

Hello. I'm Jean Macomber, a member of the SHELTER TEAM PROJECT for the Calaveras Humane Society; (also, University of California, class of 1960!) and happy to be here.

### **A very brief History of the Calaveras Humane Society**

**(These remarks are taken directly from the minutes of those meetings.)**

**In January of 1978 , 16 people who had answered a notice in the newspaper asking anyone who was interested in founding a humane society to reply, did so.**

**It was a dark and stormy night and little did they know what kind of turbulent years were yet before them, these intrepid pioneers .**

**The first task was to address the inhumane treatment of healthy animals who were sold to an animal dealer who in turn sold them to laboratories for experimental purposes. The others were clubbed or shot.**

**The very first order of business then became setting up a Spay/Neuter program which primarily involved issuing coupons worth ½ the veterinarian fee to people who couldn't afford to pay otherwise. These were to be offered to anyone who asked for one. To finance this effort they decided on a fee schedule with memberships in the organization beginning at \$2 for a junior membership, \$5 for a regular up to \$250 for perpetual membership. It was a start.**

**Rachel Moffett offered to be secretary and Zelma Johnston was treasurer. Alan Atkins, a commercial artist, offered to draw the design for the logo, a dog holding up a bandaged paw; his drawing graced all the documents for well over 20 years.**

**In that year, the accomplishments were numerous; they were granted a charter as a non-profit organization; they had more than 250 members and more than \$5000 in the bank. They stopped the selling of animals for experimental purposes and struggled with a more humane method of destroying unwanted ones. ( Later in that year the County re-instated the selling of animals to the animal dealer.)**

**They persuaded the supervisors to voter to allocate \$22,000 to improve Pound conditions. They drew up plans for the installation of a heating system, new lighting, outdoor runs with drains, a washroom with hot water and a storage room. Obviously, conditions were primitive. A spay/neuter certificate program was developed and put into effect. Dog houses**

and feral cat shelters were built and foster home program is developing; and the members were ever present at county functions to attract new members.

The next year, 1979, they continue to work on Pound improvements, but it is a very slow process. "We get promises which are then postponed or cancelled". The \$22,000 allocated for improvements goes to bid in February. The Poundmaster got \$59 to build benches for dogs in the pound so they don't have to sleep on concrete floors which are continually wet.

Since the inception of the spay/neuter program (\$15 for dogs/ \$10 for cats) 125 female dogs and 107 female cats and 32 male cats..cost over \$2000.

Supervisors approved the improvements and they were almost completed in June of 1979.

The pound is still using carbon monoxide to put down the animals. In November "untenable conditions at the pound; holes in fencing, jagged edges around the feedbins which injure the animals; we will try to hasten these repairs with the offer of volunteer labor."

In January, 1980 they met with the Board of Supervisors to build several small shelters constructed in various communities and the Humane Society to be given authority to collect fees such as licensing, impound costs, adoption fees, etc. to give financial support for them.

That didn't pass.

February, 1981 the BOS postponed a decision on what to do with the pound.

December 1981 "We relentlessly keep after our supervisors, but compassion is not a quality in abundance in the group. They make promises and even vote for it and then renig."

In July, 1982 "after purchasing the euthanasia unit, the County spent the \$20,000 that was budgeted for a room to house it, for office remodeling and painting; they said there were 'higher priorities'. In the meantime, the animals were still being sold to the animal dealer for experimentation and the lucky ones were being clubbed or shot....There are 58 counties in California and in 1982 only 14 were still selling to animal dealers; sad to say, we live in one of the most backward counties in the state."

January, 1988....Mrs. Lucy Tryon was elected President at the January Board of Directors meeting. The Board meetings were now to be held at her historic home near Angels Camp

In the old part of the pound the floors didn't drain properly, so after they were hosed down they stayed wet. The Society paid \$400 for rest benches for this part of the pound so the dogs could get up off the wet floors. They spend over \$6000 for spay/neuter in 1987 and more than \$1000 for owners' vet bills. This aid was very important as this was the second poorest county in the state, having moved up from the poorest.

They also invested in box traps to trap feral cats in the county who were then taken to the pound to be put down. In later years they had an improved solution where the cat is taken to a vet, spayed or neutered and returned to where he was found. "Trap/neuter/release" program; they looked for sponsors willing to feed them; people are generous in this respect.

I have no more minutes after those few years, but I have served on the board of Calaveras Humane Society and have many of my own statistics as well. The Calaveras County Animal Shelter has been written up 7 times in the last 7 years for violations; some of the most egregious have been corrected; however most cannot be, because the buildings are in such disrepair, they need to be demolished. Almost on a weekly basis, animals are snuffed out because there is absolutely no room to hold them; they live in cramped quarters, often sharing a small cage with another. Outbreaks of Parvo, which is a deadly infection that often means killing all the dogs in the kennel whether adoptable or not to stop the spread, and feline leukemia which means the same result for the cat population, occur way too often to be tolerated. We have no suitable quarantine or isolation rooms to house incoming animals which may be carriers of these diseases.

A major problem one of the Grand Jury reports pointed out is the ridiculously low budget AS has to work with; in 2006, the population of this county was about 49,000 with a cost per person to house our abandoned, stray, and unwanted animals of \$7.02. Amador county, population then of 38,000, \$21/person. Tuolumne, 57,000, \$14.44 and ElDorado/West slope 68,000 was \$18.50

The staff at Animal Services (years back called The Pound) and CHS have agreed in the best interest of our animals, to work together; and we are; Animal Services understands better than anyone that without the Humane Society we would lose far more animals in this county than we do. And the Humane Society knows that not many of us would work at that job.

But, right around the corner there's an answer. A new shelter is the answer. After about a year of working out the basics, we have a resolution, passed by the Board of Supervisors on December 15<sup>th</sup> that CHS we will be entering into a contract with the County to form a Public/Private partnership, with the county providing the land and CHS building the facility, which will care for the animals we shelter until they have their forever homes. Now, I'll turn you over to Karen Elliott, another CHS volunteer and SHELTER PROJECT team member who will explain how the whole miracle will occur. Thank you.

