

Speaking of Animals

The Humane Society of Utah is dedicated to the elimination of fear, pain, and suffering in all animals.

Inside:

HSU Posts Rewards in Animal Abuse Cases

Page 2

Rescue/Transfer Program Begins

Page 3

Give "Pits" a Chance

Page 4

The Millennials

Page 6

Plus:

A Legislative Update

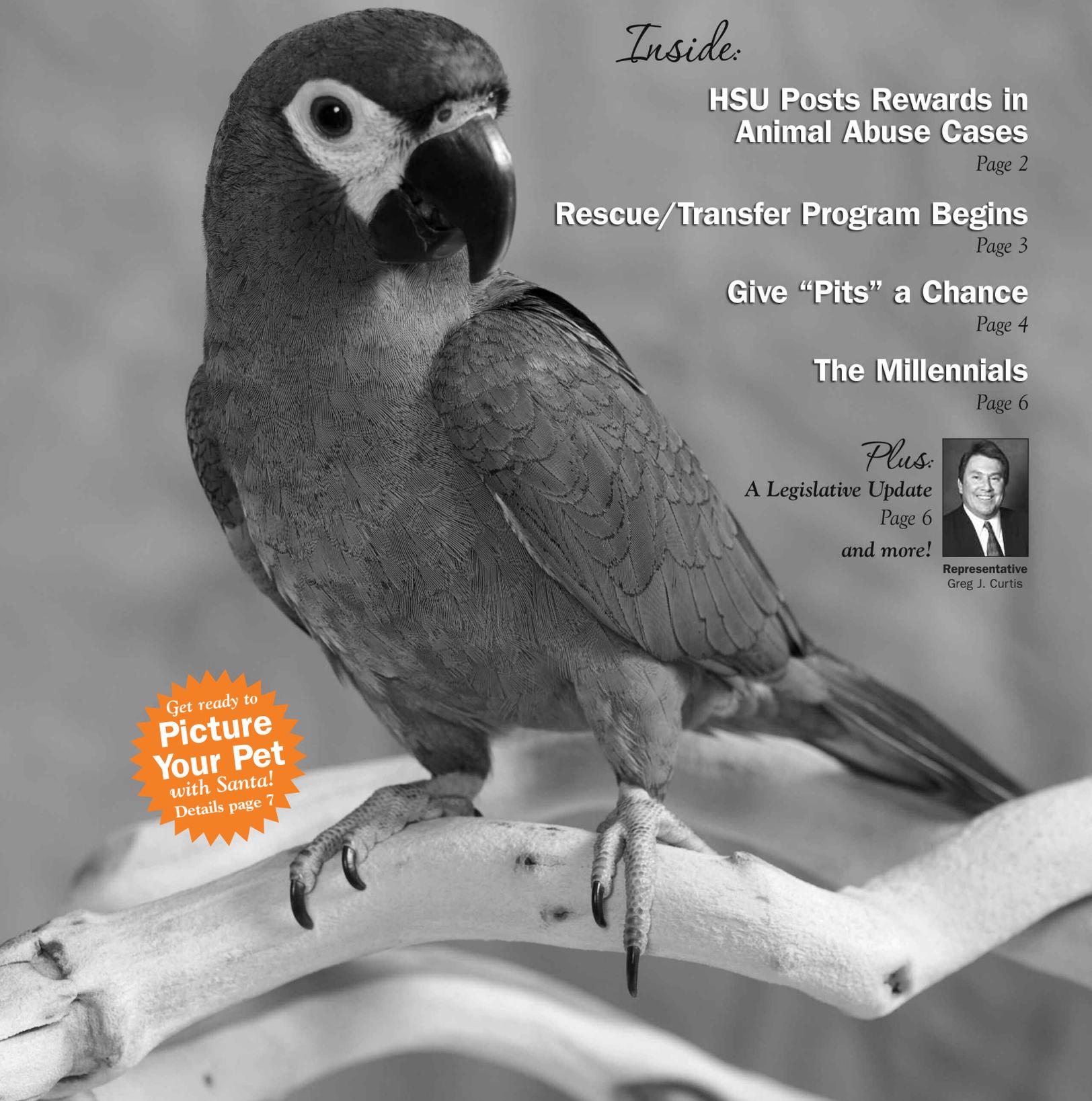
Page 6

and more!



**Representative
Greg J. Curtis**

Get ready to
**Picture
Your Pet**
with Santa!
Details page 7





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- ❖ Animal rescues
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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.

The Humane Society of Utah is an independent 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization that is not affiliated with any other group, nationally or locally. We receive no funding from taxes or any source other than your contributions.

Incorporated 1961

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Humane Society Posts REWARDS in Animal Abuse Cases —

Pays Witnesses Whose Testimony Led to Conviction

Over the past several months, a number of cases of senseless animal cruelty have been given high-profile coverage in the media, and in all of them the Humane Society of Utah has posted rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators. In at least two instances such information paid off, and HSU was pleased to present the key witnesses with checks totaling \$7,500. We'd love to do that again.

Last winter, Michael Ray Howard put fourteen Jack Russell terrier puppies into a plastic bag and left them outside to freeze and suffocate. Later, believing the pups were dead, he threw the bag into a trash bin — but one dog was still alive, and a passerby heard whimpers coming from the dumpster. The sole survivor, adopted and named "Precious" by his rescuer, is today a plump, healthy, well-loved family pet; but the cruel fate of his thirteen siblings outraged the community. HSU offered a substantial reward for information that would bring the culprit to justice.



In July Howard was convicted and sentenced to one year in prison for each of the dead puppies, and another term for what he did to Precious. (All of these sentences will run concurrently.) He was also sentenced for an unrelated drug offense, and therefore may ultimately spend up to five years behind bars.

Justice for its own Sake

The detective who handled the case went out of his way to contact the Humane Society to recommend that we pay the entire reward to a single person who had gone to the police and described in detail Howard's actions on the night the puppies were abandoned — without even knowing that a reward was available. "If that individual had not come forward to point law enforcement in the right direction," said the officer, "this case might well have gone unsolved." When invited to come to the HSU shelter to accept the reward in person, the critical witness was surprised to learn that there would be a material benefit in addition to the knowledge that justice would be done for the fourteen puppies. "I only wanted to let someone in authority know what I had seen," said the brave and compassionate person whose testimony convicted Howard. "What happened to those dogs was horrible."

"I believe that the widespread public indignation over that incident was one of many significant factors that helped get the felony-level animal torture bill passed in the last session of the state legislature," says HSU Executive Director Gene Baierschmidt. "Of course, since the crime was committed prior to the passage of that law, Howard's actions could only count as Class A misdemeanor offenses when he was sentenced. But the fact that the judge gave him the maximum possible sentence under the existing statutes, I think, shows that the days of treating animal cruelty as nothing more than 'slap-on-the-wrist' pranks are long gone — and good riddance."

continued on page 8 (Pending Cases, Rewards Available)

Adoptions Go Up!

HSU “Rescue / Transfer” Program Begins

Last spring, the Humane Society of Utah was proud to embark on a new project which we believe will bring us even closer to our ultimate goal of completely eliminating the need for euthanizing healthy dogs at our shelter. Funded by PetSmart Charities, the program capitalizes on the fact that certain kinds of dogs are in great demand — but relatively scarce — in some parts of the country, while at the same time other places have surpluses of the very breeds that those other communities are clamoring for.

It's hard to believe that adorable little dogs like these are overflowing shelters in parts of the Southwest. Through our Rescue Exchange program, we bring them to the Humane Society of Utah, where they're exactly what everyone is looking for. In a single month, Jessica rescued 81 dogs like these from being euthanized in a Los Angeles facility.



Coordination and transport of these animals among shelters and rescue groups has always been a problem. But we have hired a new employee, full-time Rescue Coordinator Jessica Almeida, whose job is to get the dogs who are often overlooked at HSU into reputable rescues or sanctuaries where they can find good new families of their own, and simultaneously bring in dogs that are in limited demand and overflowing their out-of-state shelters, but are considered highly desirable and adoptable here in Utah.

Just a Case of Finding the Right Matches

For example, we've always had an excess of large-breed dogs, especially black Labs, who just seem to suddenly become invisible whenever someone comes into our shelter looking for a dog to adopt, while nearly everyone who comes here wants a small breed, a cute little “toy”-type dog. But, incredibly, there are lots of places that can't keep up with the great demand for Labs and other big dogs, while shelters elsewhere are daily euthanizing scores of Chihuahuas, Yorkies, Pomeranians, and other tiny dogs — the very ones that are likely to be snatched up the moment they come into our shelter! The purpose of the Rescue/Transfer program is to get the right kinds of dogs in the right places.

Jessica Almeida has a professional background in animal behavior and has been working with animal rescues in Los Angeles since 2000. Shortly after re-locating to Utah last

March, she worked part-time in our Outreach Adoptions and regular Adoptions departments, but her experience with other animal groups in the Southwest proved to be highly useful to us when we heard of the proposed transfer program — officially known as the “Rescue Waggin'” — and she was of course the logical choice to assume its directorship.

Everybody's Happy

Jessica and HSU Operations Manager Carlene Wall attended a PetSmart-sponsored educational conference at the Boulder Humane Society in Colorado, where they learned all about what's necessary to ensure happy endings for the dogs selected for transfer operations. A special training enclosure was built on our back lawn, where Jessica assesses the behavior of our dogs and gives them basic obedience instruction to make sure they'll be good candidates for adoption when they go to the areas where their breeds are already highly popular anyway. After she takes them to the shelters there (all of which are accredited and closely screened before being accepted into the program, and guarantee that none of the dogs brought to them from HSU will be euthanized), she then travels to California and brings back small-breed dogs who are overcrowding their kennels.

Going in Style

The dogs are transported in a climate-controlled vehicle which is always manned by two individuals — the animals are never left unattended at any time. They have all the comforts of home, and enjoy getting lots of love and special attention from Jessica and whoever happens to be accompanying her on each trip.

And how is it all working out? “I'm proud to announce that HSU is now able to give a fresh start to as many as 50 small dogs per month who otherwise would have lost their lives in the overcrowded shelters they came from,” says Jessica. “And our own adoption figures have gone up dramatically, too. The big dogs, so consistently overlooked in Salt Lake, are now being eagerly greeted with open arms in places like Colorado and Wyoming, where they're considered the cream of the crop.”

continued on page 8 (Rescue/Transfer Program)

Big dogs, and especially big black dogs, seem to suddenly become invisible the minute potential adopters come looking for a new friend at a shelter in Utah. But there aren't enough of them to fill the demand in other places, and that's why Rescue Coordinator Jessica Almeida spends so many hours working with HSU's large dogs to make sure that they'll be highly adoptable when they're taken to approved shelters in places like Colorado and Wyoming. There they go out the doors almost as fast as we can supply them!





Give “Pits” a Chance

Pit Bulls Undeservedly Taking the Rap as “Bad Guys”

A growing number of Utah cities, including Bountiful, Logan, and South Jordan, have established legal bans on the ownership of pit bull dogs in response to incidents involving bites and other attacks, and now the city of Sandy is considering implementing a similar restriction. The Humane Society of Utah believes that regulating the ownership of dogs solely on the basis of the dog’s breed is not a logical or educated solution to the problem of aggressiveness in canines. “Ordinances aimed at punishing a dangerous dog’s owner, rather than the dog, makes more sense,” says HSU Executive Director Gene Baierschmidt. “Any dog can bite a person, but the animal’s breed is only one of many factors that can play a part in its potential for aggression. It’s much more effective to look at each dog as an individual.” The tendency to bite, in any breed, may be triggered or intensified by several conditions, including the following:

- Abuse, deliberate aggression training, and irresponsible dog ownership
- Lack of early socialization of the dog to human beings
- Lack of sound obedience training that teaches the dog where he or she stands in regard to dominance and people
- Genetic makeup, including strains within a particular breed
- Poor quality of care and supervision by the owner
- “Benign neglect” of the animal — that is, does the dog live outside on a chain, or is he or she involved with the family as a participating member?
- Behavior of the victim when aggression is shown
- Failure to surgically sterilize the dog (this procedure makes any animal more docile and more likely to bond with humans)

Comprehensive dog-bite ordinances, along with better education of the public and enforced responsibility in critical elements of pet ownership, would do far more to protect communities than would

issuing a ban on a specific breed, says Mr. Baierschmidt.

“Bad Dog du Jour”

He also points out that the “problem dog” at any given time is, simply put, the breed that is currently most popular with individuals who tend to be irresponsible, if not actually abusive, in the controlling and keeping of their pets. “Twenty years ago, Doberman pinschers were considered the epitome of the ferocious, ‘macho’ type dog. About a decade ago, Rottweilers had the same reputation. Most recently, pit bulls have become the ‘dog of choice’ for a certain segment of the population that encourages mean behavior. If one breed is banned, these people just move on to another one.” The real tragedy for these animals, says Mr. Baierschmidt, is the fact that they can be trained to perform with violence because they so desperately want to please their human companions. If those companions happen to be someone like Michael Vick, for example, the dogs will submit to all kinds of horrors themselves, and react to others with aggression, because this is what they have been taught is expected of them.

Finally, says Mr. Baierschmidt, breed-specific bans just don’t work for several reasons. “In the first place, it can be extremely difficult simply to determine exactly what breed a particular dog is. Usually, dogs classified as ‘pit bulls’ are a mishmash of many types, with standard American pit bull terrier representing only a very small part of the mix. Secondly, fatal dog attacks are actually extremely rare, and should not be the driving force in formulating public policy. Responsible breeding, training, and ownership of all dogs should be the community’s primary concern.”

Seeing is Believing

On August 14 a live demonstration at the HSU facility featured a number of dogs, including several pit bulls, who were testing for *Canine Good Citizen Certification* through Michelle Rizzi’s **Handle with Care** dog training classes.

The participants included a very special Pit named “Miss Piggy,” in an effort to make clear to the community that issuing a blanket ban on the ownership of certain breeds of dogs is not the solution for all problems involving aggressive animals. Says Gene Baierschmidt, *“We wanted to present living proof that dogs, like people, should be judged as individuals. Just because some particular breeds have frequently been mishandled and exploited by some people, all representatives of those breeds shouldn’t be denied the chance for good homes with caring people, where they will be as likely as other kinds of dogs to become good neighbors, good family members, and good citizens.”*

All dogs who enter the Canine Good Citizen program must already understand the fundamental obedience commands like “sit,” “stay,” “heel,” and “come.” After that, they are put through an intensive training course which requires them to learn more complex behaviors like these:

- ✓ Giving a calm and well-mannered greeting to approaching strangers
- ✓ Passing another dog and handler without lunging or showing anything more than a casual interest in them
- ✓ Presenting controlled reaction and recovery to distractions (e.g., loud noises, wheelchairs, something startling or out of the ordinary); the dog may show curiosity, but must remain calm and not panic
- ✓ Heeling with handler through a crowd of people without sniffing, jumping, etc.; the dog must maintain composure while walking though pedestrian traffic

Good Manners are Taught, Not Inherited

“Dogs who misbehave can be the result of inadequate training or improper handling, not genetic traits,” says Mr. Baierschmidt. *“There are good and bad dogs in every breed, and it’s not fair to make generalizations about any specific breed. Proper training – done with patience, love, and respect – can make a huge difference in the way any dog responds to his or her environment.”*

Miss Piggy, for example, was a one-year-old pit bull adopted from a shelter in 2005; soon afterward she was struck by a car and rendered virtually paralyzed. In spite of gloomy predictions from medical specialists, her new family refused to give up. They



Miss Piggy, the pit bull who lost the use of her hind legs in a car accident, appeared at the Humane Society of Utah in her personalized “wheelchair” along with several other Pits to show off their good manners and gentle temperaments. The demonstration was hosted by Michelle Rizzi, owner of Handle with Care Dog Training. All the dogs behaved beautifully, and all of them obviously adore their people, who have used Michelle’s excellent and loving training methods in teaching their dogs to be Canine Good Citizens.

obtained a cart to support Piggy’s hindquarters and took her to twice-weekly physical therapy sessions. While taking a “walk” some time later, Miss Piggy and her people met a permanently disabled man in a wheelchair and he and Piggy fell in love with each other at first sight. They have since become fast friends, seeming to provide optimism, strength, and encouragement to each other every time they visit together. Says her caregiver, *“The marvelous bond that has developed between those two got me to thinking about getting Miss Piggy certified as a therapy dog. She’s already passed her ‘Good Citizen’ trials, and soon she’ll be bringing hope and happiness to lots of other people who need the love she gives so abundantly. There’s a breed of dog called a ‘heeler’ — one who helps to herd cattle by nipping at their heels — but I tell everyone that Miss Piggy is a ‘healer!’ She literally helps people with problems heal themselves through love and good vibrations.”*

And all dogs of her breed are dangerous and should be banned? As John Lennon might have said, “Give Pits a chance!” ❖



After obediently holding a “stay” position on command while her people walked to the other side of the room, Miss Piggy returns to them when called, to be rewarded with lavish praise and hugs. Her loving mom and dad keep her useless back paws thickly bandaged to protect them from abrasion as they drag behind her, and twice a week they still faithfully take her for physical therapy to strengthen her active muscles and improve her coordination.

The Millennials – *A New Generation of Kind, Caring Kids*

The 1900's began with the Gilded Age, and then the Greatest Generation led us through some of the most trying years the world has ever known. Next came the Baby Boomers, followed by the Me Generation, and finally Generation X, they of the pierced and painted skins. Now that we're in the 21st century, our civilization is gradually passing into the hands of a new generation collectively called "The Millennials." What might we expect of the future under their leadership?

Well, if what we're seeing at the Humane Society of Utah is any indicator, things have never looked brighter. Every day we hear from not only potential Eagle scouts, church groups, and students working on special projects, but also ordinary children who are deeply concerned about — and doing things for — the less fortunate beings of this world, and their beneficiaries of choice are, increasingly, animals.

From Hurricane Help to Happy Holidays

One of the first of these was eight-year-old Katie Smith, who in 2005 single-handedly organized an elaborate fundraiser she called B.A.R.K. (for **B**enefit for **A**nimals **R**avaged by **K**atrina), to help us help the victims of the ferocious hurricane that pounded the Gulf Coast in that year. Several months later, little Emily Strand celebrated her ninth birthday by asking friends not to bring gifts for her, but cash donations to be presented to the Humane Society. In 2007, young Josh Lipman asked that his Bar Mitzvah be honored in the same way. In February, little Abbey Flick and Ariana Winters brought us a donation of \$123.25; they had earned the money the previous fall by setting up a neighborhood stand and selling lemonade, cookies, and brownies. There have been too many wonderful children and adolescents like these to list them all individually, but each and every one of them is a bright and special point of light for all our tomorrows. They are characterized by selflessness, compassion, ingenuity, and the will to sacrifice and

work hard to help creatures who don't even have a voice with which to thank them — but who, because of that caring, are healed of wounds and neglect, who go on to find wonderful homes that they fill with unconditional love, and who, without words, nevertheless communicate their gratitude and appreciation more eloquently than the most skilled orator — with a loving lick of the tongue, a happily wagging tail, a deeply contented purr.

Our most recent special Millennial is Johnathon Pack, who brought \$125 to the animals of the Humane Society in mid-July. He said "Please" and "Thank you" to adults who spoke with him, he gently and carefully stroked the shelter animals he met on his tour of the facility, and he grinned with delight when a white rat was placed on his shoulder and softly nibbled at his earlobe.

Where did Johnathon get the money for the animals? He asked his friends to bring it to his birthday party instead of giving him presents. By the way, that party was held in celebration of Johnathon's having reached the ripe old age of seven years.

With the future in the hands of people who have evidently learned to treat all life with respect and kindness at about the same time they learned to walk and talk, things are looking very promising indeed. Thanks to all of these wonderful children; may they always stay on the path they've chosen so early in their young lives. ❖



Johnathon Pack chose to celebrate his seventh birthday by asking friends to make contributions to the animals of the Humane Society of Utah instead of bringing him presents. He made this beautifully decorated box to receive the donations, and collected \$125 to help us out. Thank you, Johnathon!

Update – And Thanks Again to Utah's Leaders and Lawmakers

As most of you know, Utah is now the 44th state in America to have a felony-level animal cruelty statute in our criminal code. The new law, which makes the intentional torture of a companion animal a third-degree felony, brings us more in line with the attitudes of the rest of the country and also draws attention to the scientifically established link between animal cruelty and violence against other people.

We've already had quite a bit of positive response from officials involved in law enforcement, who say that the new regulation



has drawn more attention to animal cruelty cases and made the community more aware of the dangerous ramifications of such behavior. We'd like once again to thank legislators like Speaker of the House Greg J. Curtis, whose leadership was critical in getting the bill passed into law, Governor Jon M. Huntsman, and others who focused attention on the issue. And, last but certainly not least, many thanks to all of you whose e-mails and other efforts persuaded our lawmakers that this was something people throughout the state wanted to see happen. ❖

Problems Solved Here!

Talk to the Pro

by Michelle Rizzi

To Pull or Not to Pull...

A very common and frustrating problem for most dog owners is walking their dogs without getting dragged around the neighborhood. Before we can fix the problem, it's important to know *why* your dog is pulling in the first place. Here is the very simple answer: because it works!

When we first get a new puppy, we put a collar and leash on and allow the pup to lead us around, hoping that he'll adjust to his new accessory. But then, we never stop "allowing" this behavior. As the dog gets older he learns that as he pulls, we follow, thus...success! If you want to stop the pulling, stop the walk when the dog begins to pull. Whatever the dog is doing — good or bad, if it works, he'll continue doing it. You have to make it stop working!

There are ways to make this easier, with collars that are helpful and humane, toys, human interaction, etc., but in the end the same rule still applies. If the dog pulls, the walk stops! This must be practiced by everyone in the family, every time the dog is walked on the leash.

Sometimes taking a toy with you can help (squeaky toy, tennis ball, tug toy, etc.), whichever your dog prefers. You could

Michelle Rizzi, CPDT, is a certified animal trainer and the owner of **Handle with Care Dog Training**. She teaches obedience classes at the Humane Society of Utah, and will discuss readers' training problems in *Speaking of Animals*. Here is one over-the-top situation, with Michelle's advice on handling it:

put some of the dog's kibble in your pocket and feed him his breakfast on the walk or take him "out" to dinner. (He's going to eat it anyway, might as well have him work for it.) You are much more interesting to walk with if you have treats, toys, smiles, etc.

You can also try to tire your dog out a bit with a game of fetch in the back yard first. If he is already tired as he's heading out the door, you have better chances for success. When he starts to pull, either stop until the leash is slack (dog bounces back slightly), or turn and begin to walk the other way. Don't look at him or wait for his approval, just keep moving.

This is not a strict "heel" at your side, since a leisurely walk for your dog is still very much about the "sniff" and checking messages, etc. But he still should never pull you to get what he wants.

You should always be in control of your dog, whether on a walk or playing in the park — in every situation. Remember you are the leader, but you are a benevolent leader. No chokes, no shocks, no prongs, just a regular collar should do for most dogs. This won't be a quick fix. Remember most dogs have been practicing this behavior for months or even years. But with patience and consistency, you should begin to see some improvement each week. And always remember — "Handle with Care." ♦

*It's not too early to start thinking about making your appointments for Picture Your Pet with Santa!
The holidays will be here before we know it.*

PICTURE YOUR PET WITH SANTA

**NOVEMBER
8-9 & 15-16**

**CALL NOW TO SET UP
YOUR APPOINTMENT
261-2919 EXT. 207**

Other Cases Still Pending — **REWARDS Available**

The Humane Society is still actively seeking information that might lead to similarly satisfactory conclusions in a number of other instances of extreme animal cruelty, and rewards offered by the Society have in some of these cases been amplified by private contributions to quite substantial levels. Among the more notable are the following:

Crookneck the horse — shot multiple times in the back and belly in southern Utah. HSU reward of \$5,000 has been supplemented by an additional \$5,000 in donations (\$10,000 total).

Nine cows and a calf shot in Skull Valley — \$5,000.

Two pet dogs and a pig shot in Kanab — \$5,000 ea.

Prairie dogs poisoned near Cedar City — \$5,000.

Kitten in Sugar House burned on the paws, ears, and tail with an open flame — \$2,000 from HSU, \$1,250 from the Animal Advocacy Alliance of Utah (\$3,250 total).

Ranger the dog — kicked or thrown violently against a wall during a burglary of his home while his people were away, sustained severe head trauma. HSU has posted a \$5,000 reward, and the Animal Advocacy Alliance of Utah has added \$2,000 (\$7,000 total).

“Decent behavior is certainly its own reward,” says Mr. Baierschmidt, “but we’d like the public to know that kindness and compassionate concern can pay off in more substantial ways as well. People who do the kinds of things described above almost always, sooner or later, talk about it. Somewhere, somebody knows something about every one of these cases. And we’re hoping that the monetary compensation for anything they tell us that will put the wrongdoers where they belong will bring them forward.” ❖

The Humane Society’s Cruelty Investigation department can be reached at **(801) 261-2919, ex. 210** or jfox@utahhumane.org.

Step by step, the Humane Society of Utah is continually moving closer toward its goal of achieving a 100% adoption rate for all adoptable dogs brought to our shelter. We started by implementing Outreach Adoptions, where animals are taken to off-site locations; then we improved the animals’ odds by organizing a full-time Foster Program that makes “special-needs” animals more adoptable; and now the Rescue/Transfer plan has given even more animals the chance to find permanent, caring, loving homes for life.

“The future has never looked brighter,” says HSU Executive Director Gene Baierschmidt. “I confidently foresee a better world for animals throughout Utah and the entire Southwest than they’ve ever had before.” ❖

A Workplace Giving Opportunity

In each issue of *Speaking of Animals*, you will see the logo of Community Shares Utah. This is a workplace giving federation that allows employees to donate any specified amount through payroll options to a range of non-profit agencies, including the Humane Society of Utah, that work to benefit the environment, deliver critical services, improve the community, protect human rights and promote animal welfare.



The Humane Society of Utah has been a member of Community Shares for several years. Look over the list of other member organizations at www.communitysharesutah.org to see what good company we keep. HSU would love to benefit from your workplace giving program — if you don’t have the opportunity to contribute at work and would like to, please contact:

Carlene Wall, *Humane Society of Utah*
(801) 261-2919, ext. 209

or Lynne Bradley, *Community Shares*
(801) 486-9224

Good-Hearted Groomers

Thank you!

One of our foster parents, Emma Izatt, works for a Lehi pet-grooming parlor called Precious Pet Paradise, and over the past couple of years her boss has arranged for Emma and several other professional groomers to come to the Humane Society of Utah and spend all day sprucing up our residents to make them absolutely irresistible to prospective adopters.

In mid-July, half a dozen of these dedicated people spent an entire Saturday here. *“They groomed a ton of dogs,”* says HSU Assistant Foster Coordinator Juli Ulvestad, *“and one*

especially nice moment was the adoption of a particularly hard-to-place chocolate Lab named Dino after he’d been groomed. We all cheered for that one!”

And as if that isn’t enough, Emma also holds in-house grooming sessions to teach some of our employees and volunteers techniques to use here at the shelter. She and her good-hearted companions are truly angels among us, and we and our animals are indeed blessed by the kindness they share so freely. Thanks, Emma and friends – you bring paradise to our precious pets everywhere you go. ❖

