



“Navajos And Animals” By Ruth Storer

Tourists to the Navajo Nation are often shocked by the starving animals they see roaming the highways and scenic areas. Some visitors vow never to return, but many vacationers find our Blackhat Humane Society brochures in the Window Rock Museum or at Canyon de Chelly. They call us to ask “WHY?” This question is invariably followed by “What can I do?” Blackhat Treasurer, Ruth Storer has addressed these questions and answers them honestly in this essay.

Because the stray dogs and road-killed puppies and cats tend to be where tourists can see them (scenic highways, visitor centers, gas stations), visitors form a stereotype of the reservation as a place where people do not care for their animals. Though this is true in some cases...(lots of folks living on the “outside” don’t treat their pets so great either), it is an unfortunate stereotype much like the “drunken” Indian

(which, occasionally, some vacationers encounter in the parking lots of gas stations or grocery stores). Stereotyping is a hurtful form of racism and ignores the facts.

The Double D Veterinary Clinic sits in the shadow of Blackhat Mesa. The property is owned by Denise Oldham, a Navajo married to an Anglo Veterinarian, Dwayne Oldham. The Oldhams offered our group a part of their property on which to build a humane shelter many years ago when our group was just forming. This is how we got our name “Blackhat Humane Society”. Dr Oldham shares his practice with Dr. Germaine Daye, a woman Veterinarian and, most of the staff at the Clinic is Navajo. Looking out the window of the busy waiting area of Double D Vet, one sees a steady stream of trucks bringing stock trailers full of horses, sheep and cattle to the corrals behind the office. In through the front door come Navajos with their dogs and cats for vaccinations, treatment for worms, mange, broken bones, porcupine quills and for spaying and neutering. Nobody who is aware of this procession can say “Navajos don’t care for their animals”.

As a founding member of Blackhat Humane Society, I am constantly asked “ Why don’t THEY take care of their dogs?”

I have thought about it and I believe the historical context provides clues for part of the answer.

In the old days (about 50 years ago), dogs were the guardians of the family hogan and the sheep flock. They lived outdoors and were free to come and go. They found their water with the sheep and were fed once a day when they brought the sheep home at dusk. They warned their human families when coyotes, mountain lions or trespassers came around.

120 years ago there were only about 4,000 Navajos left after the fiasco with Kit Carson and the Long Walk to Bosque Redondo.

Now the population numbers about 250,000, representing a huge population explosion. There have never been so many Navajos as there are today. The number of contested land claims has skyrocketed and many Navajos now cluster in federally-built tract homes or trailers sur-

rounding nests of schools, hospitals and municipal services.

How does this affect the animals? They are allowed to roam and breed as freely as when their homes were spaced 10 miles apart. In the country, dogs will stay around the property, guarding the house against intruders. In town, the dogs go around in packs looking for food, for mates and for trouble. They no longer have sheep or a ranch to protect. In other words, due to the huge increase in the human population, there has been a corresponding increase in the animal population. The changes, especially centralizing, have not lent them selves to the traditional lifestyles, for people or for animals.

This is a period of adjustment during which the education of the public, to the problems and possible solutions, must be attempted.

One of the goals of Blackhat is to foster this educational process. Tamara has written a children’s book and it has been illustrated by a wonderful Navajo artist. I will be writing curriculum materials that can be duplicated and distributed to classroom teachers. We hope to work with the Navajo Animal Control officers in bringing information to school children. It’s time to stop judging and start helping!



"Many people want to adopt a puppy, believing that's the only way to "bond" with an animal.

But these adult dogs are so ready, so willing to please. Just a discouraging word from you and they get the idea! You'll

have no potty issues, no chewing, no scratching at your legs! These dogs are sweet, loving **BLANK SLATES!** Take them to obedience school or agility training. They just want to please the people who care for them!"

Tamara Martin, Sect'y BHS



OUR WISH LIST

- Dog and cat food
- Crates- Airline and metal
- Used collars and leashes
- Used toys
- Used blankets and quilts
- Out-dated Vet supplies
- More Foster Homes!

Alice finds her home

Alice (now named Karma-Roo) has her **forever home** with Pal. In our last newsletter, Alice was searching for a home that would accept a dog with disabilities. (Alice had to have a hind leg amputated due to infection after a broken bone). When Pal saw the ad for Alice, it was love at first sight! Pal is a poet and a former dancer. She was laid low due to infection in a hip replacement and now uses a metal crutch to navigate. Alice and Pal bonded immediately, as you can see from the photo. Together forever!



History of Blackhat Humane Society

Blackhat Humane Society was started in the year 2000 by some people who wanted to do more than just feed the starving, homeless animals wandering the vast and open Navajo Nation. Towns are often 100 miles apart with nothing but desert and rocks between them.

Many folks who live and work on the Navajo Reservation are concerned about pet overpopulation and they're doing all they can to find medical care and homes for the abandoned animals. What our group seeks to do is help these kind people to continue helping the animals. There exists a network of foster homes throughout the Navajo Nation. Abandoned animals are taken into foster care where they receive food, vaccinations, medical care and lots of love.

When the foster home feels the animal is ready for adoption, we put their picture and biography on our website:
www.rezdog.petfinder.org

Our group rescues mainly dogs and cats but we care about **ALL** the animals and have helped horses, cows, sheep and hawks to find a safe haven*. 90% of our money goes to veterinary care. Few young animals receive vaccinations on the Rez, resulting in a high incidence of Parvo and Distemper viruses. All BHS animals are vaccinated and spayed or neutered before adoption. Our group knows that education is the way to make changes and we have taken steps to provide programs and literature regarding responsible animal care to all ages.

*** In 2003, we rescued and placed: 218 dogs, 42 cats, 2 horses and 2 sheep.**



Generous donations have been made to Blackhat Humane Society in memory of Jonathan Edward Perry

- Sean & Jill Devon
- Robert A Auld
- Jesse & Michelle Taylor
- Joanne & Robert Zuvcink
- Dan & Lynette Guevara
- Gail Harns
- Caroline Knebel

Wedding Vows are Helping Animals!

Both Matt and Laura had been living on their own for many years. In that time, they had accumulated more than enough "stuff" for the both of them. One of the greatest loves they have (besides each other) is their love of animals. Matt's parents recently traveled out west and they were saddened by the suffering of the homeless animals on the Navajo Nation. Among the things they brought back home was a flier for Blackhat Humane Society. They shared their stories and the flier with their sons, Matt, Mark and Kevin. Matt, who is to be married to Laura in September, reminded his parents that all 3 of his dogs have been rescued. He and his fiancé Laura, decided that in lieu of personal gifts, they would be grateful for donations made in their names to a local animal shelter and to Blackhat Humane Society. Matt had recently donated a digital camera to our group. Thank-you Matt and Laura. A relationship that includes compassion and kindness can only last forever!



Do you long for a companion who will also share your love of animals? Join www.KissyKat.com, a new on-line dating service where you can interact with thousands of single pet-lovers from all over the country. If you join now, your first month is free!



THANKS TO YOU!

- Dr Oldham
- Dr Day
- Heart & Soul Animal Sanctuary
- Jana Adamson
- Ernest John
- The Roe Family
- Rosanne Urbanowicz
- Mary Furney
- Phil Giardino
- Robert Stanley
- Julie Meyers
- Patricia Klemick
- Noah's Ark Rescue
- Peggy Tyra
- Autumn Thomas
- Ann Cramer
- Greth Landwehr
- Sara Pollock
- Rose Moonwater
- April Warren
- Andrea Frazier
- Susan Simon
- Julie Snyder
- The Navajo Nation



Ayla Parker volunteers for Heart and Soul Animal Sanctuary in Santa Fe, NM.

Ayla organized a Blanket & Towel Drive for the homeless animals on the Navajo Nation and she set up a Donation Jar at her school, Eldorado Elementary.

If only we had 100 Aylas! Imagine how the word could be spread...how many animals could be helped!

Ayla lit just one little candle...let's help her keep the flame going! What have YOU done today to teach the children around you about responsible animal care? Could you show a child how to brush their dog, to check the water bowl, to make eye-contact with their dog and tell the dog that someone loves them? Your "lesson" may take only minutes but could make a WORLD of difference in a child's relationship with their pet.



ELSA (and 3 sisters!)

Call Carrie @ (505) 863-5535



OSITO

Call Tamara @ (928) 337-2828



FRANKIE BLUE-EYES

Call Tamara @ (928) 337-2828

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated"
Mahatma Gandhi

Volunteer Opportunities

Blackhat Humane Society would be lost without these wonderful foster homes! We are proud that none of our rescued animals are confined in cages. All live in foster homes and are part of the family that cares for them. We can tell you if they're housebroken, if they like children, whether they embrace or chase cats, their behavior around livestock. We know how they behave while riding in cars and how they act at feeding time. All of our rescued animals go to their adoptive homes up-to-date on vaccinations. All are spayed or neutered (if old enough). We supply some foster homes with food, sup-

plies and financial assistance for medical care. We do the advertising for prospective adopters and are always available to guide the foster parents through the adoption process.

_____ Yes, I would be interested in fostering a stray animal. I understand that I may chose dog, cat, sheep, cow, horse or any other animal that interests me.

_____ Yes, I enjoy teaching and I'd love to create a short program that could then be handed over for a teacher to present.

_____ No, I can't foster. I already have too many animals! Please accept my donation of \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

State _____ Zip _____

Blackhat Humane Society
 P.O. Box 2716
 Window Rock, AZ 86515
 Phone: (928) 337-2828
 Email: ambrwl@citiink.net
 Our homepage: www.rezdog.petfinder.org

DONATIONS NEEDED!

100% of donations go to the animals; for food, vaccinations and spay/neuter surgery. Please help us to help them! Send to:

Blackhat Humane Society

P.O. Box 2716

Window Rock, AZ 86515



Vanessa Schimon and her foster dog, Bitsy