

To the Editor:

There was a time when there was nowhere for members of the public to bring surplus puppies and kittens. As a result, litters were being dropped in rural areas "so someone would give them a good home," left in dumpsters like garbage, and even dropped into trash compactors to be crushed to death. The survivors were breeding. As a result, parts of the county were plagued with packs of feral dogs which preyed on livestock and had to be shot by farmers trying to protect their herds.

In addition, cases of animal cruelty and neglect used to be commonplace throughout Wilson County. Laws forbidding such activities were seldom, if ever, enforced by law enforcement officers.

The Humane Association of Wilson County (HAWC) dramatically changed all that. Once we had a shelter, there was no longer any excuse for dropping unwanted litters in the garbage – there was a place that would accept them, treat them with kindness, adopt them out to good homes if possible, and – sadly – humanely euthanize them if not – for there were always many more unwanted dogs and cats than there were good homes.

In addition, through many years of hard work, we won over the law enforcement personnel, not only convincing them that we were not the enemy, but persuading them to work with us in a mutually beneficial relationship.

The Humane Association developed a balanced approach which worked well for many years. Rather than concentrating all of our limited resources in one area, we were active in many aspects of animal welfare.

Not only did we run the shelter and the adoption program, but we conducted animal cruelty investigations, provided animal-related programs for the schools, donated educational videos to the public libraries, and even assisted low-income people who needed to have their pets neutered at private veterinarians.

The present management of what used to be our Humane Association has changed all that.

Now, they think it is appropriate to assume an arrogant, morally superior attitude with their so-called "no-kill" shelter – which might more accurately be called a "let somebody else do your dirty work" shelter.

There will always be more dogs and cats than there are good homes for dogs and cats. We can lessen the severity of the problem, but it is beyond human capability to eliminate it completely. Thus, there will always be a need for a place which will accept unwanted animals, find homes for as many of them as possible, and euthanize the rest. No sane person wants things to be this way, but we must recognize reality. The biology of dogs and cats is such that they reproduce easily and quickly. Thus, small numbers of fertile adults quickly produce large numbers of offspring – who then go and do likewise.

So-called "no-kill" shelters are a luxury which are feasible only in areas where some other organization performs the euthanasia which is rightfully the responsibility of that shelter. Even though we now have animal control programs operated by local governments, it is important to recognize that these programs are also run by human beings who love animals and who are just as reluctant as we are to be forced to euthanize perfectly healthy animals.

I wish the former Humane Association of Wilson County, Inc. was back.

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The Humane Association of Wilson County, Inc.
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