

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MAY 30, 1976

A.S.P.C.A. Sued by Some Members On Neglect, Mismanagement Charge

By LUCINDA FRANKS

One day a few weeks ago, a woman named Mariene Kennedy found a mixed German shepherd who had been hit by a car on the Upper East Side.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was called and came to collect him. When Mrs. Kennedy went there the next day, however, she was told that the dog's crushed legs had not been treated and that the animal would get no medical attention—not even a pain-killer, unless she paid for it.

Not long ago, a youth named Fritz Brindisi brought his Samoyed to the A.S.P.C.A. hospital clinic, which gave the dog a quick examination and diagnosed his problem as worms. The dog got worse and some weeks later died of a bacterial infection.

A woman named Deborah Fauntleroy recently paid to adopt a male kitten at the A.S.P.C.A. Later, she took it to the Animal Medical Center and was told it was not a male but a female. The center also told her that the A.S.P.C.A.'s suggestion that she feed it milk would be bad for the kitten's digestion.

Society Being Sued

These examples are taken from a growing list of complaints, ranging from alleged cruelty to alleged incompetence, that are being registered against the A.S.P.C.A. these days. The society is no stranger to criticism. For the last several years it has been under attack from several quarters, the most vocal of which is a group of A.S.P.C.A. members who are suing the society for allegedly using its funds improperly and neglecting the animals it is supposed to protect.

"There have been some problems in the past with proper management," concedes Dr. Marvin Schiller, president of



Dawn Katz and puppy she adopted at the A.S.P.C.A.

\$8.50 each (the only city funds it gets), but in fact, according to Mr. Rains, the society loses about \$1 million a year on its operation for strays.

"In the past four years, to meet rising expenses we have had to cut the staff in the four shelters from 314 to 215 people," said Mr. Rains, who is a former director of administration of the Chicago Zoological Park and joined the A.S.P.C.A. in 1972. "Out of 27 trucks for picking up strays that we had when I arrived, there are only 13 left."

The rate of animal adoptions also dropped dramatically —

cost at least \$400 to treat the dog for multiple fractures and contusions. "I didn't have that kind of money so I agreed that the dog should be put to sleep." She paid \$7 for the dog to have an injection—a quicker and more peaceful but more expensive method than the decompression chamber.

Lost Its Interns

When the society dropped its teaching hospital operations, it lost all its interns, who made up about half of its veterinary staff. Now it must operate its hospital with eight veterinarians, compared with a previous staff of 16.

The C a completel the famous SALE



Chair

54⁹⁹

side chair

44⁹⁹

WALNUT
BLACK O
NATURAL

FINEST Q

If you have ev
buy it! Perfect c
PECTLY BEAUT
Seat ht: 18". Side

ALL F
NOT

WOODEN PART
rounded, solid b
struction. Curved

STRUCTURES—
hand-polished sl
bands. Conceale

QUALITY ALL Y
Put up it and more
big chair/Chair part
set in

SEND MAIL O

bor



properly using its funds in the animals it is supposed to protect.

"There have been some problems in the past with proper management," concedes Dr. Marvin Schiller, president of the A.S.P.C.A., "but we have remedied a lot of them."

"The real problem is that we simply do not get enough funds from the city to take care of its estimated 150,000 strays," he added. "Unfortunately, our main function is putting them to sleep."

The society, which is the official New York City dog pound as well as a nonprofit humane organization that operates rescue teams and educational projects, kills about 2,000 stray dogs and cats a week in its four shelters in Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Staten Island.

"Most of them are beautiful, healthy, well-adjusted pets," said Encil E. Rains, the society's executive vice president and general director. "They just go down the drain."

According to Dr. Schiller, it would take \$500,000 a year to save them. That, he says, would allow the society to step up its adoption programs, transport the dogs elsewhere, and significantly reduce the casualties.

"Of course, it is not us but the people of New York who are responsible for the need to kill them," said Dr. Schiller. "It's the irresponsible owners who don't spay their pets, who throw them out to breed in the streets when they get tired of them."

Stacked Cages

The Manhattan shelter of the A.S.P.C.A. looks as worn out as some of the strays it brings in. The rooms holding the strays are filled with small cages stacked on top of one another, and some of the larger dogs have to curl up to lie down. Some of the

Park and joined the A.S.P.C.A. in 1972. "Out of 27 trucks for picking up strays that we had when I arrived, there are only 13 left."

The rate of animal adoptions also dropped dramatically — from about 22,000 to about 10,000—in 1973 after the society required adoptees to pay a \$10 neutering-spaying deposit in an attempt to make a dent in the city's growing stray population. Since that time, the adoption rate has stayed at about 10,000 animals a year out of a total of about 100,000 animals fit for adoption.

"And the rate is probably going to go down some more," said Mr. Rains "because we've raised the neutering fee from \$15 to \$20—the cost of the entire operation. We just were not getting people to return for the neutering when their pet came of age. Maybe paying the whole thing beforehand will induce them to return—we have to try it."

Hospital Staff Cut

The society also had to cut its hospital staff in half, ending both its teaching hospital operation and its policy of giving charity to strays or to animal owners too poor to pay for medical treatment.

Thus, the German shepherd found by Marlene Kennedy—although she assumed it would be treated by the A.S.P.C.A. veterinarians—was simply put in a cage where it would have been kept for 48 hours and then, if not claimed by an owner, destroyed.

"The A.S.P.C.A. truck had taken about an hour to get there and when they came, they had no medical equipment or stretcher," said Mrs. Kennedy. "Instead, they pulled out a noose on the end of a stick and dragged the blood-covered dog into the truck."

"He looked so lost, and I just

teaching hospital lost all its interest up about half of its staff. Now it is a hospital with 16 staff members, compared with a staff of 16.

"We do feel that the hospital budget is correspondingly smaller," Mr. Rains said. "We cannot maintain a 24-hour service like we used to. The hospital is at 5 P.M. Most of the animals are fresh out of the hospital and certainly try not to return. The quality of vet-

Outside observers say the society's problem is the burden of the dog pound and poor management. They tried to answer by commissioning a review last year of the independent company, Rains Inc. The society's majority of the directors the company implemented, and Dr. Schiller, the company's president, became president of the society. Nevertheless, the lawsuits have continued.

The lawsuit against the A.S.P.C.A., filed by Mrs. Wylter, the actress, and L. Meyer, both former board members who have been in conflict with the society's managers, seeks the resignation of the society's board members, which includes Mrs. Wylter, Mrs. Meyer, Mrs. Haines, the archivist, and Mrs. S. Haines, the archivist. The suit charges that the society is run "like an exclusive club for the corporate elite rather than for the public."

The suit also charges that the society has cutbacks due to fiscal mismanagement in the society's offices, including the Queens animal shelter, and a reduction in the

OFF
and
my
Boy
and
myl
199
loor

the stench in some of the rooms is overpowering.

Whenever a person enters the rooms, a cacophony of barks and whimpers goes up. The dogs, ranging from abandoned poodles to young mutts to puppies, poke their noses through the bars and eagerly nip at and lick hands that reach in.

The rooms are a kind of death row for dogs and cats. Only one in about 10 is adopted. The rest, after a few days, are led by ropes to a large oval decompression chamber where the oxygen is slowly withdrawn. Some animals claw to get out, but in less than a minute, they are unconscious and in about two more, they are dead.

Covered With Grease

Upstairs, the hospital clinic waiting room is often crowded and the floor is generally covered with bloody paw prints. People wait in line to get in advance before their animals are looked at. Inside the clinic, there is a long hall of examining, operating and X-ray rooms. The doctors are friendly, but many of the rooms are dirty and grease-covered.

"It's too bad, but we just do not have the money to be really responsive to the needs we know are there," said Mr. Rains in the A.S.P.C.A.'s upstairs executive offices.

Mr. Rains, who is an amiable man, quick to smile, sat back in his chair in the airy, thickly carpeted office he shares with two white doves in a large cage.

He explained that the A.S.P.C.A. operated on a budget of about \$4 million to \$5 million a year, which covers the society's stray operations, educational projects and its 15 agents, who answer calls to rescue animals that are injured, endangered or subjected to cruelty.

The cost of handling strays is supposed to be covered by the revenues the society collects by selling required dog licenses for

Mrs. Kennedy had to adopt the dog and leave a blank check with the A.S.P.C.A. Then the dog was brought out on a dolly. "Its front paw was so badly mangled that the bones were exposed," said Mrs. Kennedy. "He was crying. He had been suffering all night."

Mrs. Kennedy said the veterinarian had told her it would

of an out-of-court settlement, the society would put some of its critics on the A.S.P.C.A.'s board of directors and would give the membership a larger voice in the organization.

"We've got to stop being two armed camps," he observed. "Only then can we start pouring our energies into helping the animals we all care about."

TOTAL CLEARANCE SALE

2 days only—SUN, MON 11 AM-6 PM

20% - 50% OFF on many models

CLIP THIS AD & SAVE!!

PRESENT THIS AND WE'LL TAKE OFF AN
EXTRA 10% IN FRONT OF YOUR VERY EYES—
ON OUR ALREADY LOWEST SALE PRICES!!

TOP NAME BRAND CONVERTIBLES

CHESAPEAKE • ECLIPSE • SIMMONS • SEALY • ETC.
SOFA BEDS—LOVE SEATS—SECTIONALS



ONE HOUR DELIVERY
on stock pieces—reasonable distance

BERK/HIRE HOUSE CONVERTIBLES

19 WEST 45th St., N.Y. City (212) 246-4770

• AMERICAN EXPRESS • BANK AMERICARD • MASTER CHARGE • FREE PARKING

S
OURS
eam
30pm



DELL