

ANIMAL

CARE & CONTROL TODAY

A Publication of the National Animal Care and Control Association



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NACA President
Scott Giacoppo

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From the Executive Director

By John Thompson

Welcome to 2020 and a New Era in Animal Welfare!

In the last 20 years we've seen a continued evolution and "professionalization" of our profession. With "dog catchers" becoming "animal control officers," our professionals will become even more important resources to our communities and help our citizens look out for and care for the animals in our lives.

This will take shape in a number of ways.

First, agencies in our communities will continue to be challenged. From doing "more with less" to "driving operational efficiencies" to managing the proverbial "scope creep," all of our agencies will be faced with finding new methods and partnerships for serving our communities with finite resources.

Second, the sentiment that "our people are our greatest asset" has never been more true or important than it will be in the 2020s. From wrestling with significant vacancy rates, to finding ways to recruit the right people without increasing their budgets, agencies across the nation have shared how challenging it is to recruit, onboard, and retain quality individuals.

And third, given the rate of change – from evolving social trends, to social media, from new laws to old laws simply being enforced, from community expectations to the need for community education – more is being asked of our agencies and our people. This ultimately means finding new ways to help our professionals stay on top of these industry and community changes and find creative solutions.



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Kennel cough outbreak closes doggie daycare facility temporarily
Kennel cough has forced another doggie daycare to shut down temporarily to keep the illness from spreading.

Outbreak at animal shelter forces shut down, euthanasia
A major outbreak of kennel cough has swept through the shelter, forcing euthanasia of several dogs.

Canine distemper outbreak again hits animal shelter
After reading accounts about conditions at the shelter by a former volunteer and concerns about the situation voiced by others, you might think the county shelter is riddled by disease.

Disease situation at shelter typical, sporadic
Less than three months after an outbreak of canine distemper forced local animal control agencies to euthanize multiple animals and quarantine the shelter, a second outbreak of distemper has struck the facility.

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NACA's COMMITMENT to GREAT CONTINUING EDUCATION

NACA will continue to serve our members and supporters to help you address these trends in a variety of ways. First, we have an amazing year of webinars planned for you. For example, in June we'll be sharing *Is Mission Creep Killing Your Agency*, followed by *Actions Speak Louder than Words*, specifically discussing the challenges of unprofessionalism later in December. As we know finding and keeping good people is a continued issue for most of our agencies, we'll be sharing *The Secret Sauce to Finding the Best Candidates*, and *Recruiting the Next Generation to Your Agency*. Be sure to check out our upcoming schedule of almost 30 webinars at JusticeClearinghouse.com/NACA.

We will continue to work with Code 3 Associates to deliver the highest standard in animal care and cruelty investigation training. By combining Code 3's Cruelty Investigators Academy and NACA's National Animal Control Officer Training Academy, participants will earn the NACA Animal Control Officer Certification, and the Code 3 Cruelty Investigator Certification. To learn more about this outstanding training visit www.nacatraining.org.

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EXCITING NEWS

Perhaps one of the most exciting innovations we have been developing is NACA's first online course, Basic ACO certification. We hear you: agencies are struggling to not just find people, but train them once they're on board in a way that is both convenient and affordable for even the smallest of our communities.

This 20-lesson course has been designed specifically for the busy working professional by some of the leading names in our industry – people who you likely have only seen at national conferences, read their books, or heard about through magazines or webinars. This online certification is a great solution to prepare animal welfare staff, from new hires to those looking to take the next step in their careers. And because it's online, people can take the courses from the convenience of their own locations, whenever they can. Agencies will love our online certification as well, because it can be incorporated as part of their field training and onboarding process – all on-demand to meet your agency's ever-changing needs.

To learn more about this incredible program, visit www.nacatraining.org

This is only the beginning. Be looking for new on-line training courses, workshops, and regional training events in the coming months – all designed to help you and your agencies be more productive, knowledgeable professionals and ready to address your own communities' needs.

Kind Regards,



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From Your NACA President

By Scott Giacoppo

A fellow officer from a remote area in Alaska said this to me during our national conference in Orlando this past October. Prior to that moment, we had not met. But we already shared a bond through the professional path we both chose and love.

"I love NACA. I love the things you all do. I'll do anything you guys need me to do to help."

That bond is something you all know well. It often goes unspoken but is always respected and acknowledged. It's a bond defined by knowing and understanding what we've all dealt with and gone through as part of this job – a bond wrapped up in our professional identities as animal control officers and humane law officers.

It's about getting called out in the middle of the night to help an animal in distress. It's about the joy, challenge and heartache inherent to this kind of work. It's also about accepting the fact that so few people outside this unique field really understand what we go through and what we do. We've all been there. We all get it. And that deep mutual understanding is what unites us.

Being a member of NACA isn't just about access to best practices and training, perks and discounts at conferences, or networking. Yes, we love those things. But that's not what we're about. You are part of something bigger. Bigger than yourself, bigger than your daily calls, bigger than the agency or community you spend your days and nights serving. Being a part of this organization is about unity and standing tall and proud – together.

Growing up in a family of law enforcement officers, I had the privilege of witnessing firsthand how officers support one another without question. When I graduated from the police academy, I could feel that support, that unity, that unspoken bond that defined everything we stood for. I see it every time I look at Facebook pages devoted to the work we do: officers from every corner of the country sharing good times and bad, offering guidance and support to colleagues they have never met but understand.

I am honored and humbled to have been elected president of this organization. Sitting in our board meeting, looking around the room at my fellow board members, some newly-elected and some who have been serving for years, I know we are on the verge of great things. I see a bright future unfolding for those of us in this field and those soon to come.

In just the past two months so much has happened. We are close to launching our online certification program; we've hosted several webinars; and we're continuing to explore different ways to bring training opportunities directly to officers wherever they may work. We've launched a popular and powerful new podcast, and our social media presence is growing by the day. We even stood in the Oval Office while the President of the United States signed The PACT Act, a bill that NACA supported and worked tirelessly to pass.

There are great things on the horizon, and we need to hear from you as we go to make sure that your needs are front and center in our efforts. On behalf of the entire board, it is an honor to be a part of this incredible organization and profession. For those of you I've met and those I've yet to meet, we believe in what you are doing and stand behind you. ❖

Sincerely,

Scott Giacoppo



Animal Control in America's Last Frontier

By Michael Peck

"Where can I see the bears?" is perhaps the number one question we receive throughout the spring and summer in Valdez. Animal control in Alaska is one of the most amazing and rewarding careers someone can choose. I discovered this after volunteering for the Valdez Animal Shelter and being asked to assist with an injured eagle capture. The bald eagle was a juvenile, just learning how to fly and had injured its wing. With some experience in large bird handling, I quickly realized that out-of-the-box thinking and improvisation are mandatory in our field and most certainly in my location. Not only did I have to capture the bird (next to a fast-flowing river), but then triage injuries, ensure it was stable enough for transport, house it overnight and then prep it for transport to a suitable veterinarian and treatment center. Fortunately, despite several obstacles, this capture and rehab was successful. From that rescue on, I was hooked. I continued to volunteer until a position became available and I immediately applied. Before I start to sound like an animal control groupie (not that they exist) I should reflect on some of the pitfalls of animal

control in the last frontier and some of my nerve-racking experiences.

Of course, one of the most difficult issues facing Alaskan animal control officers is our remote location. The state of Alaska faces some incredible hurdles. Obtaining supplies, vast and difficult terrain, extreme weather, and locating suitable staff applicants are just a few challenges. Of course, you must remember that all of these come at a premium cost with a restrictive budget as well. I will use my town as an example. The City of Valdez covers approximately 277 square miles with only two ACOs providing coverage and only one Alaska state trooper for support. There are no Alaska Department of Fish and Game representatives close by either. Fortunately, the Valdez Police Department is always willing to lend a hand when possible. However, that still leaves an immense burden on the Animal Control Department. In 2018, Animal Control received roughly 315 domestic animal calls and 285 bear calls. (These include everything from sightings to trapping required calls.) We performed three eagle rescues and two owl rescues. Another

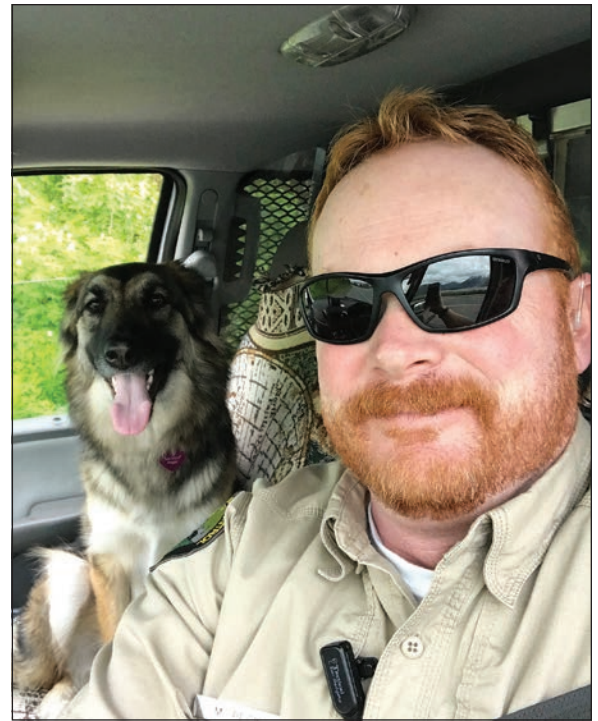


hurdle for those of us in end-of-the-road towns or fly-in-only locales, is trying to find the necessary support for our operations. The closest veterinarian who will treat an eagle is more than 300 miles from Valdez. The same goes for bears and other wildlife.

Training is another difficulty we face. Almost all effective classroom training is located out of state, requiring expensive travel, which makes it hard to secure funding and support. However, with the support of animal control staff around Alaska, the Alaska Animal Control Association has made a huge impact on the availability of annual training opportunities.

Fortunately, the training I have received so far has been first rate and has taught me too many things to list here. Perhaps the most important lesson is to get home safe and uninjured. This can be a little tricky when confronting bears and other wildlife not normally associated with the role of an animal control officer in other locations. From orphaned bear cubs to serious negative bear encounters with full-size brown bears, there is no amount of training that can prepare someone to come face to face with a one thousand pound bear, keep their cool, ensure that the public remains safe, and ensure the bear remains safe so that all involved can leave unharmed and relatively unscathed.

I can still remember a specific bear encounter situation like it happened yesterday. The sun was bright that day. It was warm, but not too hot. Fireweed and forget-me-nots were growing quickly. Mosquitos and no-see-ums were feasting on all the tourists. My call sign squawked through my radio – some people were getting too close to a bear



near the fish hatchery. I grabbed my trusty personal protective equipment, some bear spray and a bright reflective vest (I believe the vest is just to help the bears locate their next tasty meal....) Then I raced off to the hatchery. Oh yeah, the hatchery is at least 15 minutes from the closest emergency medical services staff member, provided they have no other calls or emergencies happening at the same time. Upon arrival at the scene I found 40 to 50 bystanders huddled in a semi-circle with their phones and cameras out, crowding around a full grown male brown bear capable of running at approximately 30 miles per hour. I remembered to take some deep breaths before I got out of my vehicle. I walked to the front of the growing crowd, effectively placing myself between the bear and the group of mostly inexperienced wildlife photographers.

Okay, now what? I feverishly thought through possible scenarios and solutions. Then I heard a loud, deep, breathy huff. The bear was pacing, ears pushed back. It was clearly upset that people were not even 50 feet from him and his soon-to-be fish dinner. That distance only gave one to two seconds before the bear could reach us all. I began telling people to get back, to get in their vehicles, to give the bear some room and anything else I could think

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of to help quickly disperse the crowd. I heard ooh's and aah's as the bear stood on its hind legs. And then, clear as day, someone behind me yelled, "Don't worry everyone, the officer will keep us safe!" My heart was pounding knowing it was my responsibility not just to keep the people safe, but to educate them so situations like this would hopefully not repeat themselves. I began escorting the closest of the onlookers away from the bear. Working quickly and effectively I got the crowd to disperse enough to provide the bear with an escape path that didn't include going straight through me. The bear ate some fish and provided ample opportunity for the photographers to catch a few choice pics from a safe distance. After its snack, the bear, without warning, raced full speed from the water and past the crowd. Before anyone could blink an eye he disappeared into the brush. I heard claps and cheers. My frazzled nerves got a break and I briefly enjoyed my success. Suddenly, my radio squawked my call sign – some people are getting too close to a bear in another part of town...and so my first summer with Valdez Animal Control began.

Five years later and a little more seasoned, I still call Alaska America's final frontier my home, and animal control the best career choice I could have made. With the training I have completed through NACA, Code 3 Associates and the AACA, I feel more at ease and safe with every call I respond to during my day. I have had uncountable close calls with all sorts of animals, seen some of the most amazing landscapes in the world, watched fish swim across the roadway, experienced 3.5 feet of snowfall in a single night, 50 degree below zero temperatures, hurricane force winds on ice covered streets, and yet I still cannot imagine a better place to call home. I look forward to facing the hardships thrown our way each day and I enjoy being a part of the solution to some of the conflicts we experience in even the most remote of locations. Being a member of the AACA as well as a member of NACA has opened my mind to the learning and networking possibilities within the animal control industry and left me far more proficient in this field.

Originally from Ontario Canada, Michael moved to Valdez, Alaska, in late 2015 where he began volunteering for the Valdez Animal Shelter. With past experience in the pet industry and security, animal control seemed to be a perfect career fit for Michael. In 2016, he accepted a temporary position as community safety officer with the City of Valdez. In 2017, Michael was promoted to a full-time position with Valdez Animal Control. Under guidance from the chief animal control officer, Michael currently supervises shelter operations, responds to calls for service, and conducts patrols throughout the community. Michael holds national credentials as an animal control officer and animal cruelty investigator. He also served for two years as board treasurer for the Alaska Animal Control Association. With plans for future training in emergency animal rescue, Michael looks forward to opportunities to better serve his community and the animal control field as a whole. ❖



Turning Orphan Kittens into Old Cats

A new treatment for kitten diarrhea

By Sandra J. Strong

Many of us working in animal welfare and animal control already understand cat overpopulation is a welfare challenge in our communities with an estimated 180 million kittens born each year in the United States. There are approximately 30 to 40 million outdoor unowned community or feral cats in the United States and it is estimated that these community cats are responsible for 80 percent of the kittens that are born annually. These numbers are merely estimates as there is no mandatory reporting system or census for us to accurately count cats. During the reproductive season, orphan kittens are "rescued" from out-of-doors by caring citizens and enter an estimated 3,500 brick-and-mortar United States animal shelters at alarming rates. The exact statistics are unknown, but many kittens fostered will die or be euthanized because of severe illness before they reach eight weeks of age. In one published report 78 percent of free roaming kittens disappeared or died by six months of age.

Based on previous research, we know diarrhea is a common health problem of kittens and the majority of deaths of orphan kittens are associated with clinical signs or postmortem evidence of gastrointestinal disease. Infectious causes of diarrhea, mainly feline panleukopenia virus (FPV) infection, accounts for over half of the deaths of shelter kittens. While there are numerous other causes of diarrheal disease in kittens, diagnostic testing of orphan kittens in shelters is infrequent due to limited shelter resources. Consequently, orphan kittens that develop diarrhea are often treated empirically for intestinal bacterial, protozoal, or parasitic infections and are commonly provided supportive care in the form of probiotics, vitamin supplements, subcutaneous fluids, or assisted feeding.



Given the high rate morbidity, mortality, labor, and resource requirements associated with management of diarrheal disease in orphaned kittens, it is surprising that there are no published studies examining the impact of treatment interventions on survival outcome in this population. Identification of life-saving treatment approaches would be of immediate benefit to the health and welfare of orphaned kittens and the thousands of shelters across the United States tasked to care for them.

The Wake County Animal Center (WCAC), in Raleigh

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were housed in a dedicated room within the shelter and transferred as soon as possible (average two to three days) to the home of a volunteer foster care provider.

For this project, a total of 1,718 orphan kittens were fostered, among which 220 kittens (12.8 percent) from 118 different litters were presented for evaluation of diarrhea. A total of 172 (78 percent) kittens underwent treatment for their diarrhea, among which 153 (89 percent) survived to adoption or transfer to a rescue partner and 19 (11 percent) died or were humanely euthanized. Kittens with

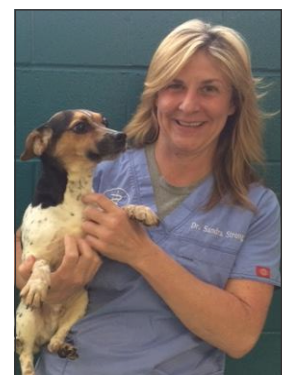
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North Carolina and North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine teamed up to look at what treatments help kittens with diarrhea. Wake County Animal Services is an open intake municipal shelter which serves a population of 1 million citizens. Approximately 300 orphan kittens enter the shelter per month during the reproductive season (May-September) and there are generally 150-200 kittens in foster care during the summer months most years. In this study, all kittens were unowned, less than 12 weeks of age, less than two lbs. body weight and relinquished to the WCAC between April 2016 and July 2017. Upon entry into the shelter, all kittens were administered a single oral dose of ponazuril paste and pyrantel pamoate and topical administration of salamectin for treatment of endo- and ectoparasites. Kittens that were estimated to be at least four weeks of age and at least 0.45 kg were vaccinated by subcutaneous injection with feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia antigen. Kittens estimated to be less than three weeks of age were offered a milk replacer via bottle. Kittens estimated to be more than three weeks of age were trained to eat a slurry of high-quality canned kitten food mixed with water or milk replacer. Once kittens were weaned onto solid food, they were offered canned kitten food and dry kibble was available free choice. The type of canned food fed varied with the inventory of a donated stock of commercially-available canned food marketed for kittens. All kittens

diarrhea that were at least four weeks of age were 24.8 times more likely to survive. While controlling for age, kittens that received a vitamin and mineral supplement were 12.8 times more likely to survive compared to kittens with diarrhea that did not receive the supplement. Treatment with subcutaneous fluids, penicillin G, tube feeding, a probiotic containing *Enterococcus faecium* SF68, ponazuril, or metronidazole did not statistically significantly increase survival of kittens with diarrhea.

The conclusion and relevance here are that at least four weeks of age and treatment of diarrhea with a vitamin and mineral supplement favorably improves survival of orphaned kittens to adoption. Application of these findings are likely to improve the health and welfare of this population and contribute to a refinement in use of shelter resources. The vitamin supplement administered was Hi-vite by Vetoquinol. Another vitamin to try is Felovite II also by Vetoquinol. The vitamins were administered orally to kittens with clinical diarrhea by using a 1.0 ml. syringe and the dose used was 0.1 ml. of vitamin per pound of body weight. If you would like to read more about the specifics of this study, please see the publication in the "Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery."

*Sandra J Strong, DVM, DACAW
(animal welfare) ❖*



On Guard Against Zoonoses

By Jay Tischendorf

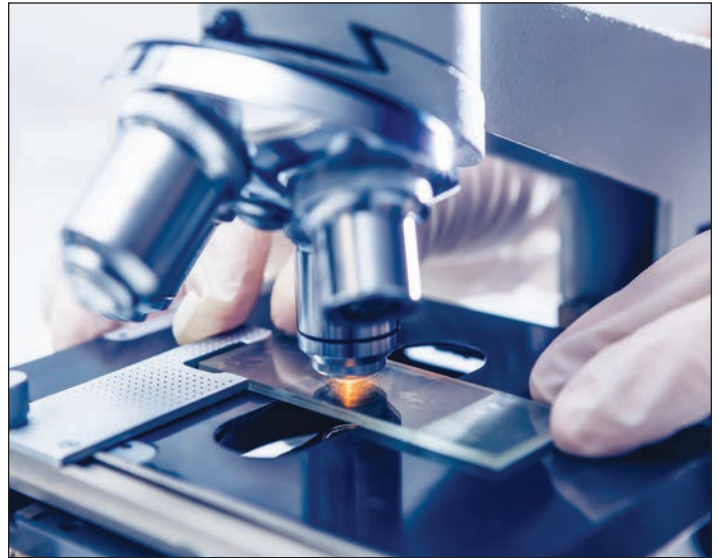
For those of us who work closely with animals, their feces, urine, blood, pus, glandular secretions, nasal discharge, and drool are all part of our daily routine. Unfortunately, all these biological substances, among others, are potential avenues for infection with what are known as “zoonoses” or “zoonotic diseases.” These communicable diseases are those infections that are shared by or transmitted between animals and humans.

Suffice it to say there are more of these transmissible diseases lurking out there than any of us would care to think about. But because we all have an increased risk of exposure to these conditions, it is important to keep the danger of zoonoses in mind as we conduct our everyday activities. Microscopic eggs from parasitic worms passed in the stool, bacteria or viruses transmitted via bites of both animals and the vectors like fleas and ticks which infest them, and aerosolized pathogens such as influenza and other respiratory microbes, are just a few of the zoonotic diseases we might worry about.

While we could dive deeply into the fascinating details of the world’s many zoonoses, such as rabies, sporotrichosis, or leptospirosis, it is arguably more important for animal care and control professionals to understand how to protect themselves from these dangerous and potentially deadly infections. First, consider that the three major pathways for our occupational exposure to zoonotic and other pathogens are inhalation, ingestion, and injection (which includes animal and parasite bites, needle punctures, or passage through an external mucous membrane). Concerted efforts to avoid exposure to microbes via these routes will go a long way toward keeping animal workers safe.

Having made this commitment, a key technique is simply the consistent cleaning and disinfection of premises, vehicles and equipment. In essence, the careful removal of pathogens ensures they are unavailable and thus unable to cause infections. This is fundamental in biological risk management and infection control. Additionally, the diligent use of personal protective equipment (PPE) including gloves, eye protection, and face masks when working with needles, animal blood, body fluids, tissues and other biological substances is critical. In cases where inhalation exposure is a risk, an appropriately selected and fitted filtration mask is warranted.

Extra care is needed when one is working with



overtly sick animals, so PPE is also important here, at least until it can be proven that an animal isn’t contagious. But keep in mind that even healthy appearing animals can carry and transmit dangerous microbes and parasites, so eternal vigilance and awareness are always necessary.

Vigilance and awareness are also paramount to bite prevention. Bites can be minimized by both the close observation of behavior cues of animals and appropriate use of humane restraint techniques, including chemical immobilization (sedation and anesthesia). Please note that I hope to work with NACA to update the NACA course, so please stay tuned for more details on that.

Anti-parasitic drugs and preventatives should be used in our patients and pets to help maintain their health and minimize the risk of diseases that these all too common organisms, such as fleas, ticks and mosquitoes transmit.

When working with needles, proper needle handling and disposal is mandatory to avoid injury and disease.

This article is a quick pass at a complex and critical subject. Let’s all make an effort to continue learning as much as we can. Hopefully future issues of this magazine will feature continued updates on zoonotic diseases and awareness. In the meantime, as we strive to minimize the danger of inhaling, ingesting, or injecting microbes, remember that good habits are as easy to learn as bad ones.

Jay Tischendorf DVM, American Ecological Research Institute (AERIE) ❖

Bojangles' and Local Media to the Rescue!

Building partnerships to help increase adoption rates

By Melissa D. Knicely

I am employed by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Animal Care and Control Division as their media relations, public relations/marketing manager. It's also essential for this story that you know I'm an avid football fan and a huge fan of the Carolina Panthers.

In mid-summer 2018, like many shelters, we were in the midst of a hectic kitten season. We had kittens of all sizes, ages, colors, and personalities stashed everywhere! We were in desperate need of kitten adoptions. I wrote a personalized email to a colleague at each media outlet in Charlotte explaining the crisis we were in and that tough decisions were having to be made regarding kittens that were being treated but not turning the corner because our space was so limited. The local media, as always, was very supportive and invited us on their shows or came to the shelter to do a story on our kitten crisis. Within a day of these stories airing our kittens were flying out of the shelter into new homes! In less than a week, we had adopted four times as many kittens as we did in a typical week. The community response and support was incredible; however, we did run into one small snag. We were quickly running out of the cardboard carriers that the kittens go home in.

Unfortunately, the company that we usually order these from said they do not keep these stocked at the Charlotte warehouse, and it would be at least another week to 10 days for us to receive more boxes. We called around to the local pet stores and bought all they had in stock, which was not nearly enough to keep up with the kitten adoption rush we were experiencing.

As we brainstormed for a solution, it came to me, much like finding a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow... Bojangles'! If you are not familiar with Bojangles', let me school you in what you are missing. Bojangles' is a franchise restaurant, famous for its delicious chicken and their yummy biscuits. Bojangles' is a "must-have" for tailgating. In

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ENROLL TODAY



NATIONAL ANIMAL
CARE & CONTROL ASSOCIATION

National Animal Control and Humane Officer Academy (NACHO) Certified Animal Control & Cruelty Investigations Training

Code 3 Associates and National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA) have formed a partnership to deliver a higher standard in animal care and cruelty investigation training. This partnership streamlines and continues to set the standard for the way animal control, law enforcement and humane officers receive training by combining Code 3's Cruelty Investigators Academy and NACA's National Animal Control Officer Training Academy.

Module A Topics Include

- The Professional & Ethical Officer
- Canine & Feline Identification
- Search & Seizure, w/ Juveniles & Liability
- Biosecurity & Zoonotic Diseases
- Rabies & Quarantine
- Veterinary Evaluations & Injury Assessments
- Authority, Laws & Ordinances, Policies & Procedures
- Investigative Report Writing
- Interviewing & Behavior Analysis
- Canine & Feline Behavior
- Companion Animal Capture & Handling

Module B Topics Include

- Animal Cruelty Forensic Photography
- Animal Fighting
- Animal Cruelty Crime Scene Processing & Evidence Handling
- Tense Argument & Confrontation Tactics
- Animal Hoarders
- Basic Nutrition
- Livestock ID & Behavior
- Livestock Investigations
- Situational Awareness & Stress Management
- Case and Trial Preparation
- Sworn Testimony (Practical)
- Body Condition Scoring Dogs & Cats

Module C Topics Include

- Large Scale Impounds
- Disaster Response Planning
- Scenario Tabletop Exercises
- Hazardous Materials Awareness
- Clandestine Labs Awareness For The Animal Control Officer / Investigator
- Backyard Breeders & Animals For Sale
- Gender & Sexuality Awareness
- The Cycle of Violence
- Identifying And Handling Exotics, Non-traditional Pets & Wildlife
- Handling Exotics, Non-traditional Pets & Wildlife (w/hands-on practical)
- Exotic Animal Investigations
- Case Study Tabletop Exercises

Certification

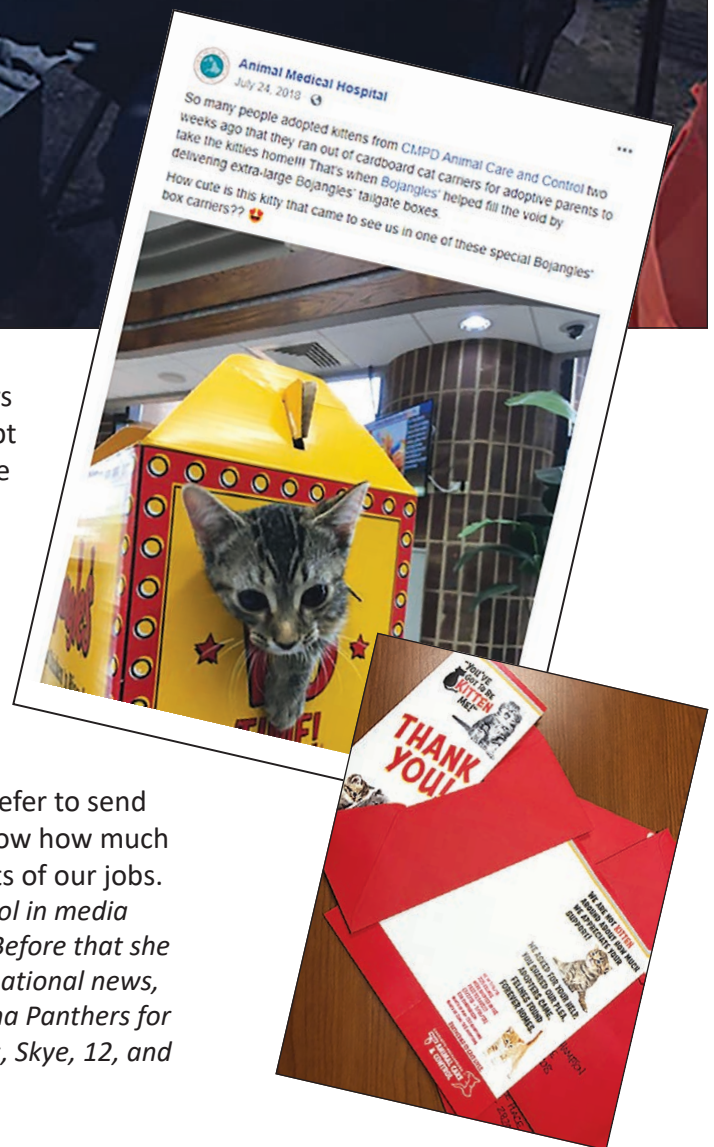
Upon completion of Modules A, B, and C participants will be dual certified as a Code 3 Associates Certified Animal Cruelty Investigator and a NACA Certified Animal Control Officer. The NACA certification requires successful completion of only Modules A and B. This academy is taught in partnership with Colorado State University and CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital for certification.

Please visit www.Code3associates.org, www.nacanet.org, or contact us at info@code3associates.org for more information and to learn more about getting help with training expenses through our Sponsor an Officer program and half scholarships. You can also visit the NACA website to apply for their Joseph Maniaci Scholarship.

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fact, that is what made me think of it! For many years I've attended tailgate parties where there is always a Bojangles' Tailgate Box (packed with 20 pieces of chicken, 3 large "fixins" (that is southern-speak for "sides") and a gallon of sweet tea. (SWEET tea is also a southern thing. It's nearly illegal to tailgate without one!) The best part, it's all packed neatly in a, you guessed it... a cardboard cat carrier shaped box, complete with air vents. Many times, I've examined the very sturdy cardboard tailgate box and said, "These are even nicer and stronger than our cardboard cat carriers, and they look just like them; we have to think of a way to do a fun adoption campaign with Bojangles'." I shared my crazy idea about where I thought we might get some "cat boxes," with our Shelter Director Dr. Josh Fisher. I do believe he thought I had lost my mind. The good news is he trusts me. I was off to do some Google stalking to find someone in the corporate office at Bojangles' to contact. A day later, I had a message back from their PR and Media Relations Manager Cliff. They loved the idea and were happy to help solve our crisis! He asked where and how many we needed! The following day, we had a few hundred Bojangles' Tailgate Boxes delivered to the shelter. Bojangles' saved the day – great PR for them, and more publicity to adopt kittens and take them home in a Bojangles' Box. The local media loved this story, and of course it was a hit on social media for months. We still have adopters bring in their own tailgate box when they are ready to adopt a kitten. I share this story as a reminder to think outside the box (or think of a box, in this instance). Resources are all around us, and sometimes they are not ones that come to mind right away; however, if you take time to share and explain your needs, you never know who might come to your rescue. Forge relationships with the local media. They can truly be a partner in your lifesaving efforts, and they really want to help animals. Always be transparent, and above all, always take time to send a thank you card, a thank you email, or tag them on a social media post. (I prefer to send handwritten cards.) Just taking the time to let someone know how much you appreciate their support is one of the most critical parts of our jobs.

Melissa has been working at CMPD Animal Care and Control in media relations, public relations and marketing for nearly 13 years. Before that she worked in the television broadcasting industry in local news, national news, sports entertainment/news and part-time for the NFL's Carolina Panthers for more than 20 years. Melissa is owned by two Siberian Huskies, Skye, 12, and Flurry, 11. ❖



Leading the Field

Meet our new NACA President Scott Giacoppo

By Rob Blizard

So many of us get our news via social media these days, and I was pleasantly surprised to see a post with such good news on Facebook recently. My colleague Scott Giacoppo had been elected president of the National Animal Control Association!

Wow—how cool is that, I thought. NACA is a well-known and highly respected organization for those professionals working in animal care and control, and Scott has been active in what he calls “an evolving field” for a long time.

“I’m a firm believer that the animal care and control field is an honorable profession,” Scott told me. Agreed 100 percent. It goes without saying.

I’d never been a NACA member myself during my career in animal welfare. Nor had I been to any of its conferences. But I know what a prominent and guiding role the association plays in a field that sometimes doesn’t get the respect it deserves for all the good that animal control officers (ACOs) bring to communities and all the risk and danger that ACOs face and experience. Some have even been killed while performing their duties.

I first got to know Scott many years ago in his role at the Washington (DC) Humane Society and was pleased to see he now had a new role as director of national shelter outreach for Best Friends Animal Society. In this role, he provides, according to the Best Friends website, “leadership and hands-on training for strategic shel-

ter partners; conducts professional shelter operations and field assessments; and leads progressive, humane trainings for animal control agencies and officers.” Now 53-years-old, Scott lives in Nashville with four cats, who are all brothers born on the street.

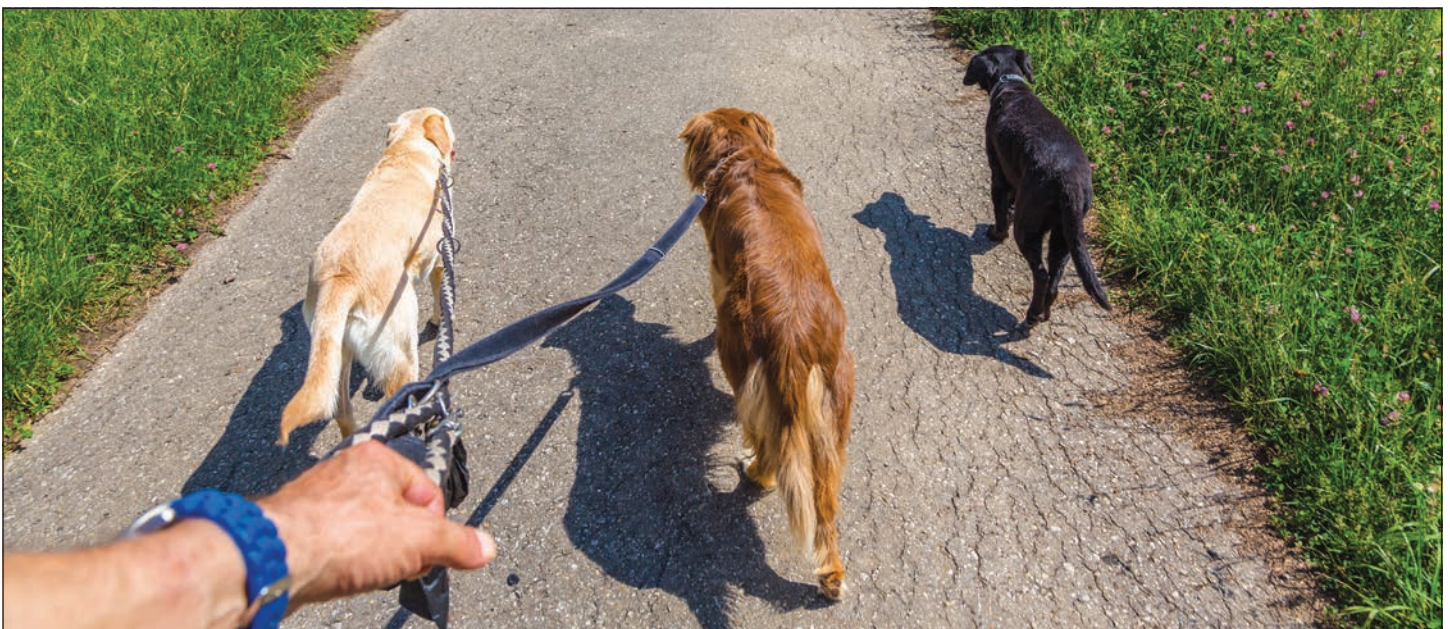
Prior to his current position, he was chief of animal field services for the District of Columbia for 10 years. Before that, Scott worked in Boston for more than a decade at the Massachusetts SPCA as the Special State Police Officer for Cruelty Investigations. He received awards and recognition for work with dangerous dogs, street gangs, community policing education, and the investigation and prosecution of precedent-setting animal fighting cases.

No doubt, this is a most impressive background, and highly appropriate for NACA, for which he was just re-elected to his second three-year term as a board member as well as his first one-year term as its president. He has been a member of the organization, founded in 1978, for a decade.

One doesn’t come across someone holding the post of president every day, so I was curious to know what Scott has on the agenda for his peers.

He deemed NACA’s primary focus to be educating members so they can do their job better by benefitting from successful strategies and tactics pioneered by their

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colleagues.

"Our job," professed Scott, "is to show them what others are doing that is working – reducing call volume, increasing public safety, solving animal-related problems in the community, increasing the image of animal control and reducing euthanasia – and not only show them what is being done, but show them how they too can do it. That's what being a member of NACA is all about: unity, being a part of something bigger than yourself, [and]...being able to learn from and teach others all over the country," he said.

He reported that NACA will continue to drive the enormous change of animal control from "being heavily enforcement-driven to being more of problem solvers in the community."

Scott pointed to ACOs wanting to change behavior as an ultimate goal, and that impounding animals and issuing citations is not always the best way to change behavior. In most cases, he believes, enforcement is not the best course of action. He said some animal control agencies are starting to focus on avoiding repeat calls by assisting people with problems that lead to frequent issues with their animals.

For example, some ACOs nationwide are now helping people fix fences to prevent their animals from escaping and roaming. He mentioned agencies including Pima County, Arizona, and Caddo Parish, Louisiana, now have trucks stocked with fence repair equipment. They have, according to Scott, been posting stories about their problem-solving efforts and receiving strong support from their communities.

Impounding animals, he explained, typically results in offenders simply acquiring another animal and the problem behavior repeating.

"Officers around the country know this to be the case," said Scott. "We've all been to the same house for the same problem over and over again. We need to find ways of stopping that cycle and solving the problem once and for all."

As president, he also wants "every ACO in the country getting the training they deserve." This includes courses on not only officer safety, but also compassion fatigue, a term for burn-out resulting from repeatedly giving on an emotional level – especially in the face of sad, tragic circumstances that ACOs and similar professions must grapple with on a daily basis.

Increased training opportunities is a chief NACA priority. There is no national education standard for ACOs and some practitioners receive no training at all. NACA offers full certification programs and Scott is advocating for courses on supervision and leadership to help pre-

pare officers for career advancement. The NACA board is also looking at additional ways that technology can help ACOs and the animals they assist.

I asked about the controversial issues with which NACA now wrestles and where the field is moving on them. Topping the list is trap-neuter-return (TNR), which NACA officially supports because the organization recognizes that trapping and removing has not reduced numbers in outdoor cat populations. Moreover, removing cats also exacerbated public resentment toward animal control.

"I firmly believe in TNR and believe it solves the issues of too many cats, and if done right reduces nuisance complaints," he noted. "More and more ACOs are getting on board but it's still not a standard practice yet, like removal once was. It's a controversial issue for animal control, city governments and animal lovers in general."

"The next issue I see on the horizon is dog licensing," said Scott. "I'm opposed to it. I think it is an outdated model that costs more than it brings in."

Many municipalities have found that licensing costs taxpayers more money than it raises, according to him. He cited Albuquerque, New Mexico, instead requiring microchipping with lifetime registration as opposed to an annual license fee. NACA, Scott noted, continues to officially support licensing programs but he hopes to encourage conversations among ACOs about whether this endorsement should be amended or abandoned.

I know from my own experience that sometimes ACOs and shelter personnel can disagree on hot-button policy subjects like no-kill rhetoric, shelter intake and euthanasia. I asked Scott about this occasional longtime conflict and he says that he continually seeks to build bridges with colleagues at humane societies and SPCAs.

"We are all trying to achieve the same goal. As long as we all put the work into saving healthy adoptable animals, then nothing else matters. No one wants to put dangerous dogs back into the community or allow animals to languish away in a shelter," he explained. "We have more in common than not and that's what we need to focus on."

Best wishes to you, Mr. President, as you and everyone at NACA seek to help more animals in need.

Rob Blizard is an independent nonprofit management consultant focusing on fundraising, marketing and communications for animal protection organizations. With 20 years of animal welfare experience, he has served as executive director at the Norfolk SPCA, as well as in fundraising management positions at the Humane Society of the United States and Washington (D.C.) Animal Rescue League. ❖

Animal Welfare Issues and Trends

Our experts share insight for the 2020s

We recently asked our NACA community of experts to share their thoughts about the trends and issues that the animal welfare community are likely to face in the 2020s. Below are a few of their thoughts.

**Lauren Bluestone, Director
of Metro Animal Care and Control, Nashville**

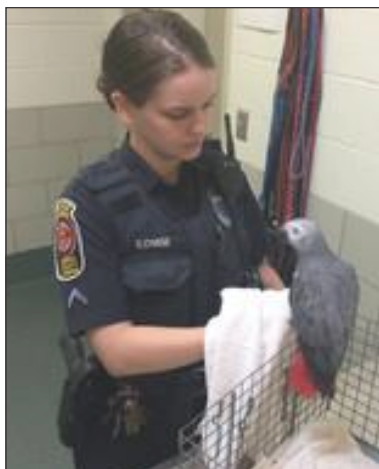


"I think one of the biggest trends we'll see in the 2020s is the controversy surrounding the animal welfare movement such as no kill facilities versus social conscious communities. We'll also continue to see the community's perception shift from "dog catcher" to "animal

services." Resources will also be a challenge (funding) and reinforce the importance of community partnerships and community engagement."

Siobhan Chase, Animal Protection Police Officer, Fairfax County Police Department

"I think how Social Media influences ownership of exotic/wild "pets" will continue to grow in the 2020s. All you have to do is scroll through Instagram, Reddit, or Facebook in order to find cute videos of "tame" wild animals interacting with humans or domestic pets. While a video of a raccoon, coyote, or fox rolling around with a pet cat is indeed adorable,



these videos are influencing people into viewing these animals as fun "pets."

These videos do not depict the risk of disease transmission, legality, liability, or training that goes into "owning" these pets. Animal welfare agencies will likely be getting increased reports of people owning illegal exotic pets due to social media. Health Departments will also likely be getting reports of human exposure to various diseases that these animals can carry."

**Jim Crosby, Director
of Canine Encounter Training**



"Even though we have a lot of research on 'The Link,' we are going to have to continue to educate law enforcement, animal control, and especially prosecutors and the judiciary to see animal cruelty as an abhorrent crime that is often – a gateway to subsequent crimes against humans."

**Adam Leath, Volusia County
Animal Services Division Director**

"The one I immediately think of is meeting the increased demands of the public with a shrinking or flat line budget and the ever-present issue of mission creep.

Agencies have to work smarter and become laser-focused on their mission to ensure they don't get pulled in different directions. Agencies have to make difficult decisions on what the public expectations are, coupled with the expectations of



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policy makers. Only use resources on programs and services that support the agency's mission."

Michelle Welch, Senior Assistant Attorney General and Director of the Animal Law Unit, Virginia Attorney General's Office



"As NIBRS numbers are reported more consistently throughout the nation, I think we will see a lot more animal cruelty and animal fighting [than previously thought]. I think the reporting will show both increases in gross neglect and intentional cruelty/torture. We are seeing a propensity for law enforcement to take cruelty cases more seriously than in past years. Our big-

gest challenges are enforcing and investigating neglect and intentional cruelty of animals. In the prosecution world, we must keep educating prosecutors to take these cases seriously."

Claudine Wilkins, Animal Law Source Founder

"I think there will be continued and increasing challenges around service animal claims.



There will be more lawsuits for police who fail to enforce a service animal owner's civil rights. There is hardly any training in this area, plus the laws are very confusing and are in a state of flux. There will also need to be additional education to help the justice community understand these laws. For example, Georgia has numerous definitions beyond federal laws, which causes a great deal of confusion, thus leading to minimal enforcement. There will also likely be an increase of fraud in service animal claims."

What issues or trends do YOU think will be critical in the 2020s? Share your ideas at editorial@justice-clearinghouse.com. ❖



The National Animal Control & Humane Officer (NACHO) Training Academy

The National Animal Care & Control Association (NACA) has continued to set the standard for the way animal control, law enforcement and humane officers receive training. Our partnership with Code 3 Associates delivers the highest standard in animal care and cruelty investigation training. This partnership streamlines and continues to set the standard for the way animal control, law enforcement and humane officers receive training by combining Code 3's Cruelty Investigators Academy and NACA's National Animal Control Officer Training Academy.

The NACHO curriculum consists of three 40 hour modules, each providing instruction in all aspects of animal control and animal cruelty investigations. We recommend Module A be taken first, and modules B and C may be taken in any order.

Upon successful completion of this academy you will receive a certificate and are eligible to apply for continuing education credits (CEUs) from Colorado State University. You will be taught by outstanding faculty who are qualified to teach the various subjects, not only by knowledge but also by experience. All of our faculty have "been there and done that."

For more information on this exceptional training and certification, visit www.nacatraining.org

"I liked the equal amount of hands on experience and lectures. All instructors were enthusiastic and extremely intelligent within their realms of instruction." – Caleigh F.



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Public Safety First

Discussions with ACOs on dangerous dogs in the community

By Camille King



Animal control officers (ACOs), the first responders in dangerous dog situations, have a difficult role in maintaining safety in the community. The Colorado statute defines a "dangerous dog" as one that has: "Inflicted bodily or serious bodily injury upon or has caused the death of a person or domestic animal; or has demonstrated tendencies that would cause

a reasonable person to believe that the dog may inflict injury upon or cause the death of any person or domestic animal; or has engaged in or been trained for animal fighting as described by the statute."

Approximately 4.5 million dog bites occur each year in the United States. Dog bites and other dog-related

injuries accounted for more than one-third of all homeowners' insurance liability claim dollars paid out in 2016, costing more than \$600 million.

As an applied animal behaviorist, I have worked closely with ACOs over the past two decades and hold them in high esteem. The purpose of this article is to thank ACOs for the incredible dedication they show every day in their jobs, to showcase the problems in our communities related to dangerous dog events, and provide creative solutions to address those problems.

The conversations highlighted below examined the long-term problem of balancing advocacy for dogs while maintaining community safety. Twenty-three ACOs located in rural and municipal areas throughout Colorado took part in this discussion.

Cumulatively, these officers had 321 years of work experience in the animal welfare industry. The majority of the officers owned canine pets from all breed groups and consistent with the research, viewed their dogs as family members.

ACOs respond to a variety of dispatch calls, and their work shift is never routine. Although they respond to calls for sick or injured wildlife, animal cruelty cases, disaster response, health-related concerns and the like, this article will focus on dangerous dog calls.

How ACOs qualify a dangerous dog

The ACOs reported that they typically look at body language and behavior to assess a dog for aggression. A dog may be known to the officer, and if the dog has a history of aggression, this information will work into their assessment. ACOs watch for eye softness or hardness, tail and ear carriage, a closed mouth, and piloerection (hackling). In addition to monitoring body language, the dog's behavior is monitored. ACOs assess the dog's response to people, especially as the dog is "on the move."

They consider whether the dog is charging at people or barking and then running away, both of which can indicate offensive or defensive aggression. Others consider whether the dog is social and willing to approach or presenting avoidant behavior.

Officers also evaluate the envi-

ronment, knowing that the dog may present aggressively when in its yard or near the property line. ACOs reported more episodes of fear-based aggression in dogs-at-large than true offensive aggression.

Types of dangerous dog cases to which ACOs respond

To give an idea of the level of risk ACOs are tasked with putting themselves at on any given day, here is a short list of some of the stories related by the ACOs I interviewed. Dog breeds and people and animal demographics were removed from the content to protect privacy and maintain confidentiality.

- A dog was running at-large, charging and biting multiple people in a neighborhood. When multiple ACOs were called and arrived on the scene, the dog jumped overhead and attacked one of the officers who tried to contain the dog. The dog bit down, ripped the glasses off the officer's nose, and caused significant damage to the officer's face. The dog was eventually contained in a safe area in a shelter. No owner ever came forward and the dog was euthanized.

- An individual went to visit a friend. The friend's dog was well-known to the visitor. The visitor reached down

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National Animal Control & Humane Officer (NACHO) Academy Modules A, B, & C Training Schedule

Module A	April 13-17, 2020	Longmont, CO
Module A	May 4-8, 2020	Boston, MA
Module A	May 11-15, 2020	Chicago, IL
Module A	June 8-12, 2020	Cleveland, OH
Module A	October 12-16, 2020	Reno, NV
Module A	November 9-13, 2020	Jackson, MS
Module A	November 30-December 4, 2020	Las Vegas, NV
Module B	February 3-7, 2020	Winter Haven, FL
Module B	February 10-14, 2020	Charleston, SC
Module B	March 2-6, 2020	Salt Lake City, UT
Module B	March 16-20, 2020	Kannapolis, NC
Module B	March 23-27, 2020	Columbus, IN
Module B	April 27-May 1, 2020	Leawood, KS
Module B	June 1-5, 2020	Longmont, CO
Module B	September 21-25, 2020	Marietta, GA
Module B	October 19-23, 2020	Seattle, WA
Module B	November 16-20, 2020	Westland, MI
Module C	January 13-17, 2020	Surprise, AZ
Module C	February 17-21, 2020	Marietta, GA
Module C	April 6-10, 2020	Omaha, NE
Module C	September 14-18, 2020	Kannapolis, NC

Registration fee for each class is \$595.

For more information, visit www.nacanet.org

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to pet the dog, and was bitten repeatedly in the face, resulting in injuries requiring plastic surgery.

- An intoxicated dog owner screamed at officers to not “shoot” the dog after the dog charged at people, bit multiple times, and was unable to be contained.

- An elderly dog was asleep in the yard. A neighbor dog broke through the fence, rushed into the yard, and killed the elderly dog. There were prior reports on file of the neighbor dog harassing the elderly dog.

- A small dog escaped from the yard and killed over 150 of the neighbor’s chickens in one episode.

- A homeless individual was removed from his vehicle during an arrest. The ACO needed to remove the individual’s dog and had to use a bite stick and catch pole to remove the aggressive dog from the vehicle.

There isn’t any justice in these types of dangerous dog cases, and people and animals suffer or die. Suffering occurs not only from physical injury, but also the immense emotional strife of others who weren’t originally involved in the actual incident. ACOs can be traumatized by the situations they encounter. It is their job to respond to dangerous dog situations. The average person in the community is unwilling to put themselves at risk in a dog fight or bite occurrence.

Yet ACOs are often the first responders in maintaining public safety. It is remarkable to witness the number of

years officers remain committed to animal welfare, even after witnessing these traumatic events. One officer I spoke to stated: “When I first started in the field, I believed I had some connection with animals. I almost quit the job, because a raccoon was euthanized. I continued to show up. I treat [the animals] like they are my own. Look how many years I have been working here. There is a reason why.”

How ACOs manage dogs in the community

There is a full range of tools that ACOs use to manage dangerous dogs in the community. The ACOs start with the least restrictive method for the situation. Their use of brain power (common sense, patience, etc.) and body language is initial and of utmost importance.

Some officers have used treats or thrown a ball to divert a dog-at-large and avoid a possible aggressive situation. Swinging a cinch leash can be a good strategy to keep the dog at a distance, and then ultimately the officer can use it to catch and leash the dog later. The public doesn’t respond to the use of a cinch leash with the intensity they do when they see the use of a catch pole.

The catch pole is a safe way to contain a dog at a distance and prevent possible bites to others. The dog will often fight capture, and the use of a catch pole can

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result in a bloody lip or tongue, or loss of a tooth. The public has a disapproving response toward this method of capture and can lash out at the ACO. The officer has the opportunity in this situation to provide education to the public and promote an understanding that the catch pole not only captures the dog quickly so the ACO can get the dog to a safe shelter, but also provides safety to the officer and the public.

Tool use increases with the severity of the situation. Officers have used a Snappy Snare containment rod. One officer reported: "The Snappy Snare springs shut. It isn't the best tool for a really aggressive dog. When the dog runs by, it [the tool] has a flexible pole. The dog can come back at you."

Other tools the officers use include Kevlar-lined gloves, a net gun that throws a four-foot by six-foot net around the dog to contain the animal, an ASP expandable baton, and capsaicin spray made from cayenne pepper.

The spray can cause coughing from inhaling the contents in the dog and the officer when both parties are in close quarters.

Lastly, the ACOs reported that they had access to chemical capture as a last resort and have had limited use of a TASER. Chemical capture was used with wildlife, and the TASER had been used in dog-on-dog aggression.

How do we advocate for dogs and provide public safety?

This question promoted a lot of animated discussion. Ongoing topics of discussion and debate included the injustice of innocent people and animals being injured and killed by dangerous dogs in the community, the belief that not every animal can get a "forever home," the views on live-release rates as a measure of success in humane societies, and breed-specific discrimination.

All persons in the animal welfare industry have a professional responsibility to maintain public safety while they are advocating for animals. All animals have the right to live in a world free from cruelty and abuse. However, it is a social justice issue if we opt to give all possible resources to one animal when the life and safety of another person or non-human animal is jeopardized in the process.

Rescues and shelters can contribute to the problem

The majority of ACOs I interviewed believe that stakeholders (humane societies, rescue groups, animal law enforcement, police officers, legislative parties, etc.)

should conduct consistent group meetings and take part in crucial conversations regarding dog advocacy and public safety. These conversations could include discussions on:

- Transparent communication to the public
- Maintenance of live-release rate numbers and placing at-risk dogs appropriately
- Rescue groups allowing for observation, assessment, and training (if needed) prior to adoptions so families have the best possible chances at successfully maintaining the dog in the home
- Protection for the innocent bystander in the community
- Education for people who discriminate against a particular species or breed of animal.

Many ACOs believe the live-release rate system is a poor standard to measure the success of a local shelter. We need to take responsibility for and be advocates for dogs without dropping our standard of community safety. If a dog is not able to be rehabilitated, it will not be successful in the community. Placing the dog with a person who can't manage it, or worse, doesn't understand what type of pet they have, in the name of giving the dog a forever home, is outrageous. It doesn't provide justice for the dog who must endure the stress of changes, let alone the unsuspecting passerby who is injured. Counting how many animals are adopted out alive doesn't measure the dog or the family's success outcomes or animal welfare's true mission.

One officer said:

"I understand the live-release rate, but dogs are being placed in the community and people aren't prepared to manage them. Some of these dogs get returned to the facility because they get into trouble and the families can't handle them. I would love to see a research study evaluating the live-release program. Are we getting the outcomes that promote advocacy and public safety? We don't know how many dogs are brought back, after a live release, to the community. Are the numbers truly accurate?"

Stakeholders need to look at the root cause of why so many more dogs with behavior and health problems are coming through the system. Human and financial resources get depleted when every dog that comes through has a medical or behavior issue. Other communities should be responsible for their dogs. If we quit taking the large volumes of dogs coming in from other states, people in our state may quit backyard breeding when they realize there is not actually a large demand for dogs going unfulfilled and therefore it is not profitable.

The role of government

In addition to public safety and improved adoption methods (testing, training, appropriate matching for families), legislative bodies (city officials, elected officials) should be involved in these crucial conversations on dog advocacy and public safety. There is a lot of power in these offices, and changes can be made when large groups of people work together efficiently.

Breed-specific legislation came up a lot in my discussion with ACOs. A few major cities in Colorado, including Denver, currently enforce breed-specific legislation in the form of a ban on pit bull-type dogs. Overturning breed-specific legislation could help with dispersing our bully breeds to multiple counties and getting access to other resources. It would also change ACOs' focus, and instead of having to cite persons in the community for keeping a banned breed, they could better serve the community by providing more education. It is in the best interest of animal control officers to be proactive and focus their efforts on maintaining public safety, reducing aggression, educating, and managing dangerous dog behavior. Education is one of the key responses to the question of how we promote dog advocacy and main-

tain public safety. Education planning should start in childhood.

Teaching respect for all life is a foundation for great human-animal interactions. Schools should teach bite prevention, dog greeting etiquette, how to care for a pet dog, and reduce breed-based discrimination. Children can also learn to be proactive and understand that if they happen upon a situation where a dog is presenting aggressively, they should leave the dog alone and go get an adult or call an ACO.

ACOs promote change in their community culture through education, responsible pet ownership, licensing the dog, spaying and neutering, hosting public events, teaching children early in schools, and setting up an education booth at local fairs. Volunteers can be taught animal welfare mission and policies and bring that education to the community.

Creative ideas and considerations for a future in promoting dog advocacy and public safety

These are ideas ACOs offered when I asked them what they thought would help make their job easier,

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whether by reducing the number of dangerous dogs in the community or changing the culture to increase understanding of what ACOs do and how best to help them.

- Improve professionalism and develop regulation and licensure in the field of animal behavior. Many people are taking a dog obedience class at a local facility and then deciding to get into the industry. They make business cards that state they are a dog behaviorist or they “guarantee” they can train aggression out of a dog.

- Owners of known aggressive dogs should have certain legal stipulations in management such as assuring that the dog is being monitored in a yard with an enclosure built to a certain standard. Additional requirements could include “Beware-of-Dog” signage, the use of a leash and a muzzle while in the community, and a behavior modification program for owner and dog to ensure a reduction in aggressive behavior. There is power in numbers, and the community can make great advances in dog law. There could also be a neighborhood peer pressure campaign for people who aren’t responsible pet owners.

- A bill can be submitted to legislation stating that all people who breed dogs must get training and be certified prior to breeding a litter of pups. The training would include the importance of breeding for temperament, discussion of overpopulation, and responsible pet behavioral care to maintain safety. If individuals have a litter of pups in their backyards without having had prior certification for responsible pet care/training, they will get cited. Dog breeders should receive recognition through public acknowledgement, a medal, a ribbon, etc., when they make breeding for temperament a priority.

- All adopters should be mandated to take a responsible pet owner class prior to bringing the dog home.

- Shelters and rescues could teach their staff to create an emotionally safe environment so people can be honest when they relinquish their dog to a shelter or rescue group. This information will help in evaluations for possible future placement of the relinquished dog.

Changing stereotypes

The public stereotype of “the dogcatcher” is one



that is quickly changing through education. Animal control officers wear many hats and function in different roles. They are teachers, mediators, detectives, police officers, therapists, EMS responders, and subject matter experts, to name a few.

ACOs are our first responders in dangerous dog situations. They are hired into this role by county officials to maintain public safety. They are the first ones the community calls when they see a dog running down the street without an owner. They are called when pet owners' dogs won't stop fighting in the home or in the backyard. They come to the rescue when an innocent person walks their dog down the street and the person and dog are attacked by one or more dogs running at-large without supervision. ACOs put themselves at risk in dangerous situations when the typical citizen doesn't want to intervene.

These same officers, who love their dogs like the public loves their pets, who sometimes put their physical bodies at risk to protect the public from a dangerous dog, who experience the emotional work in attending, removing, and protecting animals from abusive situations, and the traumatic work of coping in the aftermath of a dog mauling or a human or canine fatality, are sometimes judged by the public.

ACOs have been stopped by the public when their truck was in view and asked, "How many animals are you going to kill today?" Once again, as a behavior consultant, this greatly intensifies my idea that more education is needed. The ACO truck should be viewed as a symbol of public safety and animal advocacy in the community. People can ask questions and discuss problems with the officer, and the ACO can provide education. These officers understand the human-animal bond, human-animal interactions, and public safety measures. I can't tell you how many officers told me in our discussion that they view the dogs in the community as their own. They are in the field to be advocates for dogs and for public safety. We need to give them the respect they deserve.

I would like to acknowledge all the hard work that animal control officers provide in maintaining public safety and creating advocacy for dogs and personally thank the following officers who took part in this discussion: ReRe Baker, Taylor Barnes, Chris Branigan, Robin Breffle, Janeè Boswell, Bobbie Cain, Bryan Cottrell, Tammy Deitz, Jenn Dow, Daniel Ettinger, Rebeca Farris, Ken Gingrich, Kelli Jelen, Julie Justman, Lisa Lebsack, Ryan McFadden, Diane Milford, Bill Porter, Michelle Powers, John Simpson, Sara Spensieri, K.Waters, Carla Zinanti.

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*Resources: Colorado Revised Statutes Title 18 Criminal Code § 18-9-2045. <http://codes.findlaw.com/co/title-18-criminal-code/co-rev-st-sect-18-9-204-5.html>; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2015. <https://www.cdc.gov/features/dog-bite-prevention/index.html>; Insurance Information Institute, April 2017. <http://www.iii.org/issue-update/dog-bite-liability>; Walsh, F. (2009), Human-Animal Bonds II: The Role of Pets in Family Systems and Family Therapy. *Family Process*, 48: 481–499. doi:10.1111/j.1545-5300.2009.01297.x. ❖*



The Power of Your Unconscious

By Peggy A. Rothbaum



I was honored to give a webinar for NACA via The Justice Clearing House this past summer. My focus was on the power of our unconscious and how it can be harnessed to help us cope. Ninety one percent of participants wanted to know more about my topic. This article reviews basic background material and presents the excellent questions asked by the attendees.

The physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion from the demands of your job, including what you witness, make you vulnerable to burnout. Burnout comes from repeated direct exposure or victimization to trauma, being forced to participate in trauma, or from witnessing trauma. The concept of trauma certainly applies to humane animal care and control officers dealing with the abuse and neglect of helpless animals.

The effects of trauma are felt in different ways by different people, sometimes even years later. Trauma does not just “go away with time.” You cannot just “get over it.” Trauma produces emotions for everyone. Emotions can be comforting and helpful, or upsetting, causing more stress. Emotions are not a “sign of weakness.” They are a sign that we are human. Emotions are only a problem when they make us feel bad or interfere with

work, health or relationships.

Sometimes emotions from trauma become unconscious. When we try and bury our emotions we may not even realize that they are still there. The unconscious develops ways to protect ourselves, to shut out pain, “forget,” not care, deflect emotions. But it can get in the way of change. It tricks us into believing that familiar is better and easier, even if consciously we know that this is not necessarily true. Unconscious emotions can make us more vulnerable (to being hurt, to making mistakes, to relationship problems), as we don't really understand what we are doing. We can get stuck.

This is because of transference. What is transference? Transference is exactly what the word means. Emotions from one situation or relationship are “transferred” onto another relationship or situation. We may not be aware of this transfer. It is not the identical for everyone.

Examples of Negative transference: a woman raised in an alcoholic family marries an alcoholic; a man survives a bitter divorce and marries a second wife who is much like his first wife; a boss screams at an employee for making a common mistake that the boss often makes too. Examples of Positive transference: passion; com-

mitment; a cardiologist goes into the field because her beloved father is in the same field; a researcher studies pancreatic cancer because he promised his father on his deathbed that he would try to find a cure. Transference is only a problem if it gets in the way of love, work or play.

How can you use this information to reduce stress and avoid burnout at your job?

There are basic realities about your job that are going to be very stressful for anyone. You are dealing with sometimes-ugly reality. Sometimes it is terrible. Common everyday stress reducers such as exercise, yoga, talking with friends and family, making art or music, to name a few examples, may be helpful.

In addition, making transference connections can also help us cope. Does the current situation feel familiar?

Does it remind you of a particular person or interaction? Ah ha! These connections can help us understand feelings and reactions, calm down and make different choices. It is important to monitor emotions as well as behavior. Control and try to understand any impulses to act out. Watch for triggers. What "sets you off"? Seeking help if needed is a good idea. Talk to a psychologist for psychotherapy, supervision, coaching or behavior management. Get other professional help if you need it.

Below are Q & A from the webinar:

Q: Can unresolved burnout suffered from a previous job impact performance in my current position?

A: Absolutely. One of the articles on my website that you can download addresses that question. We wrote it because it was the second anniversary of 9/11 and

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we were dealing with our own trauma. We also talked about how things like the impact of early trauma can affect us later. It can absolutely transfer from one job to another. That's a good question.

Q: Many of us in animal welfare got into this job because we love animals. Unfortunately, many of us have to euthanize perfectly healthy and good-sheltered animals, ending their lives way too many times. The guilt never goes away; it keeps coming back. Even though I don't have any choice and I do consider myself fairly strong emotionally, it always comes up and drains me. What can we do?

A: This is something that in one of my first conversations with John Thompson, he brought up. This is the epitome of the difficulty of your job. I really think that what you need to do is talk about it. You can talk to each other; that's helpful, because you're all experiencing the same thing, but I also would really encourage you to find a psychologist who understands trauma. It is so understandable that you would feel guilty. It must be so difficult. You have to do these things that you don't want to do and it feels bad. It is better not to walk around feeling like that. This is one of the things that our society imposes on you. In a better society, we would be taking better care of our animals.

Q: As a supervisor, how can we distinguish between those officers that are suffering from burnout versus those that just need more training and help with developing emotional intelligence.

A: I don't know that there's a definite answer, but you talk to them, obviously, and listen to them and see what they say. If they're talking about symptoms of burnout (exhaustion, trouble sleeping, irritability, mood changes, distractibility), or they bring up events from the past, that's what you've got. Other people who need more training might have fewer of those symptoms. They will benefit from more nurturing, support, and supervision from you. You can see them grow, they're not stuck, or they don't appear to be stuck. People who are burned out appear to be stuck.

Q: Even though more people are open to seeking mental help, the culture in our profession will look at us as weak if we seek help and many times label us. I personally know people who are struggling but refuse to seek help. How do we break this culture to find ways for an officer to seek help without feeling marked or labeled as crazy?

A: I agree with you. I think to a certain extent people are more open about mental health help, but there is still a stigma. People perceive themselves, and others perceive them, as weak. It doesn't help that the mental

health infrastructure has been gutted. It doesn't help that we have people screaming and yelling and then people assume that that's what lack of mental health looks like. Do your thing in your little corner of the universe. Start talking to people about mental health. Have people come in from the mental health fields to talk. Do seminars. Educate people about mental health.

Q: How do we identify these types of hidden, unconscious events in our lives that are still impacting us today through transference?

A: That's a really great question. The first thing that you can do is look at yourself. Do you have little spots of vulnerability, things that make you anxious and seem like... I hate the word "overreact" because it's so judgmental: "Oh, I overreacted to that." Well maybe not. Maybe it's because your mother said the same thing to you when she was screaming at you as a child. Look at things where you think you are having a reaction that maybe don't fit the present situation. It seems a little uneven. It seems that you're telling yourself, "I really should be able to do better here." Or if you have other situations that feel somewhat similar to past situations, and you do a little better, this is positive change. So if you feel a little unbalanced like you are running a marathon on a sprained ankle, consider that transference may be at work.

There is another thing you can do, and I do this a lot because I'm aware that I'm not aware, if you will. I get people who are close to me to help me by saying "Listen, come on. You tried that last time and it did not work," or "Are you really going to do that again?" or "We already discussed this situation" or "I love you and you don't really have to do it that way." Or maybe you have a mentor at work or go talk to a psychologist. If you keep doing, thinking, or feeling the same thing over and over again, let others help you see, "Wait a minute, that doesn't seem to be working for me."

Q: Can trauma on the job transfer to your relationships with family members, or actually be transferred to family members?

A: Yes. Absolutely. One of my veterinarian friends says, "If I go home and I look upset, my wife doesn't even ask. She knows that I had a hard day and I need to go sit somewhere." Can you teach family members to have the same reactions? Yes of course. If you go home and you're cranky and unreasonable because you really had a bad day and your temper's really short, you can definitely model that, for example, to your child. That's a good time to seek help. You can understand your transferences better and unlearn the behaviors.

Peggy A. Rothbaum, Ph.D. ❖

Your Job is Already Stressful

Don't add to it with bad eating habits!

By Carlon M. Colker

You have to stop and eat at some point, and it doesn't matter if you are on the job or not. Sooner or later your appetite catches up. Unfortunately, because you are on the go at such a high work intensity, all too often animal care and control employees often rely heavily on the worst types of nutrients — fast food. Burgers, fries, chips, soda, deep-fried food, pre-packaged foods, coffeecake, donuts, etc., litter the working landscape. While we all know that healthy food is better for you, the subject today is not what types of foods you should eat, but instead

the temporal relationship of your meals when on the job.

When you eat is as important as what you eat. To compound the problem of bad fast food choices, too often we push off our hunger until we are ravenous and then we gorge ourselves on whatever is in front of us. In the worst cases we ignore our hunger most of the day and stuff it in at night. Did you just grab a cup of coffee this morning, plan on sneaking a donut or bagel with cream cheese at the stationhouse, and not plan on eating big until tonight? Does that sound like what you do almost every day? The fact is, with this particular diet pattern, you don't even need to eat very many calories to gain tons of blubber around your midsection. It's a principle I call "starvation alert."

It's an age-old mechanism whereby your body attempts to resist change. Any warm-blooded animal has an internally programmed physiologic drive to preserve energy and not change when times are good. This is a condition called homeostasis, or literal etymology of "pertaining to a condition of remaining the same." When an African tiger, cheetah, or other predatory mammal has had unsuccessful hunts and has gone hungry for days, times are



bad. The animal's body knows that, and internal adjustments are automatically made. The metabolism slows, hormone levels change, and sleep patterns alter. They are in the state of starvation alert. But the moment they finally make a big kill and gorge themselves, their bodies have an interesting response. They generally collapse and fall asleep from exhaustion even though they just ate massive quantities! This seemingly paradoxical response of their physiology actually makes a great deal of sense when you think about it. The period of starvation throws the body into a shocked state in which it makes necessary survival adjustments. These adjustments involve making fat storing pathways more energetically favorable. In so doing, during such a state, even small amounts of calories can result in stored fat. This is the nature of the starvation alert mode — preparing for another imminent harsh time of deprivation by causing the body to hoard fat.

My favorite example illustrating the principle of starvation alert in humans are the Japanese sumo wrestlers. I have spent quite a bit of time in Japan and have made many close and dear friends of Japanese heritage. In my time abroad, over the years I feel I have come to know the culture fairly well. I can tell you firsthand that the Japanese are not an obese culture by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, traditionally the women are quite beautiful and lean, while the men are svelte and fit. This is so much the case that it leads one to believe that genetics and not just dietary habits are at work here. But then like a blip on a radar screen or a spike on a seismograph, emerging from these people of modest streamlined physiologic stature, there is sumo.

Thousands of years old, the sport of sumo seems more like a religious tradition at times than a sport. But these massive athletes are tremendously powerful wrestlers — albeit their power comes from fat! That's right, FAT. These men grow to staggering proportions, with some weighing well over 500 pounds. So doesn't it make you wonder how a man from such an innately trim culture can produce so much fat? The answer is simple. It seems the Japanese have discovered the application of my theory of starvation alert and basically used it to create the otherwise inconceivable girth on these men.

Contrary to what you might think, most sumo wrestlers traditionally eat only one meal a day in the evening. It's called chanko and is made up of a pot of broth with pieces of meat, poultry, and fish mixed in with vegetables. The dish is served with a pot of rice and tea. It doesn't sound that excessive to most people, and

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many are puzzled to figure out what is so bad about this meal. But when you understand the principle of starvation alert the problem is clear. Even though the total calories consumed are not that huge in number, the clear problem is one of timing. The meal is served in the evening, and worse yet, before sleep. The result is a cultivation of the worst aspects (for our purposes) of starvation alert.

Steeped in the tradition of sumo, athletes purposely starve themselves all day. This puts them into a state of starvation alert so that when the evening feeding comes, the body is fully prepared to hoard nearly every calorie as fat in preparation for what the body perceives as necessary for “surviving” the next period of deprivation. The other “rule” of gaining weight for sumo is to have this single, isolated meal late in the day and then fall asleep immediately afterward. This again powers the hoarding of nearly every calorie as fat. Interestingly, as with animals, this extreme fatigue to the point of falling asleep is effortless, as it is an integral hallmark of your body being immersed in a deep state of starvation alert.

Unlike the sumo diet, a proper diet, whether at home or out in the field, simply does the reverse. Your meals should be smaller in size, spread with frequency throughout the day, higher in calories in the morning and decreasing to nothing at bedtime. Once past the short adjustment phase that it takes to get used to this way of eating, your body will be able to comfortably burn fat without pangs of hunger. Simply stated, in the same way that sumo wrestlers have perfected the “art” of gaining fat, if we more or less reverse the model and do everything the opposite way in terms of meal patterns and timing, we’ve got the rhythm of how to eat.

Perhaps the best common real-world example of my theory of starvation alert in action is Thanksgiving Day. It seems like everyone at one time or another has approached this gluttonous day with a similar flawed logic, and thus experienced the same outcome — starvation alert and subsequent fat gain. It starts a day or so before Thanksgiving. We begin holding back on eating in preparation for the large meal to come. Thanksgiving Day hits and we only have a cup of coffee for breakfast and skip lunch altogether, somehow thinking that if we eat less during the day we will be able to get away with stuffing ourselves at night. Sound familiar? Just like the sumo wrestler, we have put ourselves in a state of starvation alert.

The subsequent result is that in our deprived condition we are primed to gain fat. We get to dinner famished. We gorge ourselves with turkey, gravy, stuffing, sweet potatoes, giblets, and (let’s not forget) cranberry

sauce among other yummys. What’s the result? Well, if everyone else’s diet theories about calories equaling energy were correct, we should be bouncing off the wall by now, right? Well, in theory maybe, but in fact quite the opposite happens.

Like the predatory cat in the wild and not much different from the sumo wrestler, we are barely able to keep our eyes open. As we deliriously rise from the table with our belt buckle discretely undone, the blur of our gastronomically stretched consciousness comes into focus. Like fat lazy dogs we eye a quiet warm spot on the carpet near the television and collapse into a deep sleep. That is, of course, until we come back to life about a half hour later when someone wakes us up to ask us if we want some pumpkin pie!

So the moral of the story is basically to have breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a pauper, with a small snack between meals. This way, you have enough calories backloaded during the day to not stuff yourself at night before bed.

Carlton M. Colker, M. D., FACN is the chief executive officer and medical director of Peak Wellness, Inc., with centers in Greenwich, Connecticut and Beverly Hills, California. His practice specialties include internal medicine, sports medicine, and nutrition. He is an internationally recognized consultant in health and fitness and widely recognized as America’s premier wellness coach. Marquee athletes and numerous world champions from the NBA, NFL, MLB, USTA, UFC, and WWE credit Colker with improving their lives and performance. ❖



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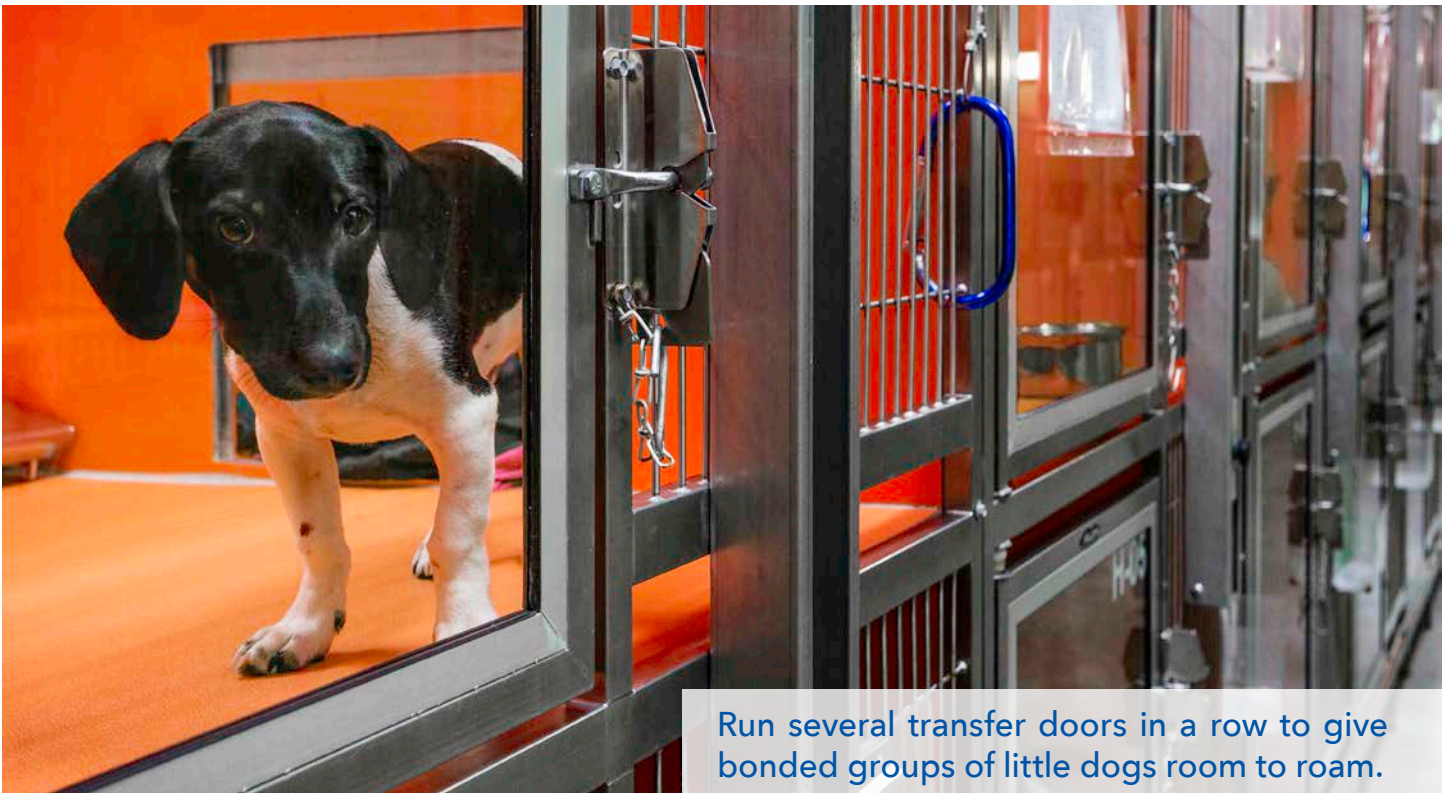
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