



Winter 2005

Humane Society Has Record Month and Year In 2004

By Gene Baierschmidt, HSU Executive Director

I'm pleased to report that 2004 was one of the best years for the Humane Society of Utah in the organization's 44-year history in every regard. For example, in December we adopted 696 dogs, cats, and miscellaneous pets into good new homes. This figure is 15% more than were adopted during the same month in 2003, and 12% more than the 622 animals adopted in the previous record-breaking month of August 2002. Overall, last year HSU placed a total of 6,232 animals! I would attribute the successes in our adoptions to some of the changes we've made over the past few years, including a well-coordinated foster program, outreach adoptions, revised adoption policies, and expanded hours of operation. The addition of our new electronic message centers on Interstate

15 has also made the public much more aware of the wide variety of wonderful animals we have for adoption here at the shelter.

In the clinic, our veterinarians performed a record 8,738 surgical sterilizations in 2004. As most people know, spaying and neutering companion animals is one of the key components to controlling the pet overpopulation problem that still exists in all areas.

The Humane Society is also the only organization in Utah that has a full-time cruelty investigator; last year, this agent performed a total of 1,716 investigations and inspections throughout the state. Also, our humane education director visited thousands of school students to make presentations about kindness and

compassion for animals, and in addition made pet-facilitated therapy visits to many nursing homes and residential centers.

Of course, we can't discuss the many successes we've enjoyed without mentioning the great volunteers who assist in the adoption center. We couldn't do what we do without them — and we can't do it without the continued support of caring friends like our members, either. The goal of the Humane Society of Utah is to be the most comprehensive center for placing adoptable animals, building lasting relationships with the public, and serving as the primary animal resource for the entire Wasatch Front. With the help of caring people like all of you, we can do it! 

Help Humane Society Get Utah Soldier's Mascot Dogs To America!

On January 30, the Humane Society of Utah received the following e-mail from SPC Dezerac Sharpe, a Utah National Guard soldier stationed in Bagram, Afghanistan:

"I am writing to you on behalf of my company's mascots. I found them as puppies, abandoned behind a shed when they were a few weeks old, and they have been like sunshine to all of us ever since. I thought twice before I assumed responsibility for these two scraggly pups, but my heart won over my head and I've never regretted it for a minute. In the nine months my unit has been away from home, these dogs have kept everyone's spirits up. They've even been given papers from our Combat Stress Section certifying what good therapy and morale boosters they are!

"Chopper is a 45-pound sweetheart who likes to eat everything in sight, and the other is a little 35-pound bundle of energy and attitude that we call Apache. The best I can tell is that they're some kind of Afghani Labs, maybe.

"I've fought long and hard to keep these pups out of harm's way, and now I'm fighting to get them safely to the States to the loving home I have waiting for them. I've put them on the MILITARYMASCOTS.ORG website where

people can donate money and help in any way possible to get them to America. Chopper and Apache will require two different flights and will have to board planes in two different countries. Our woodshop is already building them transportation kennels, since we can't get any shipped here.

"My unit leaves at the end of March to go home, and if I can't get them out of Afghanistan before then, they'll be put to sleep even though they've had all their vaccinations and have the right paperwork. Please, I can't do this on my own. All I need is a *little* help from *a lot* of people who care about animals. Can the Humane Society do anything?"

HSU President and General Counsel Craig S. Cook immediately responded, "Thanks for the great work you've done for Chopper and Apache. The Humane Society will do everything we can to help you bring these guys home. I was in the Utah Air National Guard for 25 years and am now in the Air Force Reserve, so maybe I can help in putting together a game plan."

HSU members can be part of Operation Mascot Rescue, too. The entire cost to get them to America will be \$6,000. You can go directly to the website, MILITARYMASCOTS.ORG, to pledge funding, or you can come to or mail a

check to the Humane Society's facility at 4242 South 300 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84107, or PO Box 573659, Salt Lake City, UT 84157, and we'll forward it to the rescue fund. EVERY SINGLE PENNY DONATED TO THIS CAUSE WILL BE USED TO BRING CHOPPER AND APACHE TO UTAH.

We'll keep you posted on how things are going. But right now, while you're thinking about it, *please* make a donation to help, either at MILITARYMASCOTS.ORG or the Humane Society of Utah. These canine heroes have earned the support of every Utahan. 



Over 30,000 members and contributors strong.

Magazine of the
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Humane Society of Utah Strongly Supports HB242

Increased Penalties for Cruelty To Animals in State

The Humane Society of Utah is whole-heartedly supporting HB242, which, if passed, will make intentional torture of an animal a third-degree felony and will include a one-step enhancement for animal abuse committed in the presence of a child.

“An action like this is long overdue in Utah,” says HSU Executive Director Gene Baierschmidt. “Utah’s current animal-cruelty laws are among the weakest in the entire nation.” In 1996 the Humane Society was instrumental in getting the state’s penalties for serious animal cruelty upgraded from Class B to Class A misdemeanor status, and in 2003 HSU spearheaded an initiative petition drive to upgrade the penalty for certain extreme acts of animal cruelty to third-degree felony status. That effort was thwarted when the Utah State Supreme Court upheld changes in the law passed by the legislature regarding the way petition signatures may be gathered in the state. “At that point, we knew that the only way to change the law would have to be to go back to the legislature,” said Mr. Baierschmidt.

Animal cruelty has long since ceased to be the concern of only special-interest groups, says Mr. Baierschmidt. “We are specifically concerned because of the large amount of research in our possession which shows a powerful link between cruelty to animals and violence against people,” he says.

“Pain is pain; and when someone takes pleasure in the infliction of pain on any living being less competent than the aggressor to defend itself, it’s a red flag that something more serious is involved than hurting ‘just an animal’.”

Scientific evidence of the chilling connection between animal cruelty and violence against other people includes the following:

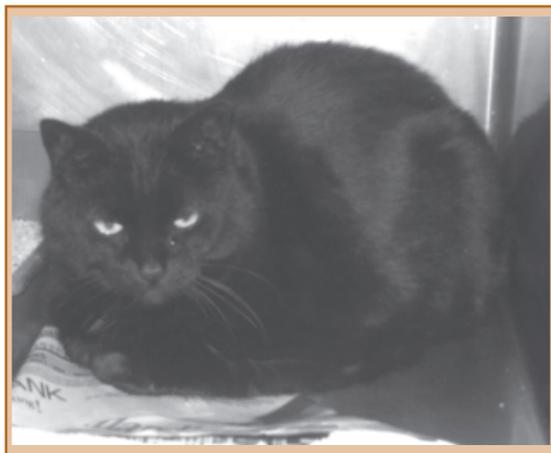
- Investigations of school shootings in Arkansas, Colorado, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Oregon revealed that many of the offenders had abused animals before turning their weapons on fellow students.
- Many of the most notorious American serial killers are known to have histories of animal cruelty. Jeffrey Dahmer, Ted Bundy, “Son of Sam” killer David Berkowitz, and the “Boston Strangler,” Albert de Salvo, all began their murderous careers with acts of animal cruelty.
- Nearly half of all men convicted of sexual homicides have been found to be animal abusers at some point in their lives.

The Humane Society is strongly urging the public to e-mail or telephone their state senators and representatives and ask them to support this vital piece of legislation. People can find out who their legislators are by going to the Utah State Legislature’s website at www.le.state.ut.us.



Against All Odds Humane Society’s Miracle Cats

Last fall when a tragic fire destroyed a suburban home in the Salt Lake area, there was little for the owners to be thankful for beyond the fact that they had escaped with their lives — they and their two female cats, both of whom had recently given birth to litters of kittens. In the aftermath of the blaze, family and friends of the homeowners had no choice but to bring the mother cats and their nine 2-week-old kittens to the Humane Society for care and shelter. Under ordinary circumstances, kittens this young would be sent to foster homes for round-the-clock bottle feedings until they were old enough to be placed for adoption, or at least fostered with their mothers; however, HSU shelter personnel had no idea which kittens belonged to which cat, and we were reluctant to make arbitrary separations. Furthermore, few foster parents would be willing or able to take care of even one entire litter at one time.



After unsuccessfully contacting several members of the foster-parent pool, Barbara finally called Barbara Backman. Ms. Backman is a Wal-Mart employee who has been a tireless campaigner for animals and has in the past persuaded the powerful Wal-Mart Foundation to support animal causes. To no one’s real surprise, Ms. Backman immediately offered to take *all eleven* cats into her home and commence the challenging process of nursing them back to health and seeing that the kittens not only survived, but flourished.

One Hundred per Cent Success!

Ms. Backman kept the little families together for two whole months, during which time the babies and mothers grew steadily stronger. All of them recovered from the damage done to their respiratory systems, and the kittens blossomed into healthy, independent youngsters. They were brought back to the shelter first, put up for adoption, and all of them were almost immediately adopted to great homes. The two mama cats — “Pearl,” an elegant black shorthair, and her tabby friend “Muffy” stayed with Ms. Backman until their milk supplies had dried up and they had completely fulfilled their duties of motherhood. Then our veterinarians spayed and vaccinated them, and they were also rapidly adopted into loving new homes.

“We consider everything that happened to these cats following the fire an absolute miracle,” says Barbara Conrad. “The fact that they weren’t killed by the flames



A Challenging Prospect

HSU Foster Coordinator Barbara Conrad was faced with the daunting task of trying to find a safe harbor for the eleven felines during the critical period following their rescue and arrival at the shelter. “From the first, our main concern was smoke inhalation,” explained Barbara. “Obviously, they had suffered some effects from the heavy smoke involved with the fire, and we were primarily worried about what it had done to the tiny, delicate lungs of the kittens. We knew that seeing all of these special-needs animals safely through the results of their ordeal would be no small undertaking.”

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
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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
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and smoke was a miracle in itself; then, if they hadn’t been able to get personalized care in a good foster home, they easily could have succumbed to respiratory illnesses in their compromised condition. And the fact that Barbara Backman was willing to take them all together and give them such dedicated care for as long as they needed it was the most wonderful miracle of all. With her help, these cats beat all the odds, and she’s the angel that made it happen.”

Both Barbara Conrad and Barbara Backman deserve a huge thanks for their special efforts and concern. Together, they typify what the Humane Society’s mission is all about. If you would like to be a part of the HSU Foster Program, please call Barbara Conrad at 261-1042.



Luigi, The Love of My Life

By Marci Henich

I wasn't sure why I was heading to the Humane Society of Utah that Friday evening after work; maybe I just wanted to visit with the animals and share a little love. Whatever motivated me to drop in, it would change my life and my family's lives forever.

I had wandered through the kennels without seeing anything that especially reached out and grabbed me, and I was just heading out through the main lobby when a tiny face peeked around the corner of the adoptions desk, looking straight at me with big, dark eyes. As quickly as the face appeared, it vanished. I'd only had a glimpse, but it looked to me like a greyhound — an incredibly small one, but still some kind of greyhound.

Big Problems in a Little Package

For a long time I had been interested in rescuing a retired racing hound, but I had no idea that a greyhound could be that small. When I asked the adoption technician at the desk about him, she said that he was indeed a greyhound — a miniature Italian greyhound — but he wasn't adoptable because he was so extremely high-strung and frightened that he wouldn't let anyone near him. I was fascinated, and begged to be allowed to try to approach him. I quietly sat as close to him as I could until it was time for the shelter to close for the night, talking softly but making no attempt to force myself on him. As I got up to leave I tentatively stretched my closed hand out to the little dog, and he kissed it! I was hopelessly in love from that moment.

The next morning I returned and asked to adopt the little greyhound. The shelter manager insisted on interviewing me for some time, making sure that I understood that this was a "special-needs" animal who was going to present some serious challenges and would require a strong commitment on my part.

Sight hounds — dogs who rely heavily on their vision rather than their sense of smell to locate objects — are different from other dogs, and must be treated with special care, and this particular individual was extraordinarily sensitive. I was told that he wouldn't be good around people, especially children, nor would he be likely to get along with other animals. He was extremely thin, even by greyhound standards, because he had refused to eat for several days. He was very nervous, a "fright-biter." The list of precautions was lengthy as the manager carefully tried to explain why he might not be a good choice. Was I really sure I wanted to take this on?

Learning to Trust

Even though my head questioned what I was doing, my heart was 100% sure that taking this little fellow into my life was the right thing to do, and I went through with the adoption. Since he was an Italian greyhound, I chose to call him Luigi.

The first weeks with Luigi were spent coping with his needs. He suffered from such severe separation anxiety that he couldn't be left alone for a moment, so my husband took him to work with him every day and he slept with us every night. We let him accompany us everywhere we went and introduced him to everyone we encountered, both human and animal. We already had three cats and a rabbit at home, and we made sure that Luigi met each one gradually and in non-threatening circumstances. Our children are all older, but there are many young ones in the neighborhood, and we let Luigi meet all of them in the same manner we brought every new experience to him: slowly, with our strong support and reassurance, and strictly on his own terms.

With love, patience, and lots of positive reinforcement, Luigi's spirit began to shine. He tried so hard to please



us! Each time he had a problem (for example, a potty accident in our bed at 3 AM), he would be so frightened that he would be punished — but we never dreamed of responding with anything except loving and understanding instruction in proper behavior, and each time he tried that much harder to please.

Love Works a Miracle

By the time Luigi celebrated his first birthday, he had made legions of friends, two-legged and four-legged alike. Now when he goes for his walks people stop to talk to him and give him pats, children come to our door to see if he can play, and little toddlers come running for "Weegie kisses," which he is always happy to give. (He is, after all, a true Latin lover at heart!)

Now I know why I was drawn to the Humane Society that evening. What a tremendous blessing we have been given in this little "unadoptable" dog! Our entire family has been brought closer through our shared love of Luigi. Every day is brighter, happier, and more filled with fun because of him. To know him is to love him — and everyone does!



Mr. Cliff Bell poses with his new best friend, Bogey. Mr. Bell was one of the very first senior citizens to take advantage of our PALS (Placing Animals with Loving Seniors) program, through which persons 65 years of age and over can adopt older animals from the Humane Society either free or at a greatly reduced cost. "Bogey took maybe 15 minutes to fit right in with me and take complete charge," says Mr. Bell, affectionately massaging his buddy's floppy ears. He's especially pleased because Bogey, at 11 years old, was already well-trained and housebroken and had a mellow, relaxed personality. "We're inseparable," says Mr. Bell with a smile. "Where I go, Bogey goes." Obviously, Bogey feels the same way.

Humane Society's 'PALS' Program Offers Free Felines, Discounted Dogs To Senior Citizens

ing Seniors), which targets people 65 years of age or older who want to add the companionship of an animal to their lives.

"Many senior citizens would make ideal parents for pets in need of a good home," says HSU Executive Director Gene Baierschmidt. "Because lots of them are retired, they're home most of the day. They often live in a quiet environment free of small children, and they have plenty of love to share. And we often receive cats at the shelter who are perfectly healthy and socialized, but because they're older these wonderful animals are often bypassed by the usual adopter, who generally wants a kitten or very young cat. The PALS program is a perfect win-win solution for both senior citizens and senior felines."

Wonderful Wednesday Each Month!

Starting January 1, 2005, the PALS program has been in operation the first Wednesday of each month from 10 AM to 5 PM at the HSU facility located at 4242 South 300 West. During these times qualifying seniors will be able to adopt cats two years of age or older free of charge, and HSU will also reduce the adoption fee for

dogs two years and older to \$25 for seniors. In addition, rabbits of any age will be adopted at no charge to seniors. The usual adoption fees are \$49 for adult cats and \$75 for dogs, so the PALS program offers a wonderful bargain to seniors, who are often on fixed incomes. All animals available from the Humane Society have already been spayed or neutered and have their first immunizations. Prospective senior adopters still must qualify according to the standard adoption procedures of the Humane Society, and must complete a preliminary questionnaire and provide photo identification and a verifiable address.

"The focus of the PALS program is to find caring homes for the older dogs and cats in our care," said Mr. Baierschmidt. "These animals are usually calmer and better-behaved than the lively, playful kittens and puppies." At the same time, he points out, the program is highly beneficial to older members of the community. "Numerous studies have linked pet ownership with improved outlook, lower blood pressure, and various other physical and emotional benefits," he says.

So far, the PALS program has proved to be a great success. All seniors are urged to take advantage of this wonderful program for finding love on a two-way street.

Older pets and older people are pairing up at the Humane Society of Utah through the Society's new program called PALS (Placing Animals with Lov-



A Second Chance For “Chance”

Two days before Christmas last year, a scrawny, bony yellow Labrador retriever was brought to the Humane Society’s shelter by a family who could no longer afford to care for him. He was 18 months old, not housebroken, and had been kept strictly outside. When he was put into a warm kennel he was grateful and settled right in, but was also very shy and quiet, seeming almost afraid to call attention to himself. Because there were so many other large-breed dogs at HSU at the time, it seemed that it would be very easy for potential adopters to overlook this skinny, withdrawn fellow. With such apparently risky prospects, his name was all too appropriate — his former people had called him “Chance.”

His Lucky Break

During the first week of the new year, a lovely lady named Lorraine came to the Humane Society looking for a dog — not for herself, but for the South Valley Health Center, a first-class rehabilitation home. Lorraine’s friend Molly is the facility’s administrator and believed that a dog who could regularly spend time on the premises would



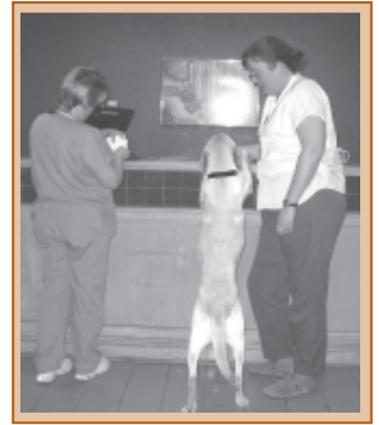
be a perfect companion for the residents there, and when Lorraine walked through the kennels and saw Chance, she immediately felt that he was the right dog for the job. She took him to South Valley that same day, and he seemed to fit in at once.

Since his new life began, Chance has flourished. He is “on shift” from 8:00 to 5:00 every day, reporting for duty with Molly, with whom he makes his home when he isn’t at the center. The residents adore him. He has free run of the place and goes into every open doorway to visit, snuggling close to the beds so people can stroke him and enjoy the unconditional love he has to offer. Chance has become so popular that when an HSU employee dropped in to see how things were going, Pat, the owner of the facility, said, “I’ve never been what you’d exactly call a dog person — but if you came here to take Chance back to the shelter, you can’t have him!”

A Brand-New Animal

Chance’s adoption by Molly and the South Valley Health center has meant tremendous benefits for more than the home’s residents. Chance himself has become

housetrained and learned the good manners of an indoor dog. He has gained both weight and confidence, and it would be hard to find in this sleek, happy dog any traces of the emaciated, frightened animal who came to the Humane Society last Christmas.



The Humane Society is an active participant in the Pet-Facilitated Therapy program, where we take shelter dogs to visit care centers all over the Wasatch Front. South Valley Health Center has taken this beneficial program one step further by having their own on-staff therapy animal. If one visit can be helpful, just imagine the difference having the same familiar, beloved animal around every day can make! To quote an old Johnny Mathis ballad, chances are the chances are awfully good.



Notice of Annual Membership Meeting

All members of the Humane Society of Utah are invited and encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting of the Society, which is to be held April 11, 2005, at 6:00 P.M. in the auditorium of the Society’s facility at 4242 South 300 West in Murray.

Included in this year’s Meeting agenda will be presentation of candidates for the Board of Directors; an update of the Society’s progress, events, and future plans; and the transaction of any other authorized business.

We invite you to join us at our beautiful facility; we welcome your participation and would appreciate your attendance. The staff, Board, and of course the animals of the Humane Society of Utah wish to thank you for your continued support.



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