



Summer 2004

House Harbors 39 Cats in Squalor — Humane Society to the Rescue!

This spring the Humane Society of Utah rescued 19 cats from a Murray home where 39 of the animals had evidently been kept by a “hoarder,” a person who loves animals and wants to help homeless cats and dogs, but who inadvertently places them in grave danger by keeping large numbers of them in cramped, crowded, squalid conditions.

“The intentions of these people are certainly humane,” says HSU Executive Director Gene Baierschmidt, “but the great irony lies in how much suffering and even death they create for the animals they’re attempting to save when they try to make a residential home function as a shelter.”



Unfortunately, Love Is *NOT* All You Need

He specifically emphasizes the tremendous costs involved in providing even a relatively small number of animals with adequate medical care, quality food, and enough space and sanitation. “Even at the Humane Society’s shelter, which is specifically designed, staffed, and equipped to deal with many animals at once, we’re well aware of the enormity of work, time, and expense involved in maintaining the animals’ welfare. For example, we immediately provide every incoming animal with preventive medications, and clean and dis-



infect each individual cage or kennel many times a day. We have in-house licensed veterinarians who check the shelter population daily and treat problems as soon as they appear. We have plenty of room to store large quantities of clean cat litter, newspapers, towels, bleach, and the many other basic materials that are necessary for keeping our animals healthy. Our extensive volunteer crew spends a great deal of time interacting with the animals individually in order to maintain these highly sociable creatures’ psychological well-being. How can one person living in a trailer, or even a five-room home, possibly meet the needs of even a single animal when scores of them are involved?”

The hoarding phenomenon is not a small one, according to Mr. Baierschmidt, who cites the case of a home in south Salt Lake that was condemned only a few days before because of an enormous number of cats living there. The house was filled with animal waste, and many of the cats were in poor health.

Want to Make a Difference?

The Murray home was also about to be shut down by the Board of Health. The owners were told that they could keep two cats, the Humane Society took 19, and the remaining 18 were placed in various other homes or went to Murray City Animal Control, who had initially been referred to the home by an anonymous tip.

The animals that were taken by the Humane Society were put up for adoption as soon as they were given complete medical examinations and spayed or neutered. Several of them were “special-needs” animals because of health problems, and foster parents took care of them until they were ready for adoption. So far several of these cats have found wonderful new *uncrowded* homes, and there are still several of them in our Cat Colony in the main lobby of the shelter, located at 4242 South 300 West, who need someone to call their own. Interested? Drop by and visit them. This could be your chance to be a hero!



These are some of the cats who were seized from a “hoarder’s” home and rehabilitated by the Humane Society. Several have already been placed in good new homes, and several are still waiting for another chance at a good new life. They can be visited in “paw-son” at the Cat Colony located in the HSU main lobby.



Over 30,000 members and contributors strong.

Magazine of the
Humane Society of Utah
4242 South 300 West
P.O. Box 573659
Murray, Utah 84157
www.utahhumane.org

Animal Cruelty Petition Update

A little more than a year ago, the Humane Society of Utah and the other member groups of the coalition "Voices against Violence" launched a massive petition-signing campaign to take advantage of a narrow window of opportunity that would have allowed us to put an initiative on the ballot allowing citizens to vote on the issue of stronger penalties for extreme acts of cruelty to animals. It was crucial that we obtain over 76,000 signatures from registered Utah voters before June 2004, because the Utah Supreme Court had only recently struck down a law that had made it virtually impossible for any environmental or animal-protection groups to place initiative referenda before the voting public. With that law off the books, we had — for the first time in many years — a chance to let the people themselves express their opinions about how seriously they viewed sadistic brutality toward animals, instead of letting all decisions be made by a handful of rural legislators who know next to nothing about issues involving animal cruelty and care even less.

You responded beautifully, accumulating an enormous number of signatures for us; we fully expected to meet our quota by the beginning of the summer. Past experience, however, should have taught us that the powerful "Cowboy Caucus" has no intention of releasing its stranglehold on the state. To our intense shock and indignation, a decision rendered by the Utah Supreme Court in late April of 2004 completely derailed the possibility of seeing our proposed initiative laid before Utah's voters, and we were forced to terminate the petition-gathering campaign. Briefly, this is what happened:

In August of 2002, the Court had overturned the law which required any group wishing to place an initiative on the ballot to obtain signatures in almost every urban *and* rural county in the state. The Humane Society, and nine other groups, perceived that decision as a victory for citizens' rights, since it would bypass the Legislature and put matters of public concern in the hands of the people — not the politicians. We therefore began our petition drive at that critical time, taking advantage of the new chance that had been opened up to us: Instead of having to canvass the entire state trying to obtain the necessary number of signatures from every county — a complicated, costly process that virtually guaranteed failure for almost any group trying to get an initiative proposition placed on the ballot — we could gather the total number of signatures from any place in Utah, including the populous, sophisticated, and urbanized Wasatch Front.

This is a Democracy?

The Utah State Legislature was, pre-



dictably, highly resentful of that decision, which had suddenly made citizen initiatives a realistic possibility. In the 2003 session, therefore, they devised a new law which utilized senate districts, rather than counties, as the regulating factor determining where petition signatures must be obtained — which is, of course, almost exactly the same situation as before.

In addition, the Legislature now requires that *seven* public meetings be held throughout the state before an initiative petition can be circulated, and also imposes a one-year limit on obtaining the required number of signatures. All of the groups who had been gathering petition signatures for various initiatives, including the Humane Society, realized that these mandates would be impossible to meet and that, if they were upheld, the citizen-initiative process in Utah was dead. Accordingly, these groups filed a lawsuit challenging the new law, claiming that it could not apply to those initiatives already in progress and that it was unconstitutional because of the impossible burden it placed on initiative-sponsoring groups.

Then came the final blow: While this lawsuit was in progress, the composition of the Utah Supreme Court was changed when two of the authors of the August 2002 opinion, which favored initiative petitions, retired. The new Court did not view the issue as its predecessors had. On April 20, 2004, the Court issued a unanimous opinion which upheld the new law passed by the 2003 Legislature and rejected all of the challenges of the initiative groups. In effect, this ruling holds that all of the restrictions placed on petitioning groups by the Legislature were "reasonable" (!) and must be met in order to place an initiative on the ballot, and that the 2003 law applies to all of the petitioning groups regardless of when they filed their initiatives. It is extremely unlikely that either the Humane Society of Utah or any of the nine other affected organizations will be able to meet these burdensome rules now or in the foreseeable future.

Never Give Up!

Although the petition signatures that so many people worked so hard to obtain cannot now be used to put the issue of intensifying the penalty for cruelty to animals on this November's ballot, they *can* be used to show the Legislature the degree of public concern and interest in this issue that exists. We're therefore asking you to send us all your petitions, whatever their degree of completion, as soon as possible so that we can use them in our *new* campaign — to find legislative sponsors to present a felony-level animal cruelty bill in the 2005 session of the Legislature.

We know how diligently you've worked for the animals, and we assure you that your efforts will not have been in vain. We will organize a strong, united effort to get the law

amended in 2005, and will utilize all forms of the media, the Internet, and concerned individuals to achieve this goal.

Please remember that while we may have lost a battle, the war is far from over. We will never, never rest until Utah's cruelty laws provide adequate means for us to protect our fellow creatures from the acts of ignorant and depraved humans. This is the 21st century, forty-one states already have felony animal-cruelty laws in place, and the Cowboy Caucus can't ignore the civilized world forever.



We need your e-mail addresses so we can keep you informed about important animal issues like legislation! Please go to our website at www.utahhumane.org to register. From the animals, thanks!

Humane Society of Utah

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Services Provided:

- Adoption of animals to qualified homes
- Low-cost sterilization surgeries
- Receiving of unwanted animals
- Preventive immunizations
- Investigation of animal abuse and neglect

For further information on services provided by HSU, call 261-2919 during business hours.

Remember HSU is *your* shelter. We are here to help the animals of Utah. Please help maintain and support our programs with your contributions.

Incorporated 1961
4242 South 300 West
Salt Lake City, UT 84107-1415
Telephone: (801) 261-2919
Fax: (801) 261-9577
www.utahhumane.org

Smith's Pet Club

Smith's first Pet Club contribution in the amount of \$7,000 was recently awarded to the Humane Society of Utah. The Pet Club unleashes support for Utah's animals with every pet product purchased by users of Smith's Fresh Values card. For every \$100 spent on pet supplies, the Pet Club customer receives a certificate for \$9 off the next purchase, and \$1 is donated to the Humane Society. To make it even easier, shoppers' Pet Club purchases are totaled at the bottom of the receipt.

Smith's offers the benefits of the Pet Club to humane societies throughout the company's seven states of operation. You can help a lot of animals - your own and those at HSU - by using your Fresh Values card every time you do your shopping for pet food and supplies at Smith's.

From all of us to everyone at Smith's, thank you for this gr-r-r-reat program! We think it's purr-fectly wonderful.



Rainbow Bridge

Just this side of Heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge. When an animal dies who has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water, and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable.

All the animals who had been ill or old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing: each one misses someone very special who had to be left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; his eager body begins to quiver. All at once he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster.

You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together. . . .

Author unknown



Two "Golden" Angels Remembered



Shadow (left) and Amber Dewey passed away within four months of each other. Loving memories of both of them will live on forever in their family's adoring hearts.

One of the Humane Society's most devoted and long-time friends, Mrs. Robbi R. Dewey, notified us late last year of the passing of the family's beloved golden retriever, Shadow, saying, "Shadow died on October 29, 2003, after a very, very short battle with cancer. Our house is still very empty, not to mention our hearts. He was a companion and friend — gentle, giving, full of love, always wanting to please. We called him our 'gentle giant!' His memory and spirit live on forever. Shadow was born on November 28, 1995 and died just one month shy of his eighth birthday. We love and miss him so much! We pray that he is in a place free from pain, forever free to play."

Then in April we received another saddening message from Mrs. Dewey: "In four months we have lost both of our golden retrievers. We told you about Shadow's death in October — then in February our two-year-old golden, Amber, died of a brain hemorrhage. Needless to say, this has been a very, very tough time for our family. Both Shadow and Amber will remain in our hearts forever."

As we do with all people who have had to say good-bye to beloved animal companions, the Humane Society extends its deep and sincere sympathy to the Dewey family. We hope they will take comfort in remembering how much love these dogs both gave and received while they were with their people. Shadow and Amber will be waiting for them at Rainbow Bridge.

“Where Can I Call You, Baby?”

Every time we adopt another animal from our shelter, one of the first things we stress is the importance of getting proper identification for the new family member.

“According to a 1997 study of over 1,000 animal facilities nationwide, approximately one million dogs and over half a million cats were taken in as strays during that one year,” says HSU Executive Director Gene Baierschmidt, “and only 16% of the dogs and 2% of the cats were returned to their owners. Statistics like these are tragic, and all the more so because they could so easily be changed for the better.”

In hopes of helping to improve the reunion rate for pets and their people — and they *can* become separated no matter how conscientious pet guardians are — the Humane Society sponsored its first official Tag Day in April to encourage adequate ID provisions for companion animals. Emphasis was

placed on having at least *two* forms of identification on each pet. “We encourage microchipping as the virtually foolproof way to get errant animals back home,” said Mr. Baierschmidt. “But because ID tags are usually the first thing people look for on a stray dog or cat, the Humane Society has also started engraving and selling its own metal tags right on the premises. Now each adopted animal can go straight home with a personalized tag listing all his or her vital information.”

Quick, Classy, Bargain-Priced

The tags come in a dozen different varieties of colors and shapes, including bones, hearts, and circles, and the cost, including custom engraving, is only \$5 each for a colored tag and \$6 for a chrome finish. They are also available for sale to the general public, whether the animal was adopted here or not.

“Companion animals are a part of the family,” says Gene Baierschmidt, “and protecting them from loss and harm is as important as maintaining proper safeguards for any other family member. We urge anyone who assumes responsibility for a companion animal to ensure that both a chip implant and an up-to-date tag are in place.”

The Humane Society is now offering on-site personalized, two-sided engraving on pet identification tags. The cost is only \$5 for a colored metal tag or \$6 for a chrome finish. Tags are available for both adoptees and the general public.



**HUMANE
SOCIETY
OF UTAH**

4242 South 300 West
P.O. Box 573659
Murray, Utah 84157
www.utahhumane.org

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