New Ordinance Requires That All Pets Be Sterilized in '92

By Kim Sturla, Former Executive Director, Peninsula Humane Society

Thirty-four yesterday. Forty today. Tomorrow it will be 45. Last year the total number was 9,112. Ten years ago, the total was 8,423.

Despite our low-cost spay/neuter clinic and our efforts in the educational and legislative arenas, Peninsula Humane Society (PHS, 12 Airport Blvd., San Mateo, CA 94401) is still destroying almost the same number of animals we did ten years ago.

Society-at-large allows the death of unwanted dogs and cats to be an acceptable solution to the overpopulation problem. We, therefore, decided to design an educational campaign that tells the public that...
Of dead animals filled two pages with the heading, “And we couldn’t do it without you. You are looking at the tragic reality of what happens when people refuse to spay and neuter their animals.” Page four explained the problem and told the reader what he or she could do to help solve it.

**Press Packet.** We designed a comprehensive press packet that included a press release, magazine, newspaper insert, description of the overpopulation crisis, information on our low-cost spay/neuter clinic, history of what PHS has done to combat dog and cat overpopulation, our animal statistics from 1965 to 1990, a list of endorsements for our ordinance, and an announcement of our press conference.

**Press Conference.** Our press conference was held three days after our newspaper advertisement appeared. The purpose of the conference was to announce our proposed ordinance. The speakers

**On the Cover: Members of the media film a cat euthanized at the PHS press conference.**

included Supervisor Tom Nolan, author of the ordinance; Superior Court Judge Tom Smith, a prominent community member; PHS Shelter Manager Chris Powell; PHS State Humane Officer Ward Sterling; and myself. After giving our statements and fielding questions, we invited the media to observe and film our euthanasia.

Reporters observed, filmed, and photographed the “accepted” solution that for too long has been politely hidden from the public. All ran the footage on television.

**The Ordinance.** The original ordinance called for a moratorium on all breeding of dogs and cats until San Mateo County reached zero pet population growth. It was soon amended, however.

Passed December 18, 1990, the final ordinance reads that all dogs and cats over the age of nine months must be spayed or neutered unless their guardian has a breeding permit or their veterinarian states that the animal is not physically healthy enough to undergo the surgery. The criteria and fee for the breeding permit will be determined by an advisory committee, which has been established by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. The advisory committee is comprised of breeders, veterinarians, and humane society representatives.

1991—No Enforcement. There will be no enforcement during the first six months of the ordinance. During that time, the advisory committee will meet and determine the fee and other criteria for the breeding permit. The mandatory spay and neuter requirement will not take effect until January 1992.

1992—Fines for Violators. People who do not have their animals spayed or neutered and do not possess a breeding permit will be issued a citation. The penalty is an infraction; the maximum fine for the first offense is $100. All first-time violators, however, will receive a “fix it” ticket. In other words, if someone’s dog or cat has bred or is not spayed or neutered, and the guardian does not have a breeding permit, he or she will be issued a citation. The citation fee, however, will be waived if the animal is sterilized within 30 to 90 days (30 days for males and females who are not pregnant, and 90 days for pregnant females).

This gradual “phase-in” is vital to the success of the ordinance. It is critical that PHS has sufficient time to conduct a massive educational outreach campaign to inform the residents of San Mateo County about this new ordinance and assist them in making arrangements to get their animals altered at an affordable price.

**Enforcement.** Because PHS is the animal control agency for the entire county, it will be responsible for enforcing the ordinance. When people come in to claim their lost animals, they will have to either show proof that their animals are altered or present their breeding permits. PHS will also request cooperation from local newspapers so that when people advertise homes for their litters of kittens and puppies, they will be required to display their breeding permit number.

Additionally, the public will be our eyes and ears. The vast majority of the citations issued for violations of the local animal control laws are initiated by complaints from the public. The dog license list also tells us which guardians have their dogs spayed or neutered. We will, of course, begin with this group.

One last point should be made with respect to enforcement: Another positive aspect of the ordinance is that the importance of establishing a cat licensing program has finally gained acceptance. Once this program is in place, we will be able to monitor the feline population more accurately.

**The Public’s Reaction.** The support our campaign received and continues to receive is tremendous. Our newspaper advertisement generated some angry phone calls, but we had many more people—those who...
Regulating the breeding of pets is not an extreme solution to overpopulation. Killing them is.

understood the message we sent—who expressed gratitude for our courage.

After the euthanasia footage ran on local and national television, we were inundated with letters and phone calls. Again, the supportive phone letters far outnumbered those from people offended by the dramatic visuals.

It was reassuring that many of those who originally contacted us to voice their opposition to the newspaper advertisement and euthanasia demonstrated quickly came around and ended up supporting our ordinance.

The ordinance was less controversial. We certainly heard loud opposition from the dog breeders, the American Kennel Club, and some veterinarians. But the reaction and action from our membership and the general public was very supportive.

We hope our efforts will be the first of many and that similar pieces of legislation will surface all over the country. Regulating the breeding of cats and dogs is not an extreme solution to overpopulation. Killing them is.

To obtain a copy of the San Mateo ordinance, as well as a copy of a ten-point strategy to get such an ordinance passed, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request to Pet Overpopulation Action Network, Peninsula Humane Society, 12 Airport Blvd., San Mateo, CA 94401.

Mandatory Sterilization: Why It’s Essential That Every Adopted Animal Be Sterilized

I’m not a mathematician, but if you are satisfied that 90 out of 100 adopted animals are being sterilized, then you are saying that you are pleased with yourself that 10 of those animals are not sterilized.” That statement came from Diane Allevato, executive director of the Marin Humane Society, during her speech at last year’s HSUS Preconference Symposium (see sidebar).

Animal sheltering and control professionals have heard lines like that before. In reality, though, could 10 unsterilized animals out of every 100 placed really make a difference in terms of the numbers of animals that come into the shelter?

In her editor’s notes to Overpopulation of Cats and Dogs, Marjorie Anchel, Ph.D., president emeritus of the New York State Humane Association (NYSHA), demonstrates why the answer to that question is an emphatic “yes”:

“Shelters strive for a high adoption rate,” writes Anchel, “in part because it sounds good in fund-raising, and partly because they sincerely wish to give as many animals as possible a good life. Unfortunately, almost every adopted animal who is not sterilized increases the number of strays.”

Anchel then presents NYSHA’s concept of the “effective adoption rate,” designed to provide a theoretical measure of the number of surplus animals who result from an adoption policy that fails to ensure 100 percent sterilization of adopted pets.

“Effective adoptions” are defined as the number of adoptions, minus the number of unsterilized animals, minus the number of their potential offspring within the next two years. The resulting figure is the number of potentially unwanted animals who could be produced within two years from all unsterilized, adopted animals.

How It Can Be Done

I n 1990, Marin Humane Society (MHS, 171 Bel Mar Key’s Blvd., Novato, CA 94949) first achieved 100 percent sterilization of pets adopted from the shelter.

So said Executive Director Diane Allevato at the 1990 HSUS Preconference Symposium held October 24, 1990, in San Francisco, where she presented her society’s methods for achieving that goal. Shelters, Allevato emphasized, must “guarantee that every single one of the animals adopted from the shelter is sterilized. Every one.”

Allevato first stressed the importance of working with a contract, which she termed “an enforceable promise.” The sterilization contract should be distinct from the adoption contract, should be drafted by legal counsel, and should look impressive. A shelter should also get some legislative support for its contract; Marin County, for example, makes violation of the contract a misdemeanor.

The shelter’s adoption program itself is also integral to making enforcement workable. The program should be able to screen out those adopters who will “probably” avoid getting their animal sterilized; adopters should be people who will be likely to honor the contract. Adoption counselors should also educate the new owner about the contract’s importance and seriousness at the time they sign it.

The final and most essential key to achieving 100 percent compliance, according to Allevato, is enthusiastic follow-up. The shelter must remind the adopter—whether by card, letter, or phone call—that their surgery is due, and follow that up within 30 days.

Then, if the adopter fails to have the surgery done, the shelter must physically repossess the animal. A provision in MHS’s sterilization contract reads: “I give my permission to (an) agent of the humane society to remove the animal from my premises if the animal is not sterilized, and entry shall not constitute a trespass upon the premises occupied.”

MHS takes the animal, has him or her sterilized, and then tells the owner when the pet can be picked up. With the society’s deposit program, the cost is already taken care of.
Just One Litter . . .

By Kate Rindy and Rhonda Lucas Donald
Reprinted from the Fall 1990 JSUCS News

Cindy forgot that the apartment repairman was coming in to fix her sliding glass door that day. She forgot to confine her seven-month-old kitten in the bedroom. When she got home from work, there was Kali, waiting for her outside under a pine tree. “Thank goodness you’re OK,” she sighed. A week or so later, the kitten is putting on weight. It is pregnant. What a disappointment, Cindy thinks. She was waiting for Kali to go through one heat cycle before she had her spayed—she’d always heard that was best. Cindy doesn’t worry about finding homes for the kittens. She will just take them into the clothing store where she works and put them in the window.

Cats have surpassed dogs as the most popular pets in the United States, with 30.6 million households owning cats. As a result of this elevated status, the number of cats entering animal shelters has also dramatically increased. Given the rate at which cats reproduce, it becomes clear why there are so many homeless cats. For example, if Kali were allowed to breed at will, she could be the source of 420,000 cats in only seven years. But 420,000 is not the root of the overpopulation problem. Kali’s one litter is.

The kittens are a real success. All 4 find good homes. Cindy decides to get her cat spayed, but she’s in no hurry. After all, Kali never goes out. Six months later, Kali’s kittens are all in homes and have matured. The striped female who went to the mother and two children is no longer kitten-crazy. She says she doesn’t pay as much attention to her anymore. She is left outside and out of the way most of the time. When she delivers 5 kittens, the family puts a free-kitten ad in the paper. Luckily, a man is interested in all 5. He wants to use them as barn cats on his property. In reality, he sells the kittens to a local research facility. The family still doesn’t get rid of the mother cat spayed.

Every day, the newspapers are filled with “free pet” ads. Many of the people seeking to give away litters of kittens and puppies find success—they find “good” homes for each of the litter. They think the book is closed once the last puppy or kitten leaves with his or her new owner, that the problem is solved. But it isn’t.

Animal dealers use free pet ads to obtain animals to sell for laboratory research or product testing. Even if the animals don’t fall into the hands of researchers, they may not be safe. In an in DeKalb County, Georgia, a man was convicted of torturing and killing 77 cats. He admitted to torturing the felines and later photographing their remains. He kept detailed records of each cat’s acquisition, appearance, behavior, and treatment in a log he dubbed “This Cat Just Had To Die.” This man obtained cats through newspaper ads for free kittens.

The family that took the black male kitten say he’s a great cat. They let him out periodically, especially since it’s summer. Now that the cat is eight months old and sexually active, he spends a great deal of time roaming the neighborhood for receptive females. One day his excursions take him across a highway where a car strikes him. He is left to die near the median. The family discovers their dead pet, and the parents tell their crying children that these things happen and that they’ll get another cat. In his short life, this cat has already fathered 8 litters—50 kittens.

The young woman who took the black female kitten lives in a no-pets apartment. When her landlord discovers the cat, he orders her to get rid of it or be evicted. Unable to move and unable to find anyone to take a mostly-grown cat, she takes the animal to the outskirts of town and abandons the cat. In the year and a half before this cat dies of distemper, she has 4 litters of feral kittens.

For the most part, unless the “effective adoption rate” is a positive figure, pet overpopulation is the result of a deliberate human action.

“Free-to-good-home” pets can end up as laboratory research subjects just like these cats.

The young man who adopted the striped female has her spayed when she turns six months old and keeps her indoors always. She will be a healthy, wonderful companion for him for 16 years.

If we calculate the number of kittens that Cindy’s cat produces, we find that just 15 months after Kali first became pregnant, 83 kittens have been born. Cindy found “good” homes for Kali’s first 4 kittens, but she didn’t consider the other 79 plus. The sad fact is, every litter, planned or accidental, causes pet overpopulation. The cycle must stop before it starts—before that one litter.

Jack and Susie bought a male Akita puppy from a large pet store chain. Of course, he came complete with AKC papers registering him as a purebred. As “Bear” grows and matures sexually, Susie can barely handle the 100-pound dog. He is erratic, seems preoccupied, and won’t listen to her when she’s outside. She has lost control of him six times already, and he ran loose for several hours each time before coming home.

The dog trainer Jack takes Bear to advises Jack that the dog should be neutered. Neutering would make Bear manageable and reduce his inclination to run off. Additionally, the trainer warns, neutering will help prevent Bear from becoming aggressive and eventually even uncontrollable.

But Jack wants to use Bear as a stud. He paid $500 for Bear, not to mention the trips to the vet for shots, checkups, and even vitamins. Surely, the puppies would bring in a lot of money. Somehow, though, he never arranges to stud the dog. All the while, Bear is getting more difficult to handle.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) reports that they have 36 million purebred dogs registered in their studbook. In 1989 alone, AKC registered more than 1 million dogs and 550,300 litters.
of people who see animals as disposable commodities. As in Jack’s case, many people who enter shelters each year are there because they believe that breeding their animal would be profitable. After all, they paid profit margin is usually slim or nonexistent.

Finding “good” homes for litters does not guarantee that they won’t breed or be mistreated. Surely there is a demand for these purebred dogs. But purebred pets are not immune to the whims of individual pet owners. Pet overpopulation is not a new issue to most pet owners. Since the 1980s, groups such as The Humane Society have worked to inform people of the problem of too many pets and not enough homes and to encourage education, sterilization, and legislation to protect animals.

But “pet overpopulation” may seem abstract to the average person who just has one litter on his or her hands. One, 2, or 4 animals does not seem like an insurmountable problem. But with a population already saturated with pets and 10 or 20 people bringing litters into each animal shelter daily, the picture becomes clearer.

Pet overpopulation comes from many sources. It comes from people who breed animals intentionally for profit or hobby. While it is true that there will always be a market for purebred animals, that market should be filled by conscientious breeders who are committed to improving their animals’ breed in terms of genetics, behavior, and temperament, as well as proper color, size, and shape. Pet overpopulation comes from puppy mills, those cruel, often horrendous breeding farms that supply pet-store animals. Pet overpopulation comes from animal owners who abandon and left to fend for themselves, reproducing litter after litter. Pet overpopulation comes from animal shelters that do not ensure that the pets they adopt out are spayed or neutered. These shelters are revolving doors for pets and their offspring.

Pet overpopulation, or at least attitudes that perpetuate the problem, even comes from commercial and ads for pet food. Happy children romp with puppies and kittens, all in an effort to push cat and dog food. These companies are very concerned about keeping pets healthy through good nutrition, but also do their part to foster pet overpopulation and assure more sales.

But primarily, pet overpopulation comes from pet owners who allow their unaltered pets outside, where they do breed. It comes from people who allow their pets to have “just one litter,” for whatever reason, or from pet owners who realize that “Sam” is really “Samantha” after she delivers kittens.

Many of these people would appear to be model pet owners. They provide veterinary care for their animals, give them special toys, fancy collars, and gourmet pet food. They spend a lot of money on their pets—sales of pet products are expected to exceed $8 billion dollars this year. But when they allow their animals to breed, even if it is an accident, they are irresponsible and at the root of the pet overpopulation problem.

There are so many sources of pet overpopulation. But there are also many solutions. For over 20 years, the HSUS has worked to expose the cruelties of pet overpopulation and the ways to prevent this unnecessary suffering. In the last three years, our “Be a P.A.L.—Prevent A Litter” Campaign has been implemented by thousands of individuals and groups across the country.

Now, more than ever before, veterinarians in increasing numbers are educating their clients about the importance and advantages of having their pets spayed or neutered. Cooperative programs by veterinarians, humane groups, and individuals offer reduced-fee surgeries for animals whose owners can’t afford the regular price.

Legislation that protects animals by requiring responsible pet ownership is in place in many parts of the country. Mandatory sterilization of shelter animals, differential licensing, and ordinances regulating the breeding of animals all contribute to responsible pet ownership.

Most importantly, the solutions lie in the hands of individual pet owners. Pet overpopulation happens one litter, one animal at a time. It is not the millions of surplus animals born 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 their animals.

Our challenge is to reach people before they reach the point of giving up their pet, before they allow their pets to breed, and in many cases, before they make the decision to get a pet in the first place. Talk to your neighbor, your city councilpersons, your local media. One litter, one animal at a time, we can make a difference.

Reprints of this article are available for $0.30 each or at bulk rates of 50/$6.50, 100/$10.00, 500/$30.00. Order from The HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington DC 20037.

Survey Provides Insight On Humane Society Salaries, Benefits

By Geoffrey L. Handy

he Humane Society & SPCA of Seattle/King County (12312 S.E. Eastgate Way, Bellevue, WA 98005) recently undertook an interesting venture. They sent a survey questionnaire to 101 animal welfare organizations across the United States. Intended to help the society evaluate its own structure, salaries, and benefits, the survey sought to find out what other humane societies were doing in these areas.

According to Executive Director Nancy Buckingham McNeney, the survey “was designed to provide only fundamental information for evalu-
Cats Get Equal Time in Class

When it comes to animal training classes, cats are often overlooked. Many animal protection groups offer dog obedience classes, but few have programs designed for cat owners and their felines. But with the number of pet cats having surpassed the number of dogs, more and more people need help training and caring for their cats. Education to help people raise and care for well-adjusted and well-behaved cats can prevent cat surrenders and increase the number of responsible cat owners.

The Cat Care Society (5985 W. 11th Ave., Lakewood, CO 80214) is working to fill this need in their area. As part of their humane education program, they offer a low-cost cat class for adults each month. The class covers introducing a new cat to the family, social training, aggressive behavior, litter box training, grooming, leash training, diseases, and nutrition, among other things. Designed to give common-sense solutions to problems and to provide cat owners with resource materials, the cat class is offered in locations throughout the Denver area.

The Cat Care Society will provide those interested with an outline of the material covered in the cat class. To obtain a copy, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to them at the address above.

NAHEE Wins Award

The National Association for Humane and Environmental Education (NAHEE), a division of The HSUS, has won a 1990 Award of Merit from the Partnerships in Education Journal, a national publication that explores the workings and impact of school-business partnerships.

“We are delighted to win an award of this magnitude,” says Patty Finch, NAHEE Executive Director and HSUS Vice President for Youth Education. “Fostering kindness in children is crucial to decreasing violence in today’s society. Such recognition will help us spread the word that kind children become kind adults.”

The award recognizes NAHEE’s Adopt-A-Teacher Program, in which businesses and humane societies supply the NAHEE newspaper KIND News and other humane/environmental education materials to elementary school students. Current participants include Security Pacific Bank, in cooperation with the Arizona Humane Society; The General Federation of Women’s Clubs; IOLAB, in cooperation with Pomona Valley Humane Society and SPCA; Orlando Metal Recycling and The Humane Society of North Florida.

NAHEE reaches more than 336,000 children and 11,000 teachers nationwide. For more information about NAHEE’s humane education programs, contact them at 67 Salem Rd., East Had- dam, CT 06423.

Signs Direct Drivers to Adopt Pets

In her article, "June is Adopt a Cat Month," November’s "short, snappy messages" promoting adoptions to the four highways she signs to direct motorists to Covington, Louisiana, are greeted by eye-catching messages attached to the highway signs directing people to the St. Tammany Humane Society (P.O. Box 197, Covington, LA 70434). In June, the messages say, “June is Adopt a Cat Month.” October’s message reminds motorists of Adopt a Dog Month.

Janice Breaux, publicity director for the society, came up with the idea to add “short, snappy phrases” promoting adoptions to the four highways. She approached state highway officials, who welcomed her idea and helped to design the signs. They are greeted by eye-catching messages along the highways: "Adopt a Dog Month," "June is Adopt a Cat Month," "October is Adopt a Dog Month," and "June is Adopt a Cat Month."

The idea has been so successful that the society has decided to continue the program year-round. Now, motorists are greeted by eye-catching messages along the highways: "Adopt a Dog Month," "June is Adopt a Cat Month," October’s message reminds motorists of Adopt a Dog Month.

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just five minutes to push a bolt through the sign
ejectivity, openness, currentness, and remind

The signs are a white plastic/paper blend, intended for outdoor use. They are expected to last
several years if used only for 30-day periods each

people to visit our shelter when searching for a

The conference registration fee is $60, which in­
clude an awards banquet on Saturday. To obtain
rooms at the hotel as early as possible.

The conference room rate is $75 per night,

The conference will include presentations on a
different theme, “Animals... It’s Their World Too.”

animal protection conference to be held April
25, 26, and 27, 1991, at the Headquarters Plaza
Hotel in Morristown, New Jersey. This regional
conference, jointly sponsored by The HSUS Mid­
Atlantic (MARO) and New England (NERO) Re­

tected to the term ‘AIDS,'” says Stephen Krit­
sick, DVM, HSUS staff veterinarian, “it is not in

Correct Terminology Important

feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) is com­
monly referred to as feline AIDS. As reported
in the December 1988/January 1989 issue of
Shelter Sense, this disease in not the same as
human AIDS and cannot be transmitted to people.
But because FIV affects cats in much the same
way AIDS affects people, veterinarians and others
have informally called FIV feline AIDS.

We advise groups and individuals dedicated to
protecting animals to refer to this disease as FIV
instead of feline AIDS. “Because of the fears at­
tached to the term ‘AIDS,’” says Stephen Krit­
sick, DVM, HSUS staff veterinarian, “it is not in
the best interest of cats or people to call the
disease feline AIDS.” The term evokes misplaced
concern and could cause people to shun or aban­
don cats or otherwise cruelly treat them.

Company Sells Cruelty-free Products

If you are concerned about the toxic effects of
pesticidal flea-control products or wish to find
pet shampoos that aren't tested on animals, Blue
Ribbons Pet Care Products has just what you're
looking for. Blue Ribbons sells pet-care products
that are all natural, contain no animal by­
products, and are not tested on animals.

They offer dips, collars, and combs to safely con­
trol fleas, shampoos to bathe pets and soothe skin
conditions, even bathing collars to keep soap out
of pets’ eyes during bathing. They also sell pet

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trol fleas, shampoos to bathe pets and soothe skin
conditions, even bathing collars to keep soap out
of pets’ eyes during bathing. They also sell pet
toys, healthy treats, and gifts for pet owners.

Although prices in the Blue Ribbons catalog are

more information about Blue Ribbons and to
obtain a free catalog, please contact Blue Ribbons,
2475 Bellmore Ave., Bellmore, NY 11710; (516)
785-0694.

SHELTER SENSE/MARCH 1991
Book Discusses Pet Overpopulation

new compendium of information, views, and solutions to pet overpopulation should be added to the bookshelf of any animal shelter or humane society.

Overpopulation of Cats and Dogs: Causes, Effects, and Prevention is a printed record of the proceedings of a major conference on pet overpopulation sponsored by the New York State Humane Association (NYSHA, P.O. Box 284, New Paltz, NY 12561). Held in September 1987 in New York City, the two-day event featured many prominent speakers from the fields of animal sheltering and control, veterinary medicine, education, law, and animal rights.

Edited by Marjorie An- chel, Ph.D., president emeritus of NYSHA, the text includes thought-provoking speeches and discussions on subjects that run the gamut from early spay/neuter to pound seizure. A variety of enlightening perspectives and ideas on the plight of unwanted animals are presented, as are practical solutions that have worked before or may work in the future. Presentations include:

- How animal control is best handled in rural, urban, and metropolitan areas.
- A discussion on who is responsible for pet overpopulation.
- Euthanasia: the agents used, public perception, and the stress it places on technicians.
- What part veterinarians have played and could play in limiting pet overpopulation.
- An exploration of attitudes toward neutering and euthanasia.
- A discussion of the responsibilities of animal shelters in combatting this tragedy.

Overpopulation of Cats and Dogs, with a foreword by HSUS Vice President for Companion Animals Phyllis Wright, includes speaker presentations as well as question and answer sessions. One appendix features recent updates on some conference speeches, while another provides insightful editorial comments from Anchel.

This valuable educational reference should be within arm’s reach of any individual who faces the consequences of uncontrolled breeding of dogs and cats. The text can also enlighten legislators, educators, veterinarians, and members of the general public.

To order the hardbound, 260-page book, send $25 per copy to Fordham University Press, P.O. Box 6525, Ithaca, NY 14850. Add $2 for shipping and handling for the first copy, and 50 cents for each additional copy.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR—For full-service humane society located near the Smoky Mountains and handling 15,000 animals annually. Will assist in planning/implementing capital campaign for new shelter. Desired skills include public relations, fundraising, education, budgeting, contract negotiation. College degree and three years administrative experience required. Salary DOE. Send resume, three references to Knox County Humane Society, P.O. Box 1346, Knoxville, TN 37901–1346.

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER—For animal control department contracted out to humane society. Requires high school diploma, animal control experience, and humane commitment. Send resume, salary requirements to Perry Poe, Executive Director, Douglas County Humane Society/Animal Control, 1755 Humane Society Blvd., Douglasville, GA 30134.
New Ways to Solve Old Problems

By Phyllis Wright, HSUS Vice President, Companion Animals

Since 1970, The HSUS has promoted the LES program—Legislation, Education, and Sterilization—designed to combat pet overpopulation. Legislative initiatives and local animal ordinances mandating that all animals adopted from shelters be neutered were new ideas in the '70s.

Now in the 1990s, the Peninsula Humane Society (PHS, 12 Airport Blvd., San Mateo, CA 94401) has taken a giant step by getting an ordinance passed that makes pet owners responsible for getting their pets neutered unless they have a breeder's permit from San Mateo County.

This is a new approach to an old problem and—with careful consideration and hard work—one that can be effective in other areas.

Begin by making sure that all pets adopted from your shelter are neutered. You should not be part of the problem by adding surplus puppies and kittens to the community. Allowing even one unaltered animal to leave your shelter can lead to generations of unwanted and homeless pets.

Do your homework and talk with community members about the pet overpopulation problem. Get a copy of San Mateo's ordinance for your own reference (available from PHS). Read carefully this month's cover article by Kim Sturla. And read the article from the New York State Humane Association on why it's so important that every single adopted animal be sterilized, as well as the sidebar that describes how the Marin Humane Society is accomplishing that.

Once you’re familiar with what can be done, make plans and set goals you can obtain. And remember to be creative in working within your community. What works in one place may not work for you. Know the community and how to best succeed in enacting spay/neuter legislation in your area.

Once a law is passed, the key to its success lies in educating the public about the law and how to comply. PHS integrated a solid and ongoing education program in conjunction with the phasing-in of their ordinance, and any similar laws in other areas will need the same dedication.

Finally, of course, is sterilization. The San Mateo ordinance requires animals to be sterilized, but to make this easier for people, PHS expanded the services of their spay/neuter clinic and has found ways to offer affordable surgeries to pet owners. Your group doesn’t have to perform the surgeries, just arrange for them with cooperating veterinarians and clinics.

The LES program is still the best way to combat pet overpopulation. The Peninsula Humane Society deserves hearty congratulations for taking bold steps to implement these ideas.