cat or dog bear a litter of kittens or puppies, and bringing them up as a part of the family, that makes one capable of such this process enduring. The devotion of the mother cat, the purring and licking and grooming, the interest of the young one's ears to bring conformance with cat rules of child behavior, the experience of having a cat—first of the weight of a passing dog, all are calculated to make a forever-after devoted animal lover. If children do not pet and experience during this formative years, I argued, what will they learn in books or from pictures which will make them humane, whether trained intellectual honesty was exemplified by the fact that he was a human encyclopedia of the other principles related to humane welfare, and that the other princi­ples related to humane welfare problems associated with the use of animals in biomedical laboratories, yet still retaining regrets that the litter of kittens or puppies cannot be a part of the life experience of most children.

The "SAVE-a-LIFERS"

Another of Fred's positions which at first I found difficult to accept was one that still is of critical importance in the humane movement.

Assuming that the net number of unwanted animals is most calculable to implant in a manager of animals is most calculable to implant in a manager of animals that the greatest single obstacle to solution of the pet animal surplus problem was the "save-a-lifers," who were so silly they could not prevent the death of an animal, as opposed to preventing the suffering and deaths of far greater numbers in the future.

By Frederick I. Thomasen

SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ABOUT FRED MYERS, THE “MIRACLE OF BIRTH” AND PET POPULATION CONTROL

So long as I have forgotten the exact year, I was elected a director of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). I had been a director and vice-president of a local spca shelter, and that was my main interest in humane work. But after a few months' contact with Fred Myers, one of the founders and then head of the HSUS, I recognized that Fred's thinking had been started all over again.

Fred was a unique combination of qualities. He was the greatest humanitarian of all time. He was dedicated to the improvement of animal welfare in a way which made it a religion with him. Fred had brains. He could analyze a problem as incisively as any of the scientists with whom my work had brought me into contact during the preceding forty years. He was a human encyclopedia of knowledge about all phases of animal welfare. He was a gentleman and a scholar, not to mention a logical philosopher, with a potential for real accomplishment in this field of endeavor. Fred bad brains. He could analyze a problem as incisively as any of the scientists with whom my work had brought me into contact during the preceding forty years. He was a human encyclopedia of knowledge about all phases of animal welfare. He was a gentleman and a scholar, not to mention a logical philosopher, with a potential for real accomplishment in this field of endeavor.

Fred was a unique combination of qualities. He was the greatest humanitarian of all time. He was dedicated to the improvement of animal welfare in a way which made it a religion with him. Fred had brains. He could analyze a problem as incisively as any of the scientists with whom my work had brought me into contact during the preceding forty years. He was a human encyclopedia of knowledge about all phases of animal welfare. He was a gentleman and a scholar, not to mention a logical philosopher, with a potential for real accomplishment in this field of endeavor.

Fred was a unique combination of qualities. He was the greatest humanitarian of all time. He was dedicated to the improvement of animal welfare in a way which made it a religion with him. Fred had brains. He could analyze a problem as incisively as any of the scientists with whom my work had brought me into contact during the preceding forty years. He was a human encyclopedia of knowledge about all phases of animal welfare. He was a gentleman and a scholar, not to mention a logical philosopher, with a potential for real accomplishment in this field of endeavor. Fred had brains. He could analyze a problem as incisively as any of the scientists with whom my work had brought me into contact during the preceding forty years. He was a human encyclopedia of knowledge about all phases of animal welfare. He was a gentleman and a scholar, not to mention a logical philosopher, with a potential for real accomplishment in this field of endeavor. Fred had brains. He could analyze a problem as incisively as any of the scientists with whom my work had brought me into contact during the preceding forty years. He was a human encyclopedia of knowledge about all phases of animal welfare. He was a gentleman and a scholar, not to mention a logical philosopher, with a potential for real accomplishment in this field of endeavor.
REFLECTIONS — FROM PAGE 3

veterinary services for the sick and injured animals so they could be rehabilitated for adoption, despite the fact that people were evidently being turned away at the door, and were being slaughtered in the community's other shelters and pounds on the highways.

Under the "no-kill" policy, "no-kill" shelters soon became full capacity, and additional animals could be accepted only as space became available and were "adopted out." Some of the animals of an age, appearance or condition making them unattractive to potential adopters were kept on hand for weeks, months and even years. Since the number of adopters was much smaller than the number of people offering their unwanted pets, these animals were caring for a pitifully minute portion of the total surplus production of dogs and cats. Yet their founders, directors and financial supporters were informed that the millions of other dogs and cats they could not care for. Some of the famous philanthropists, including those who "save-a-life" shelters received glowing write-ups in the media, and were popular speakers at humane society and other conventions where "save-a-life" shelters were portrayed as disinterested in such matters as euthanasia and "save-a-lifers" is seen to be still the great obstacle to achievement of a balanced pet population.

PREDICTION THE BEST CURE

In the intervening years more and more people have gradually come to realize that there is no solution except to answer the pet over-population problem, that euthanasia is necessary, and that we should be more willing to kill animals than we may be willing to act on this. In the meantime, most people, not alone those in the humane movement, have come to realize that the real solution of the problem is to prevent the birth of more animals that can be absorbed by the potential good homes available. This is now the battle cry of nearly everyone who is concerned with the welfare of animals. Prevention, it is recognized, is the best cure.

SAVE-A-LIFERS' INFLUENCE STILL DOMINATES POLICY

At least, most people believe they are for prevention rather than cure.

That is one reason so many of them are distancing themselves from euthanasia. Why put a lot of effort into killing more humane when the "real" problem is preventing the need for killing? And even if they accept the fact, brought out so clearly in our Report to Humane Legislators No. 29 (September, 1974), there are due to population shifts and other conditions there will always be a pet animal "float," amounting to hundreds of thousands or millions yearly, that will require sheltering. The question is, how successful the prevention campaign may be.

But it is in connection with the effort to prevent the birth of surplus puppies and kittens that the influence of the "save-a-lifers" is seen to be still the greatest of the two. The achievement of a balanced pet population.

It is the "save-a-lifers" who are the most visible spokesmen for prevention, yet remain the chief although unknowing opponents of the essential steps required to achieve it.

MAKE PET OWNERSHIP CHEAP

Fred Myers was practical enough to know that he could go on so far in leading his members to accept unpopular but effec
tive steps that he would need the support of the wealthy. So he did not openly denounce the "save-a-lifers" as a great hindrance to humane accomplishment, although privately, to me, he expressed them.

In fact, he then looked upon me as more or less a "save-a-lifer!" Pressure from all humanitarians and human societies at that time was to make pet ownership as cheap as possible, so that the surplus of more homes for pets and thus reduce at least a part of the need for destroying the animals in shelters and pounds.

Thus, there was no increase in adoption fees as low as possible, and opposed cat licensing, as many do now for the same reasons. Thus, the heavy financial burden required donations as low as possible, so more animals could be saved from the euthanasia chambers. "Save-a-lifers" advocated letting shelters sell dogs and cats by people, regardless of their financial ability to provide proper care for the animals, was (and still) much favored. They advocated setting up funds, often collected at great effort, for the purpose of subsidizing the spaying of female animals so that they could be saved from the euthanasia chambers. The way to reduce the production of surplus pet animals, he thought, was to make ownership of pets more expensive. Only people who were willing to pay the high fees and who were financially able, to provide for all of the needs of their animals should own them.

This would reduce the number of homes and willing to own pet animals, he acknowledged, and hence would temporarily reduce adoption fees and also the number of animals to be destroyed in shelters and pounds. But the indirect and longer-run effects would be great, he felt. It would reduce the number of animals to be destroyed, and to increase the number of really good homes available. People, he said, who cannot, or who do not, who cannot afford the fees for pet will not provide it. If you buy cheap, clothing or household articles you cannot expect a good quality care as you would expensive items, and they will be discarded sooner. If people pay nothing, or only a small amount, for a dog or cat, it will be easier and cheaper, to pay fifteen dollars a year for veterinary care. Much easier and cheaper, if the animal gets sick or injured, to discard it and get another pet. Cheaper. Cheap. Cheap. Cheap.

Cheap.

Cheap. In the end, Fred knew, it would greatly reduce cat ownership, and they are right. The question is, Do we want the maximum number possible of "own ers" or the minimum? The concept is: the fewer the better, and we permit them to be that way.

CHEAP OWNERSHIP IDEAS OF THE SAVE-A-LIFERS STILL PREVAILED

Although many more humanitarians have come around, at least partially, to Fred's viewpoint, the pervasive influence of the "save-a-lifers" and the cheap ownership advocates still prevails in most humane circles.

It is found in the opposition to the proposed requirement that all animals adopted out by the shelters must be spayed or neutered. A proposed bill providing for this under State law went down to defeat in the 1979 Florida legislature, opposed by both large and small humane societies and other organizations in the State. The same result has been experienced elsewhere.

The shelters are told they will never be able to reduce their adoption fees and also the number of animals brought to the shelters because people would get the idea their unwanted pets would not be killed instead of adopted out. They do not realize what a large proportion is destroyed under these circumstances. If there were fewer unwanted females adopted, there would be fewer progeny brought to the shelters, and hence a large proportion that would not be adopted out.

These influence are found also in the opposition to requiring subsidized spay and neuter clinics to be located, if possible, in the community of the animal to be spayed or neutered.