Organizing An Effective Board of Directors

by Carroll S. Thrift

Organizational management has become increasingly important as humane societies face new challenges and changes. As with every non-profit group, organizational management begins with the board of directors and requires a process or system of making decisions, implementing decisions, and exercising good leadership. The purposes of an organization are achieved by coordination of the decisions made and the people involved. Therefore, an organization increases its chances for success when it has an effective board of directors with set responsibilities and a sound organizational structure.

In *The Effective Board*, Cyril O. Houle said, "Organization is merely the way by which people relate themselves to one another so as to achieve their common purpose." An important element in this relationship is "leadership" from both board and staff. Each must possess a strong sense of ownership of the organization and,
particularly, a clearly defined structure of operations in which to accomplish their respective tasks.

Equally important is the board’s understanding of its functional responsibilities. Generally, the board’s primary responsibility is trusteeship or supervisory control. The board of directors serves as trustee of an organization on behalf of the public served, donors, and funding sources. As trustees, board members of a non-profit organization are legally responsible for its management and control and are liable for the consequences of negligence by the organization. Also, the board serves to determine goals and objectives, establish policies and other general guidelines and limits for ongoing operation, authorize programs sponsored by the organization, and evaluate the results of the organization’s operation.

Within these broad responsibilities, a board is responsible for five major functions of an organization:

1. Policy Administration

The board must establish the administrative policies that govern the affairs and development of the organization. Boards that fail to establish policies cannot function with any direction. This critical function can be divided into two areas:
* The board sets the goals of the organization.
* The board sets policies that serve as guidelines and limits for all other functional areas.

The best way for a board to communicate its intent or direction is with written goals and objectives -- a mission statement of its primary purpose and what it wishes to accomplish. Then, both strategic (long range) and operational goals should be set.

Policies affect activities within an organization’s program areas. The board’s general responsibility is to set policies that
* assure proper goals are set;
* establish the type of service the organization will give and the guidelines to follow;
* establish guidelines for appropriate use of all resources, and
* assure periodical evaluation of work toward the goals.

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Circus Fund-Raisers Are Not Acceptable
by Jeanne Roush

Unfortunately, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) cannot recommend the use of any circus for fund-raising purposes. Our own undercover work in circuses and field investigations and reports we have received from circus employees reveal that circus life does not provide wild animals with the quality of life we believe they should have.

The level of care varies considerably among circuses. While we fully recognize that some circus animals receive top-quality nutrition and veterinary care, the fact is no circus, due to the necessity of traveling with a light load, can provide a proper and enriched habitat for wild animals.

Often we hear the argument that circus animals are better off than animals that languish in small, sterile cages at some zoos. We find such comparisons pointless since humaneness is not relative, and we do not use substandard zoos as our measure.

Inasmuch as circuses subject animals to inadequate living conditions and possibly stressful training regimens, and they portray them in a manner that distorts their true natures and behaviors, we find that they do not serve any positive function with regard to wildlife. Engaging a circus as a fund-raising event is, of course, a decision that each society must make for itself. In our opinion, however, doing so presents a philosophical conflict and leaves the organization open to criticism from the public it serves.

Jeanne Roush is the assistant to the director for Captive Wildlife Protection at The HSUS.
Landfill Gas Poses Shelter Hazard
by Gary L. Mitchell

Many animal shelters are located near active or closed sanitary landfills. Gases generated from landfill waste disposal may pose a hazard to these buildings. The Humane Society of Vero Beach, Florida (P.O. Box 644, Vero Beach, FL 32960) plans to build a new animal shelter on a portion of a closed sanitary landfill. Recognizing the potential gas hazard, the Society contracted with SCS Engineers (11260 Roger Bacon Drive, Reston, VA 22090-5282) to evaluate the site and develop a conceptual plan for a system to protect the proposed building. Other groups that have built or plan to build an animal shelter on or near a sanitary landfill should also investigate the presence of landfill gas.

WHAT IS LANDFILL GAS?
Landfill gas (LFG) is found in all sanitary landfills and other disposal sites that contain organic wastes. A mixture of methane and carbon dioxide in approximately equal amounts, LFG is generated through natural decay of organic matter. Gas generation begins shortly after waste is buried and continues for many years after a disposal site has been closed.

Danger from LFG stems from methane, a flammable gas—"natural gas" used for home heating and cooking. When present in high enough concentrations, methane can cause explosions. Normally, LFG moves up from waste, and vents safely to the atmosphere. However, in some situations, the gas moves horizontally for distances of more than one-quarter of a mile. LFG tends to accumulate in crawl spaces, basements, and other enclosed parts of buildings. Concentrated in these areas, any spark or flame could ignite it. Although there have been a number of accidental explosions caused by LFG, including several fatalities, none of these accidents has, so far, occurred at animal shelters. To date, there is no known direct link between LFG and human- or animal-health problems.

LFG has a potential benefit. At large landfills, enough LFG is generated through natural decay of organic matter. Gas generation begins shortly after waste is buried and continues for many years after a disposal site has been closed.

Animal shelters near landfills can be protected from the LFG danger in a number of ways. Trenches can be dug between the waste and the buildings. When properly designed and installed, they intercept moving LFG, directing it up to safely dilute into the air. Before constructing an animal shelter or other building directly over a disposal area, plastic membranes could be installed below the floor, which would seal off the building from LFG. Other protective methods include mechanical systems that either withdraw the gas before it reaches the building or develop over pressure areas below the building to prevent gas from moving toward the shelter.

VERO BEACH SHELTER
Programs and services of the Humane Society of Vero Beach, Florida, have increased over the past few years and will likely continue to expand as the community grows. With this in mind, the Society's executive director, Joan G. Carlson, and its board of directors are planning to increase services and the shelter facility. The Humane Society of Vero Beach is a member of the SCS Animal Shelter Operators Network (ASON), a collection of shelter operators from across the nation, who are working to improve the welfare of shelter animals and to increase adoptions.

Shelter Director Joan G. Carlson said, "I am very pleased to be a part of this project. The Humane Society of Vero Beach is committed to improving the welfare of animals in need of care. We value the expertise of SCS in providing us with the best possible advice and assistance to ensure the safety and health of our facility and its staff."

Shelter Manager Susan D. Bower said, "I am excited about the potential of this project to benefit our shelter. The additional space and resources will enable us to provide better care for animals in our care and increase our capacity for intake. We appreciate the support of SCS in making this possible."

The project will be funded through a combination of private donations, grants, and other sources of revenue. The project is expected to be completed within the next six months. The Humane Society of Vero Beach will work closely with SCS to ensure that the project is completed on time and within budget.

"We are very pleased to be working with the Humane Society of Vero Beach on this project," said Robert J. Spero, principal, SCS. "SCS is committed to helping animal shelters become more effective and efficient in their operations. We look forward to working with the Humane Society of Vero Beach to ensure the success of this project."
directors developed plans for a new, expanded facility. A good location was of primary concern. Some potential sites were too expensive or were poorly located. Other acceptable sites were not zoned to allow animal shelters— a common problem in siting new facilities.

One of the sites considered was adjacent to a former sanitary landfill, along a major Indian River County road. Although the building site would be located on a part of the landfill that did not actually receive waste material, refuse was buried within approximately 50 feet of the site.

Since Carlson knew that LFG was a potential hazard at this location, she contacted the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation (DER). DER personnel visited the site, installed LFG monitoring probes, and monitored LFG for several months. When landfill gas in explosive concentrations was found as close as 50 feet to the proposed building site, the humane society contracted with SCS Engineers to evaluate the information and investigate alternative ways to protect the building. SCS Engineers representatives interviewed people familiar with the operation at the old landfill. Gas concentrations measured by DER personnel were reviewed and evaluated. Using County earth-moving equipment, trenches were dug near the proposed building site to identify the presence of disposed waste. Investigation results confirmed that landfill gas was relatively close to the site; however, very little refuse was actually located below the building site.

Since refuse and LFG were found so close to the site, a protective system containing three elements was considered necessary and the most cost-effective as well as one of the most reliable and least expensive for this location. The system consists of excavating a shallow, ground-filled trench between the refuse and the animal shelter (see Figure 1) to intercept most gas migrating from the refuse toward the building, allowing it to vent safely into the air.

Continued on next page

Figure 1

Second, a system of ventilating pipes below the building's floors would provide additional protection. Any gas in this area would tend to enter the pipes, and vent into the atmosphere before entering the building (see Figure 2). Using a sticky compound to seal all openings in the floor slab, found around water, electrical, telephone, and any other utility installations, could also prevent LFG entry.

Finally, a system of LFG monitoring probes, designed to spot gas beneath the floor, would include a relatively simple LFG detection meter that humane-society staff could use to check the effectiveness of the gas control system.

The humane-society board of directors approved the construction of the new animal shelter on the site near the landfill, including the landfill gas protection system. Board members feel that the relatively small additional cost for the system is well worth the safety it will provide to the Society's staff and animals. In addition to the cost of the new shelter, the organization is spending approximately $13,000 to build the protective system, including the final engineering plans and cost of the monitoring meter. (It could cost more to add the same protective system to a shelter already located on or near a landfill. The cost of any protective system would be tailored to individual groups' needs and circumstances.)

Although not ideal locations, active or closed landfills are often sites of animal shelters, and potential hazards from landfill gas exist at virtually every one. Any existing or proposed animal shelter site located near a landfill should be tested to determine the presence of LFG and its potential dangers. Often, relatively inexpensive protective systems requiring little maintenance or energy can protect the buildings, people, and animals.

Gary L. Mitchell, PE, is vice president of SCS Engineers, which has offices in Reston, Va.; Long Beach, Calif.; Covington, Ky.; and Bellevue, Wash.
Wallpaper strips are cheaper to use and at least as strong as expensive canine identification collars, according to Dick Myers, president of The Orlando Humane Society (616 Barry St., Orlando, FL 32808).

Myers said Society Executive Director Frank Andrews recently began using a wallpaper rather than continue to spend approximately $1000 yearly on conventional collars. Andrews took a roll of white, washable cloth wallpaper to a local printer to chop into half-inch width rolls on a paper cutter. The two ends of a collar-length strip are stapled together around the animal's neck. "They've proven to be as good or better than the former collars," said Myers.

Lightweight, colored, nylon tags used to identify livestock are also useful for identifying shelter dogs.

The 2-1/2-inch-high tags, manufactured by the C.H. Dana Company Inc. for use on goats and calves, are black, blue, green, and red, with large, engraved white or yellow numbers from 1 to 999 on the front and back. (A number/letter combination engraving costs 15 cents extra each tag.)

Useful for separating dogs by breed, sex, health status, disposition, or other category, the washable tags attach to an animal's collar with a leash snap and are guaranteed unbreakable during normal use. By labeling a dog's file folder with its tag number, the animal can be easily identified by its tag without removing its records from the office.

For more information, call toll free, 1-800-451-5197 (In Vermont, call Dr. M. C. Gillick, 1-800-879-8285). Write Breck T. Viets, product manager, C.H. Dana Company Inc., Hyde Park, VT 05655. Credit will be honored for orders sent on organizational letterhead or purchase orders. Quantities of 1 to 49 tags cost 65 cents each; 50 or more cost 62 cents each. Terms are net 30 days. Shipment will normally begin 72 hours after an order is received. Prices are FOB (Free on board) Hyde Park, VT.

Arnold Fox, director of the Montgomery County Humane Society (14645 Rothgeb Drive, Rockville, MD 20850), an HSUS-accredited society, has used the tags for years. Since the tags are too large for puppies and cats, Fox suggested using plastic bands with paper inserts -- the type used on hospital patients -- for these animals.

Hollister Inc. (P.O. Box 250, 2000 Hollister Drive, Libertyville, IL 60048) will send one box of approximately 400 feet of plastic banding and 400 insert cards with clips for $117.52, according to a company spokeswoman. (Prices may change, so call toll free, 1-800-413-4065, to confirm.) Inserts are automatically printed with an organization's name, city, and state at no extra charge. (Only 57 characters allowed; processing may take three weeks.) Payment is due in 30 days.

2. Finance

The three areas of board financial responsibility include financial management, asset management, and resource development (fund raising). Usually these finance areas are managed by a finance committee charged with performing ongoing financial monitoring, assuring that all legal financial requirements are carried out, and establishing fiscal policies and review procedures. The finance committee works closely with staff to prepare operating budgets, monitor revenues and expenses, and arrange for an annual audit of the records. Resource development can be managed through a separate fund-raising or membership committee.

3. Public and Community Relations

Public and community relations functions are basically designed to inform the public about an organization, and especially, promote some favorable recognition. Recognition enhances fund raising and also ensures that those who can or need to use the organization's services are aware of the programs offered.

4. Personnel

When an organization employs staff, personnel policies must be established and constantly monitored. Personnel policies can be carried out by a personnel committee to deal with work laws, working environment, wages, salaries, benefits, job descriptions, job classifications, employee training, etc.

5. Evaluation

Evaluation is an ongoing process of reviewing whether an organization's policies and programs are effectively meeting the community's needs and achieving the organization's goals, and for recommending ways to improve the organization's function. Most groups continue to overlook this important evaluation process.

In order to carry out its functional responsibilities, a board of directors must possess the organizational structure to manage and perform. This sense of organization provides efficiency and, most notably, effectiveness.

*Bylaws*

Bylaws are the rules of an organization -- the laws by which it governs its internal affairs. A primary responsibility of the board is to ensure that the organization operates within the framework set forth in the bylaws. Bylaws usually spell out the organization's name and purpose, the board's organization and powers, board meeting procedures and frequency, duties and selection of board officers, duties and power of committees, and procedures for amending the bylaws.
The board exercises control and governs the organization through the actual board meeting. The board meeting should not be a discussion group; it is a meeting where decisions are made. Policy development, discussion, and research should take place in committee meetings -- not the formal meeting. Board members should attend meetings regularly; review agendas, other documents, and materials before a meeting; review minutes of previous meetings; and follow parliamentary procedure during a meeting.

* Board Size

Boards should have an economical and simple structure. The larger the board, the more unwieldy it becomes. However, a board should be large enough to satisfy requirement compositions. Many boards average 30-to-36 members, but some of the most effective boards range in size from 12 to 18.

* Board Tenure

Consider rotating board membership. Although there are some good arguments for non-rotating boards, the advantages of board rotation are that it

1. injects new life into the organization;
2. allows less complacency, and
3. broadens the base of community leadership.

Many organizations limit board membership to no more than one term of three-to-five years. A board member could serve for more than one term, but it's probably not wise for the member to serve more than two consecutive terms without at least one year's absence from the board.

* Officers and Committees

The best way for a board to perform its tasks is by establishing committees. Through committees, work can be divided so that far more can be accomplished than if the entire board acted on all matters. Committees provide organizational structure and much flexibility for work and change. The number of officers on a board committee depends upon the size of the organization and its needs. The list of officers and their duties are included in the bylaws. There are three types of committees:

1. Executive Committee - The committee is usually composed of board officers and one or two members at large. One chief role of the executive committee is to provide guidance for the organization between board meetings and to act in emergency situations.
2. Standing Committees - These are established on a permanent basis to work within a specific jurisdiction such as finance, personnel, public relations, etc.
3. Ad Hoc Committees - These are organized for a specific and limited duration to carry out the assigned function, make recommendations, and disband.

Congress recently prohibited use of cats and dogs in Department of Defense (DOD) "wound laboratories" as part of the FY '84 Defense Appropriations bill. A House version that would have prohibited such use of any animal was rejected by House/Senate conference on Nov. 16, 1983.

In reality, cats were not considered for use in these laboratories. However, the agreement protects numerous cats and dogs purchased from municipal animal shelters or auctions by USDA-licensed animal dealers from being shot to teach military medical students to treat human battlefield wounds.

For years, DOD shot several thousand pigs and goats at four of its U.S. facilities. Various groups and individuals deny that studying these animals' wounds provides vital clinical experience and have suggested workable alternatives. This year, DOD planned to use medium-sized dogs, in addition to domestic farm animals, at its new wound laboratory in the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) in Bethesda, Md. There, animals would be anesthetized, suspended in slings, and shot in the hindquarters with a 9mm Swedish Mauser at a 12-to-15-foot range. Animals used in military training would be euthanized; those used in research could be allowed to regain consciousness. This is one reason why some people are reluctant to surrender animals to shelters.

Public outcry prompted Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to place a temporary moratorium on the dog wounding. Weinberger could curtail future use of all animals in DOD wound laboratories, but he has not yet made a public statement about it. Although the recent legislation requires that all other animals used in such experiments -- pigs and goats, for example -- be treated according to federal guidelines for humane treatment of animals, animals will nonetheless be used in research. In some research laboratories, pain medicine will not be administered to animals if it interferes with an experiment.

Congress recently passed a law that says no elderly or handicapped person may be denied the chance to live in federally subsidized housing just because he or she owns a pet. H.R. 3959 passed during the closing hours of the first session of the 98th Congress. Signed by President Reagan on Nov. 30, 1983, the new law will allow animals that are wild or too large, for example, to be excluded from small rental units in Section 202 federally subsidized buildings. Building managers can set guidelines regarding population density, pet-owner financial obligations, and pet-care standards, etc.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) worked with Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire and New York Congressman Mario Biaggi to achieve this type of legislation. For more information, write The HSUS, 2100 L St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037.
A Letter to the Editor —

As a result of the article about computerization that appeared in the November 1983 Shelter Sense, I've received a number of requests for Animal Bytes. Animal Bytes is a newsletter, published at no cost for AAZPA organizations, that addresses the computer and related animal-management needs. It provides a forum in which readers share their data processing experiences. Since Shelter Sense is already in place as a periodic newsletter serving humane organizations, I feel that a Shelter Sense column devoted to sharing computer experiences, in the same vein as Animal Bytes, would best serve those interested in computerization.

Computer applications in various types of organizations are different. The animal-related uses of a computer in a humane society would be quite different from those in a zoo. Yet, from the view of most organizations, the problems of installing a computer are the same. What, then, is the answer to the information needs of the various organizations? There are a number of publications, either free or for sale, that deal with the computer as a tool of an organization. These periodicals solve the need for general information. The solution to the special needs of the various humane organizations lies in establishing user channels through which common information can be shared.

The Shelter Sense column could highlight the experiences of users, pose questions to be answered, or publish articles of general interest relating to data processing.

Fred Andrus,
Editor, Animal Bytes

Editor's Note—

Due to the excellent reader response to the Shelter Sense computerization article, Fred Andrus and others mentioned in the article have fielded a number of requests for more information. His suggestion for a regular Shelter Sense column about computer user experiences is helpful and practical.

Write to me with a brief description of your organization's experience setting up and using a computer system. For starters, tell me about unique uses for your computer, computer problems encountered and how they were solved, interesting results from computer use, or helpful computer companies or representatives with whom you've dealt.

Andrus has prepared a helpful bibliography of selected computer publications. For a free copy, write Shelter Sense. 

Review and Update Your Adoption Policies
by Phyllis Wright

Wright is vice president of Companion Animals for The HSUS

SHELTER SENSE
The Humane Society of the United States
2100 L St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037

Spring is coming, puppies and kittens will arrive at your shelter in droves, people will make vacation plans that exclude the family pet — you know what happens to animals during the warm season. Review and update your adoption policies now to avoid causing additional animal problems.

Remember, animals' quality of life is most important! Although street-corner or shopping-mall adoption giveaways may bring your organization lots of publicity while at the same time reach a lot of potential pet owners, don't adopt out animals this way. The reasons are simple: If you give away animals on a street corner, why shouldn't the public think it can, too? In that kind of environment, your professionalism as well as your ability to adequately screen potential adopters is reduced. The first shelter visit to adopt an animal should be made by an adult, without children, so that a more objective decision can be made. Suggest this to the public. Arrange convenient adoption hours for working adults so that they won't crowd into the shelter on Saturdays.

Screen the animals for health and disposition problems. Have your checklist for potential dog and cat adopters ready. Make certain the animals you adopt out are clean and inoculated, with a collar and tag. The shelter and its animals should be a role model to encourage responsible pet ownership.

Lax adoption procedures will spell trouble for you, the public, and the animals every time. Don't let this happen. For a copy of HSUS Guidelines for Responsible Pet Adoptions, send 25 cents to Responsible Pet Adoptions, AC4001-C, The HSUS, 2100 L St. N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

![HSUS Logo](https://example.com/hsus-logo.png)

February '84/SHELTER SENSE/13
**Employee Training Boosts Shelter**

A newly established humane-society employee training program has increased employee productiveness and satisfaction. According to Kathy Henderson, manager of education for the Humane Society of Santa Clara Valley (2530 Lafayette St., Santa Clara, CA 95050), their two-day training program gives new kennel and office workers a look at the way each individual's job contributes to a successful shelter operation.

The first day of training includes the humane society's history, philosophy, services, and structure; a tour of office and kennel areas; several slide shows and a video tape presentation; familiarization with employee time cards and benefits; and completion of necessary employee insurance and tax forms. By the end of the day, trainees have watched a kennel supervisor demonstrate proper cat- and dog-handling procedures; studied the employee manual; and observed workers in the offices, veterinary facility, and pet supply shop.

Day two is spent cleaning cat kennels, where each trainee is paired with a kennel attendant for an overview of kennel work. Trainees also watch animal euthanasia. Later, they learn about the need for accurate record keeping by correcting sample "impounds" -- the paperwork that accompanies each shelter animal. Trainees study the section of the procedural manual that applies to their jobs, watch a movie, and discuss euthanasia.

Although the training program has had good results since it was started several months ago, Henderson may improve the video presentation and develop some type of follow-up for new employees who have been working several weeks. "So much information is presented during the two-day session, it may be difficult for trainees to retain it all," she said. She would like to hear about other successful shelter employee training programs. Write her at the above address.

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**WANTED**

- Education director to plan and administer progressive, three-person humane-education department for established San Francisco Bay-area humane society. New 12,000-square-foot education center. Articulate, personable, experienced candidates should send resume, references to Diane Allevato, executive director, Marin Humane Society, 171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd., Novato, CA 94947; telephone, (415) 883-4621.

- Shelter manager, experienced with HSUS guidelines and animal welfare, to manage shelter, cruelty investigation, some public relations, fund raising, and education. Salary, $15,000-$19,000. Apply to Dr. James Schmidt, 1321 Macombo Rd. S.W., Ft. Myers, FL 33907.

- Humane-society director. Experienced in office, financial, and staff management; animal care; and public relations. Apartment available. Salary, $16,000-$19,000. Send resume to Search Committee Chairman, 1500 East Manor Drive, Lincoln, NE 68506.