1-

All Cats Should Be Indoor Cats

By Rhonda Lucas Donald

Telling a cat owner that his or her cat should stay indoors will often elicit indignant responses such as, “It’s only natural for a cat to go out,” or “How could I deprive him of so much pleasure?” or “Cats can take care of themselves.”

The fact is, none of the above is a good reason, only an excuse. Cats allowed to roam at will sometimes pay with their lives, and taxpayers pay millions of dollars each year for animal control services to rescue, treat, feed, and house many of the cats that roam “at large” in the country.

There is nothing “natural” about a cat being outside. When humans domesticated cats (about 6,000 years ago), they removed them from the wild and changed their ecological role. Cats are no longer wild predators that fit into an ecosystem, but are dependent
Cats allowed outside do serious damage to already struggling wildlife populations, and they don’t just kill “pest” animals.

on humans, receiving the things they need to live from people.

Nothing “Natural” About It

Although cats retain their hunting instincts, there is no natural need for them to hunt. True predators in the wild only kill what they will eat, whereas a cat kills for play, not always eating what it catches. The number of wild predators in relation to the number of prey species is kept in check by numerous natural controls such as weather, availability of food, mates, and other predators. Domestic cats upset this balance. A well fed house cat doesn’t need to hunt to survive, yet house cats kill untold numbers of wild animals while being almost wholly unaffected by the natural controls on their numbers. One study in a small village in England found that house cats were responsible for between one third to one half of all house sparrow deaths in that village. This fact becomes even more alarming when you realize that birds were one of the less frequently caught specimens (small mammals led the list).

Wild animals have enough problems surviving against the ever-encroaching human population without having to satisfy the hunting instincts of neighborhood felines.

Cats Can Cause the Same Problems as Dogs

In addition to inflicting damage to area wildlife, free-roaming cats cause many of the same problems that dogs do. We do not tolerate dogs roaming at large because they can be a nuisance. Cats break into garbage, too, and dig up the neighbor’s flower beds, defecate in children’s sand boxes, ruin bird watching for people with feeders, and add to the burgeoning cat overpopulation problem. Free-roaming cats also pose a hazard to motorists who try to avoid hitting them on area roads.

Also like dogs, outdoor cats can transmit diseases to people. Cats allowed to roam at will are even more likely than dogs to come into contact with rabid wild animals and thus spread the disease to people. And cats that go outside are more likely to carry toxoplasmosis, which can be contracted by pregnant women and their unborn babies when they change litter boxes or garden in soil where cats have buried feces. These threats can be avoided by keeping cats indoors.

Risks to Outdoor Cats

Of course, the most important reason to keep a cat in is for the animal’s own safety. Cats like to go outside, but for their own good, they shouldn’t be indulged. After all, young children might like to play outside unsupervised, but allowing them to do so is negligent. The same is true for allowing cats outside.

Outside threats to cats are numerous and take their toll on cat’s lives. According to Barbara L. Diamond’s article “Bringing the Outdoors In” (Cat Fancy, April 1990), “While the average outdoor or indoor-outdoor cat lives two to three years, an indoor-only cat’s average life span is 12 to 15 years or more.” A look at just a few of the hazards facing outdoor cats explains why their lives can be so brief:

- **Disease.** Babies and other zoontic diseases have already been mentioned as threats to people. More common are diseases that inflict cats only and that are spread through contact with other cats. Two diseases that kill large numbers of cats each year are feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus. Both diseases are transmitted from cat to cat and, once contracted, result in the eventual death of the animal due to a compromised immune system. Keeping cats inside helps prevent the transmission of these killers.

- **Parasites.** Outdoor cats inevitably pick up fleas and ticks and then bring these pests into the home with them. Fleas can cause anemia, skin irritations, and allergies in cats. These parasites also pose risks to humans since they can transmit disease through their bites. Ridding the pet and home of fleas and ticks is difficult and can expose the pet to harmful chemicals. Indoor cats aren’t generally exposed to fleas, ticks, ear mites, or other parasites.

- **Poisoning.** Poisons exist on chemically treated lawns, in bait left out to kill rats or mice, and in auto antifreeze drained from cars (a sweet substance cats love to lick, but which is deadly). Most cats love to chew on greens, but their fondness can be safely satisfied with grass grown in an indoor pot.

- **Other animals.** Other cats, dogs, and wildlife are potential enemies of cats and often engage in fights that leave a cat injured. Outdoor cats can suffer torn ears, cut eyes, abscesses, and other injuries requiring expensive veterinary treatment.

- **Crue! People.** All shelter workers can tell horror stories about cats that come in tarred and feathered, burned, or tortured in some other way by cruel kids or disturbed adults. A cat outside is a likely target for people who collect animals to sell to research laboratories. Outside pets are at the mercy of the people they encounter.

- **Traps.** The HSUS speculates that over 100,000 cats are caught in traps each year. Those who aren’t killed may suffer for days before being released and often lose limbs from the injuries.

- **Traffic.** Most outdoor cats die from auto accidents. It is a myth that cats are “streetwise” about cars. Cats are intelligent and alert, but they stand very little chance against fast-moving vehicles.

- **Pet overpopulation.** Anyone who’s ever worked in a shelter knows that unaltered cats allowed to roam and mate at will account for millions of the cats euthanized each year. One female cat and her offspring can produce 420,000 cats in seven years. All pets, whether strictly indoor or outdoor-outdoor, should be spayed or neutered. Pet owners who allow unaltered animals outside are irresponsible and at the root of the terrible pet overpopulation problem resulting in millions of animal deaths yearly.

Keeping Cats Happy Indoors

Owners will swear that their cats will be miserable if cooped up in the house all the time. This attitude perpetuates itself if the pet owner makes no effort to provide the cat with a stimulating environment. But with a little attention to what a cat likes and needs, a pet owner can create a home that keeps the cats healthy, safe, and happy.

In her April 1990 Cat Fancy article, “Bringing the Outdoors In,” Barbara L. Diamond suggests that cat owners “take a few minutes to view the home from the cat’s perspective” in order to “shape the healthiest and most rewarding indoor environment possible.” Here are some tips from Diamond (along with a couple of our own) to help cat owners keep their pets amused and fit behind closed doors:

- **Disease.** Babies and other zoontic diseases have already been mentioned as threats to people. More common are diseases that inflict cats only and that are spread through contact with other cats. Two diseases that kill large numbers of cats each year are feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus. Both diseases are transmitted from cat to cat and, once contracted, result in the eventual death of the animal due to a compromised immune system. Keeping cats inside helps prevent the transmission of these killers.

- **Parasites.** Outdoor cats inevitably pick up fleas and ticks and then bring these pests into the home with them. Fleas can cause anemia, skin irritations, and allergies in cats. These parasites also pose risks to humans since they can transmit disease through their bites. Ridding the pet and home of fleas and ticks is difficult and can expose the pet to harmful chemicals. Indoor cats aren’t generally exposed to fleas, ticks, ear mites, or other parasites.

- **Poisoning.** Poisons exist on chemically treated lawns, in bait left out to kill rats or mice, and in auto antifreeze drained from cars (a sweet substance cats love to lick, but which is deadly). Most cats love to chew on greens, but their fondness can be safely satisfied with grass grown in an indoor pot.

- **Other animals.** Other cats, dogs, and wildlife are potential enemies of cats and often engage in fights that leave a cat injured. Outdoor cats can suffer torn ears, cut eyes, abscesses, and other injuries requiring expensive veterinary treatment.

- **Crue! People.** All shelter workers can tell horror stories about cats that come in tarred and feathered, burned, or tortured in some other way by cruel kids or disturbed adults. A cat outside is a likely target for people who collect animals to sell to research laboratories. Outside pets are at the mercy of the people they encounter.

- **Traps.** The HSUS speculates that over 100,000 cats are caught in traps each year. Those who aren’t killed may suffer for days before being released and often lose limbs from the injuries.

- **Traffic.** Most outdoor cats die from auto accidents. It is a myth that cats are “streetwise” about cars. Cats are intelligent and alert, but they stand very little chance against fast-moving vehicles.

- **Pet overpopulation.** Anyone who’s ever worked in a shelter knows that unaltered cats allowed to roam and mate at will account for millions of the cats euthanized each year. One female cat and her offspring can produce 420,000 cats in seven years. All pets, whether strictly indoor or outdoor-outdoor, should be spayed or neutered. Pet owners who allow unaltered animals outside are irresponsible and at the root of the terrible pet overpopulation problem resulting in millions of animal deaths yearly.

Keeping Cats Happy Indoors

Owners will swear that their cats will be miserable if cooped up in the house all the time. This attitude perpetuates itself if the pet owner makes no effort to provide the cat with a stimulating environment. But with a little attention to what a cat likes and needs, a pet owner can create a home that keeps the cats healthy, safe, and happy.

In her April 1990 Cat Fancy article, “Bringing the Outdoors In,” Barbara L. Diamond suggests that cat owners “take a few minutes to view the home from the cat’s perspective” in order to “shape the healthiest and most rewarding indoor environment possible.” Here are some tips from Diamond (along with a couple of our own) to help cat owners keep their pets amused and fit behind closed doors:

- **Disease.** Babies and other zoontic diseases have already been mentioned as threats to people. More common are diseases that inflict cats only and that are spread through contact with other cats. Two diseases that kill large numbers of cats each year are feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus. Both diseases are transmitted from cat to cat and, once contracted, result in the eventual death of the animal due to a compromised immune system. Keeping cats inside helps prevent the transmission of these killers.

- **Parasites.** Outdoor cats inevitably pick up fleas and ticks and then bring these pests into the home with them. Fleas can cause anemia, skin irritations, and allergies in cats. These parasites also pose risks to humans since they can transmit disease through their bites. Ridding the pet and home of fleas and ticks is difficult and can expose the pet to harmful chemicals. Indoor cats aren’t generally exposed to fleas, ticks, ear mites, or other parasites.

- **Poisoning.** Poisons exist on chemically treated lawns, in bait left out to kill rats or mice, and in auto antifreeze drained from cars (a sweet substance cats love to lick, but which is deadly). Most cats love to chew on greens, but their fondness can be safely satisfied with grass grown in an indoor pot.

- **Other animals.** Other cats, dogs, and wildlife are potential enemies of cats and often engage in fights that leave a cat injured. Outdoor cats can suffer torn ears, cut eyes, abscesses, and other injuries requiring expensive veterinary treatment.

- **Crue! People.** All shelter workers can tell horror stories about cats that come in tarred and feathered, burned, or tortured in some other way by cruel kids or disturbed adults. A cat outside is a likely target for people who collect animals to sell to research laboratories. Outside pets are at the mercy of the people they encounter.

- **Traps.** The HSUS speculates that over 100,000 cats are caught in traps each year. Those who aren’t killed may suffer for days before being released and often lose limbs from the injuries.

- **Traffic.** Most outdoor cats die from auto accidents. It is a myth that cats are “streetwise” about cars. Cats are intelligent and alert, but they stand very little chance against fast-moving vehicles.

- **Pet overpopulation.** Anyone who’s ever worked in a shelter knows that unaltered cats allowed to roam and mate at will account for millions of the cats euthanized each year. One female cat and her offspring can produce 420,000 cats in seven years. All pets, whether strictly indoor or outdoor-outdoor, should be spayed or neutered. Pet owners who allow unaltered animals outside are irresponsible and at the root of the terrible pet overpopulation problem resulting in millions of animal deaths yearly.
Helping an Outdoor Cat Adjust to Life Indoors

Although it takes patience and work, an outdoor cat can be turned into a perfectly content indoor pet. The key is to make the conversion gradually and to provide lots of attention and stimulation while the cat is indoors.

Begin by only letting the cat outside during the middle of the day. Cats do most of their hunting between dawn and dusk, and this change will help shift them from the hunting urge. Gradually shorten the length of time the cat is outside until you no longer let him or her out at all. Cat’s are creatures of habit, so you must be careful to slowly replace their old routine of going outside with a new one of staying in. Substitute outside excursions with periods of special play time. Supervised trips out on the balcony, deck, or patio can make the transition from outside to inside a little easier.

Some cat owners even screen in porches or small enclosures from their homes. These enclosed “outdoor” environments protect the cats yet allow them to get fresh air and sunshine.

Provide plenty to keep the cat occupied inside. Especially important is extra play and attention time. Cats need human companionship to be happy, and when they spend all their time out of doors, they get very little TLC. An enclosed “outdoor” environment is even better—a floor to ceiling scratching pole with perches is essential. A scratching post at least two feet high is essential. A floor to ceiling scratching pole with perches is even better. A scratching post at least two feet high is essential—a floor to ceiling pole with perches is even better. A scratching post at least two feet high is essential—a floor to ceiling pole with perches is even better.

Play games with your cat. Human companionship is a very real need for cats. What better way to provide this and make your cat happy than by playing with him or her? In addition to playing with cat toys, a cat may also enjoy games of chase, peek-a-boo around doors, capturing non-toxic soap bubbles, or chasing light spots created with a flashlight or reflective object.

If cats have their owner’s love and attention and lots to do on the inside, they won’t miss the great outdoors, which, after close examination, isn’t so great for cats at all.

The Best Way To Catch a Dog

Photographs taken by Matthew Lewis and reprinted courtesy of The Washington Post

Kevin Kenefick has been an Animal Control Officer for 17 years, and with District of Columbia Animal Control (1001 New York Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002) for the past four. Matthew Lewis of The Washington Post followed Kenefick as he did the routine and not-so-routine things that make up an ACO’s workday. These photos reveal the true nature of a good ACO and how animal control is not a job best accomplished by force and chase, but by kindness, compassion, and, at times, a tasty tidbit.

When asked about his job, Kenefick responded, “I truly love it. It can be hard at times, but you see many, many minor miracles that keep you going.”

A little food does wonders to coax a frightened dog to Kenefick.
National Resolution, “Every Litter Hurts”
Theme Mark Third “P.A.L.” Month
By Geoffrey L. Handy

Outstanding local efforts toward finding creative solutions to pet overpopulation chracterized The HSUS’s third annual “Be a P.A.L.—Prevent A Litter” Campaign last April. The United States Congress declared April 1990 National “Prevent A Litter” Month, and thousands of local humane agencies, shelters, and individuals promoted spay/neuter in their communities. The national 1990 “Be a P.A.L.” campaign sought to make pet owners understand that every litter, planned or accidental, contributes to pet overpopulation. The HSUS’s new “Pick One” kit was designed to play upon that theme: “Prevent A Litter” bags informed people that their “one litter” is responsible for pet overpopulation crisis and gave needed backing to local spay/neuter campaigns.

Numerous municipalities and seven states—California, Delaware, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania—joined Congress in proclaiming April 1990 “Prevent A Litter” Month.

The New York State Humane Association (NYSHA, P.O. Box 284, New Paltz, NY 12561) merged “Be a P.A.L.” with the educational “Helping Hands for Pets” campaign. As part of “Helping Hands for Pets,” which was jointly sponsored by The HSUS and England’s Royal SPCA, children created banners featuring their own handprints to symbolize the need for helping hands for dogs and cats.

Banners created by New York schoolchildren—most of which focused on spaying and neutering—were put on display for a full week in the Concourse of the Empire State Plaza in Albany. Seventeen hundred people passed by the exhibit, which also featured New York Governor Mario Cuomo’s signed proclamation declaring April “Prevent A Litter” Month.

Veterinarians and veterinary technicians across the country participated in “Be a P.A.L.” campaigns. Volunteers for Animal Welfare (VAW), P.O. Box 2006, Oklahoma City, OK 73156) persuaded 33 veterinary hospitals to reduce their spay/neuter fees from 10 to 50 percent during parts of April. Nearly 1,000 people called for a list of participating veterinarians, and a total of 451 animals were sterilized during the month.

Their efforts also showed how momentum can be gained by running a campaign every year: in 1989, 17 veterinary clinics had offered low-cost spaying and neutering as part of their campaign that sterilized 202 animals. VAW’s relationship with veterinarians has been so outstanding that three vets now offer reduced spay/neuter fees year-round.

Targeting different segments of the community on the pet overpopulation crisis and gave needed backing to local spay/neuter campaigns.

In Upstate New York, the Lewis County Dog Control Office & Shelter (RD 1, Box 482, Pine Grove Rd., Glenfield, NY 13343), which in 1989 took in 252 dogs and euthanized 83 of them, persuaded the county to proclaim April as “Prevent A Litter” Month. Two local veterinary clinics offered discounted spaying and neutering for any pet that had been adopted from a shelter. Dog Control Officer Clifford Cook also convinced several area merchants to participate: they offered a 10 percent discount on all pet-related items to pet owners showing a recent spay or neuter certificate.

Humane education was the emphasis of the unschooled Williams County Humane Society (P.O. Box 14, Montpelier, OH 43543), which supplies 28 fourth-grade teachers with “Adopt-A-Teacher” materials year-round. The organization distributed “Be a P.A.L.” materials throughout area elementary schools to supplement their program. 180 classrooms received “Prevent A Litter” posters, and one board member—a retired fourth-grade teacher—spoke to 13 classrooms about responsible pet ownership. The society also held an open house to kick off Be Kind to Animals Week in May and distributed educational materials in “Prevent A Litter Bags” to those attending. The society has offered rebates for spaying and neutering since 1975.

Requests for “Be a P.A.L.” materials more than doubled from last year’s campaign. Many of the 1,150 requests came from concerned individuals who took the time to educate neighbors and other community members about reducing the vast numbers of surplus, unwanted animals born every day.

A Lesson in Preparedness from a Shelter that Endured the San Francisco Earthquake
By Rhonda Lucas Donald and Rick Haze, Community Resources Manager, Santa Cruz SPCA

At 5:04 PM last October 17, Rick Haze was leaving one of the Santa Cruz SPCA’s trucks and heading toward the shelter. On the way, the earth roared and began to buckle in waves of motion. The San Francisco Bay Area earthquake, measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale, had struck. Time seemed to crawl during the 15 seconds the quake lasted. After it was over, the rescues, cleanups, and aftershocks—of which there would be thousands—began.

Representative Dean Gallo (left) and Senator Alan Cranston (right), “Prevent A Litter” sponsors, pose with HSUS President John Hoyt.
A cat sits amid the wreckage of an earthquake-damaged building. Many animals were lost and homeless after the disaster.

Of all the shelters in the Bay Area, the Santa Cruz SPCA (2200 7th Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062) was the worst hit, sustaining between eighty and one hundred thousand dollars in damage. Their livestock and administration buildings suffered structural damage. But the animals fared well, relatively speaking. None was injured, though all were terribly frightened.

Once the initial shock was over, the staff began to help the many animals that were lost, trapped, or left homeless by the quake. With over 13,000 homes condemned, thousands more people were forced to stay in emergency shelters, where animals were not allowed. The SPCA aided in the rescue of lost and frightened pets and helped evacuate a badly damaged pet store. Staff worked round-the-clock taking lost pet reports and collecting and distributing pet food. Thousands of animals were placed in foster homes until their owners could reclaim them.

Several months later, the Santa Cruz SPCA is still providing pet food to needy earthquake survivors and still working to repair the damage done to its facility. Numerous other shelters in the area have helped, and donations have come from across the country. However, more monetary help is needed to repair the buildings. Any group wishing to contribute to the Santa Cruz SPCA can do so at the address above.

Handling the Disaster

The disaster was handled admirably by the Santa Cruz staff. Part of their success was due to having a disaster plan in place for such an occurrence. After living through the quake, they have garnered even more knowledge on preparing for such a calamity. The following tips can help agencies prepare for earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, or other emergencies so that they will be better able to help the animals who will need them:

- Arrange temporary housing for animals, including livestock. This might include volunteers who can house animals, commercial kennels and stables, fairgrounds, and farms. This list will be crucial in the event of a disaster.
- Have a list of volunteers and ex-employees who can be called upon to work in case members of your staff are stranded or injured.
- Compile a list of companies, preferably local, that will donate services, food, transportation, etc.
- Keep a list of media contacts to get the word out that you need help. You may have to be quite assertive to succeed in getting animals in the news in the heat of human tragedy.
- Keep the phone numbers of local emergency agencies such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army handy. They usually can’t provide animal care or food themselves, but they must be made aware of your agency’s services.
- Have a working generator, a two-week supply of fresh water, and a stockpile of human food on hand to provide for any people who might be stranded at the shelter.
- Have flashlights, batteries, radio, first-aid supplies, blankets, and other standard disaster preparedness items.
- Check birds immediately. A bird is likely to break a blood feather and bleed to death while frantically flying around in its cage. If you notice that your bird is bleeding from a broken blood
feather, pull out that feather immediately.

* Keep the household calm and quiet. It’s comforting for animals to feel as though things are peaceful. It also helps to have their favorite toys and bedding available; familiar objects and smells are calming.
* Allow animals to cope in their own way. It’s okay if Fifi doesn’t feel like eating for a few days, or if Tasha decides to camp out in the closet a while.
* Don’t coddle. Give your animals lots of attention but try not to act overly concerned. Like children, animals are sensitive to your reactions: if you act as if everything is fine, then they will feel better and be more likely to run and play.

If Your Pet Becomes Lost

Despite your best efforts, your animal may manage to escape during the commotion of the emergency. Don’t give up. Get to work quickly.

* Call your local animal shelter immediately and report your lost pet.
* Post “lost pet” signs around the neighborhood. Be sure to include a photograph of your animal; a description; the animal’s name; your name, address and phone number; and any other pertinent information about your animal.
* Go door to door. Talk to your neighbors personally about your pet. Give them a copy of your lost pet poster and ask that they help spread the word.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and spokeswoman Ana-Alicia are advocating that consumers make “The Beautiful Choice”™ and opt for products that are not tested on animals.

Ana-Alicia, formerly of the television show Falcon Crest, says she joined the campaign to let people know that these products are available and glamorous.

“As an actress, it’s important that I always feel and look my best,” Ana-Alicia says. “As a member of this planet, it’s important that I respect and have compassion for all forms of life. That’s why I use cosmetics and personal care products that have not been tested on animals.” The actress has recorded public service announcements about the campaign for The HSUS.

The campaign enlists manufacturers to “take the pledge” not to test on animals and to sign a formal agreement with The HSUS. In return, The HSUS will allow the manufacturers to use “The Beautiful Choice” logo in their advertising, on their products that are part of the campaign, and on displays of these products. The logo depicts a contemporary drawing of a rabbit, surrounded by the words “Pledged to The Humane Society of the U.S.—Not Animal Tested.” Without endorsing these products, The HSUS is trying to show consumers how to more easily identify these products as ones that are not tested on animals. The campaign will target the natural foods industry, some beauty salon products, and a few premium department store lines and mass retail brands.

Several manufacturers have already indicated that they will “take the pledge.” Product displays for the campaign should appear in stores this fall. We urge Shelter Sense readers to join The HSUS in promoting cosmetics and personal care products not tested on animals. Include articles in your newsletter or local paper informing people that they don’t have to buy products that are cruelly tested on animals, that they can make “The Beautiful Choice,” too. Tell them to look for The HSUS’s “The Beautiful Choice” logo on displays of cosmetics and personal care products. If your local health food or cosmetics store does not carry non-animal-tested products, ask the store manager to contact The HSUS for information on these items and “The Beautiful Choice” campaign.

We also ask that groups encourage their mayors or county administrators to declare October “The Beautiful Choice” Month. To help, we have developed a model proclamation that you can present for their consideration. In addition, we offer a brochure about the campaign and an updated consumer guide to help shoppers locate products not tested on animals. For any of these items or for more information, write “The Beautiful Choice” Campaign, The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

**HSUS Launches “Beautiful Choice” Campaign**

**ITEMS**

1990 HSUS Conference in October

In 1980, the HSUS membership convened in San Francisco under the conference banner, “Animals...It’s Their World Too.”

In 1990, a year commemorating the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day—a year of growing environmental awareness—we have chosen to celebrate and explore the theme once again. The Holiday Inn Golden Gateway in San Francisco will be the setting for this year’s conference, from October 25 through 27.

On Wednesday, October 24, we will offer a pre-conference symposium that Shelter Sense readers will want to attend. “New Perspectives in Animal Overpopulation” will be hosted by Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals, and will feature leading authorities from across the country.

It is important that you register ahead of time for this year’s conference. Write to The HSUS and request a conference information packet, which includes hotel and travel information as well as a conference schedule and registration form. To get your packet, write to HSUS Conference, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

Phyllis Wright socializes with differing last year’s HSUS Conference.

Ana-Alicia promotes the use of products not tested on animals for The HSUS’s “The Beautiful Choice” campaign.

Santa Cruz SPCA employees sort out donated pet food to send to earthquake victims.

Ana-Alicia says she joined the campaign to let people know that these products are available and glamorous.
Pet Portraits Raise Funds, Awareness

As many animal protection societies have learned, pet pictures with Santa are a popular way to raise money. But many groups in the South have found a way to take this idea one step further and offer professional pet portraits that also benefit their organizations.

Michael Joseph and his wife, proprietors of Pet Portraits by Michael, take their photography studio on the road to offer pet portraits to animal lovers. In exchange for some publicity help from local humane societies, they donate 100 percent of their sitting fees to the societies.

Here’s how the arrangement works: local animal protection groups agree to sponsor Pet Portraits by Michael and help publicize the sitting dates by placing an announcement in their newsletter and by hanging posters in veterinary offices, groomers, and pet shops in the area. On the day of the sitting, volunteers help register people as they arrive for their appointments.

In exchange, Pet Portraits secures the location for the shoot, sponsors two newspaper ads, books the appointments, and donates an estimated fee of $9.95 to the sponsoring agency. Pet Portraits makes their profit by selling photo packages of the pictures they take at the sitting.

Animal protection groups that have sponsored Pet Portraits have been very satisfied with the results of the event. In addition to receiving a nice donation check, groups report that the event also fosters agency awareness. When clients show up for their sittings, agency volunteers have materials about their group and its programs available. The photographer also provides the agency with a mailing list of all participants. People who have pet portraits taken are good bets as prospective humane society supporters.

Societies in the South are fortunate to have someone as experienced at photographing pets as Michael. He’s photographed over 10,000 pets and his expertise makes the sittings go smoothly. But other groups could also benefit from similar arrangements with photographers in their areas.

If you would like information on how pet portraits could work for you, or if you would like to discuss a booking, contact Joseph Photographies at 4007 B Country Club Rd., Winston-Salem, NC 27104; (800) 822-1379.

Insurance Hinders Mobile Adoptions

As your shelter ever considered beginning a mobile adoption program in which employees take animals to malls, parks, and other public areas in the hope that more of them are adopted? If the answer is yes, be aware of the increased costs of liability insurance that may accompany mobile adoptions.

When a few board members of the Mississippi Animal Rescue League (MARL) 4395 South Dr., Jackson, MS 39209 decided they wanted to pursue the idea, Director Debra Boswell phoned a call to MARL’s insurance company to find out about liability coverage. Insurance company representatives then contacted Fireman’s Fund, underwriter of MARL’s existing policy, before getting back to Boswell.

“Fireman’s Fund feels that taking these animals into an open environment tends to put stress on them and makes them more aggressive, excited, and possibly uncontrollable,” says the letter from the insurance company to Boswell. “Expanding these animals in an uncontrolled environment would increase the liability exposure a great deal. If the League should decide to go ahead with mobile adoptions, please be advised that Fireman’s Fund will no longer be in a position to provide the liability coverage.”

The letter went on to say that MARL would have to offer another standard market for the coverage and that they would probably have to obtain insurance from a surplus lines broker and pay much higher premiums.

This case serves as a reminder to shelters that already have mobile adoptions in place: they should double-check with their insurance companies to make sure their shelter liability coverage extends to mobile adoptions.

Insurance hassles are yet another reason for shelters to stay away from mobile adoptions. The HSUS believes that the main purpose of any adoption program must be to provide responsible, lifelong homes for animals. Beyond the logistical and emotional problems that occur with taking animals into busy, foreign environments, mobile adoption programs promote “impulse” adoptions, which frequently result in animals being neglected in the backyard or returned to the shelter after a year.

Book Helps “Second-hand” Dogs

Adopters who take new puppies home from the shelter usually have it easy. They’ve been given information from your shelter on responsible pet ownership, basic pet care, and possible training methods. They can practically start from scratch and make that pup grow up to be the pet they always wanted.

But what about the pet owner who adopts the adolescent or adult canine, the dog who came to the shelter after having grown up as a stray or as a “problem animal” in an uncaring household? Such a dog has special needs and offers greater challenges by way of socializing and training.

Shelters can obtain a valuable resource for new owners of these “second-hand” dogs. It’s a paperback book called Second-Hand Dog—How to Turn Yours Into a First-rate Pet. Written by professional dog trainer Carol Lea Benjamin, the book provides a concise, readable approach to overcoming many of the problems common with such dogs.

The book begins with an illustrative story of an abandoned dog named Dimitri. Over a period of several months and with a lot of effort, Dimitri’s new owners managed to change him from a mal­treated, fearful dog into a rehabilitated, trusting companion. Using that example as proof that a second-hand dog can be transformed into a loving pet, Benjamin offers a specific, concrete training and care program for achieving success.

Along the way, she describes how the new pet owner can establish himself as the “pack leader,” eliminate a biting habit, socialize the animal properly, and solve particular or recurring problems.

The illustrated, 96-page book is ideal for distribution or sale to adopters of adolescent or adult dogs. The Humane Society of Carroll County, Maryland, gives a copy of the book free to every adopter. Copies of Second-Hand Dog cost $4.95 each for 1-49 copies, or $2.45 each (half price) for bulk orders of 50 or more copies. Prices include postage. Send orders, with payment, to Howell Book House, 866 3rd Ave., New York, NY 10022.
Books for the Shelter Bookshelf

In addition to Second-Hand Dog, The HSUS recommends these other texts for the shelter bookshelf or for distribution or sale to the public:

Emergency Care for Cats and Dogs--First Aid for Your Pet is a comprehensive handbook for pet owners that provides detailed first-aid procedures for virtually any medical situation that puts your pet's life at risk. Written by Craton Burkholder, DVM, MA, the 174-page paperback covers everything from choking to appetite loss to heat stroke. "The text should be in every home where there is a dog or cat or both," says Dr. Michael J. Fox, HSUS Vice President for Farm Animals and Bioethics.

Care of the Wild, Feathered, and Furred is a handbook for wildlife rehabilitors. With humor, simplicity, and care, Mae Hickman and Maxine Guy explain how to rear orphaned birds and mammals and how to treat common injuries and diseases. Lots of basic information is provided so that even a beginner can feel prepared for many situations. Charts featuring diets for various species are particularly helpful, and chapters on equipment and handling. Bulk copies of Care of the Wild, Feathered, and Furred cost $12.95 plus $2.00 handling. Single copies of Care of the Wild, Feathered, and Furred are $11.95 plus $2.00 handling. Bulk rates for shelters for both books are as follows: 20 percent discount for 10-24 copies; 35 percent discount for 25-49 copies; and 50 percent discount for 50 or more copies. Postage costs vary. Contact Michael Kesend Publishing, Ltd., 1025 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10028; (212) 249-5150.

Executive Announcements

Advertisements are free and limited to job openings in humane organizations or animal control departments. Ads must be submitted on your organization's letterhead no later than five weeks before the month of the issue in which you want your ad to appear. Please limit announcements to 50 words (including address). Sorry, Shelter Sense cannot print "position wanted" ads.

Executive Director--Needed by established humane society in the Shenandoah Valley to head our expanding services. Candidate must have knowledge of shelter management, non-profit administration, public relations, fund-raising, and cruelty investigation. Compensation is negotiable. Send resume, salary requirements to Shannon Hicks, Executive Director Search Committee, 115 Featherbed Ln., Winchester, VA 22601.

Executive Director--Candidate must have knowledge of shelter management and fund-raising, and be able to communicate effectively with staff, volunteers, and media. Salary is negotiable depending on experience, and generous fringe benefits are provided. Send resume to Search Committee, SPCA of St. Petersburg, 9099 100th Ave., Largo, FL 33773.

Shelter Manager--Will direct all functions related to the operation of the humane society: animal care, supervising staff, communicating with the public, conducting educational programs, and maintaining local government relationships. Salary range: $14,000 to $16,000 per year. Send resume, salary expectations to Personnel Committee, Franklin County Humane Society, P.O. Box 184, Frankfort, KY 40601.

Pet Overpopulation. Unwanted cats allowed to roam and mate at will account for millions of the cats who must be euthanized each year because there aren't enough homes for them. Allowing unwanted animals outside is irresponsible and at the root of the terrible pet overpopulation problem.

Keep Cats Indoors!

Cats may love to go outside, but for their own good, keep them in. Although cats are smart, alert, and aloof, they are no match for the many perils that await them outside. That's why the average indoor-only cat lives up to three times longer than the cat who goes outside. Consider these threats:

Disease. Feline leukemia and feline immunodeficiency are only two of the diseases that are passed from cat to cat and, once contracted, result in the eventual death of the pet. And outside cats are even more likely than dogs to come into contact with rabid wild animals.

Parasites. Outdoor cats suffer from fleas, ticks, ear mites, and worms that indoor cats are not generally exposed to.

Poisoning. Poisons can be found in lawn chemicals, bait left out to kill rodents, auto antifreeze, and other sources.

Other Animals. Fights with other cats, dogs, and wildlife often leave cats mauled or injured. And it's not just the Toms. Female cats get into fights, too, because cats are by nature territorial.

Cruel People. Cats are often the victims of burning, starving and feathering, and other tortures. Animal dealers may collect outside cats for sale to research facilities. Outside pets are at the mercy of the people they encounter.

Traps. It is estimated that over 100,000 cats are caught in traps each year. Those who aren't killed may suffer for days before being released and often lose limbs from the injuries.

Traffic. Most outdoor cats are prematurely from auto accidents. It's a myth that cats are "streetwise" about cars. No matter how alert, a cat is no match for a fast-moving vehicle.

(Check for your name and phone number.)

Provided by The Humane Society of the United States.
“It’s Just One Litter…”

By Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals

In the shelter, the question is asked over and over again: you’ll find homes for them, won’t you? And you answer, over and over again, with the facts about pet overpopulation as you take in yet another litter, yet another unwanted animal.

Outside the shelter, all over town, litters of purebreds and mixed-breeds are born daily. The classified ads verify this. So do your statistics.

Pet overpopulation happens one litter, one animal at a time. It is not millions of animals each year but one animal, one litter, turned in, given away, sold, abandoned, or no longer cared for. But the correlation between that one litter and pet overpopulation is rarely understood by the individuals turning in, giving away, selling, or abandoning the animals.

Making this connection, convincing people that their one litter is the reason for pet overpopulation, is one of the most difficult challenges continuing to face all of us who work for the protection of companion animals.

The causes of pet overpopulation have been in place generations before your shelter sees the unwanted animals who result. Your efforts to educate someone who has just turned in an animal are often frustrating. Your challenge, as always, is to reach people before they reach the point of giving up their pet, before they allow their pet to breed, and in many cases, before they make the decision to get a pet in the first place.

You are meeting the challenge. Now in its third year, the “Be a P.A.L.” campaign continues to expand and reach more and more people due to the committed efforts of individuals, animal control agencies, and humane organizations. In this issue of Shelter Sense, we have reported on some of the successful campaigns carried out across the country. These people and the thousands of others who promoted “Prevent A Litter” are to be saluted. They are bridging the gap between just one litter and pet overpopulation.