

Humane Society – a Morgan County success story

by David Abner

The Morgan County Humane Society has come a long way from the overcrowded cat trailer and dog kennel of a couple of years ago.

Today, along with the trailer and kennel, the society boasts a new administration building and visitor center, mobile adoption van, cat isolation building with clinic room and two large fenced in dog exercise areas.

Saturday, May 16 the society hosted an open house to show off its new facilities and honor its volunteer of the year. About 30 people stopped by to view the new facilities and talk to the society volunteers and board members.

The staff and facilities of the society are funded totally by private contributions and donations, and most of the work to build and maintain the facilities is done by a group of very dedicated volunteers.

New administration building

The new administration visitor center building is the first structure you come to as you drive up the gravel driveway to the shelter.

The building was funded by a grant from the Ruth Hornbeck Memorial Foundation of Parkersburg and with contributions from several local organizations.

The structure was originally a garage shell purchased from the Amish American Company in Martinsburg. It was delivered and placed on a concrete slab foundation.

Then the real work began. Humane Society Treasurer and volunteer Kelvin Langley spent two months modifying the shell into comfortable office space. The office is well lit and wall-to-wall carpeted.

Langley said his first job was to shore up the roof so it could hold drywall. He then completed all the electrical wiring and installed the dry-wall.

A gas line was run and a gas heater installed and soon an air conditioning unit will be mounted in an opening in the back wall.

Langley built a covered wooden deck as a porch and entrance way on the front of the building.

“99.9 percent of the work on the administration building was done by Kelvin Langley,” said Humane Society President Ed Duncan.

About the only job Langley said he didn't do was finishing the sheet rock. After seeing the building it is hard to imagine that it was once meant to be a garage.

Mobile pet adoption vehicle

Because of a generous donation from the estate of Courtney Wachs, the society was able to purchase a Ford minibus.

All but four of the 22 passenger seats have been removed in order to accommodate cages for transporting the dogs and cats.

The society plans to take the minibus to local events such as the Morgan County Fair, Apple Butter Festival, and annual Poker Run and to pet stores in the area.

“This is the only mobile adoption vehicle in the Eastern Panhandle and maybe the only one in West Virginia,” Duncan said.

“Peter Moss at Herb's Auto helped us find the vehicle at an extremely reasonable price,” Langley said.

Duncan said Herb's will do all the routine maintenance for free and repairs at cost.

Cat adoption room

The old administration office in the cat trailer is being converted to a cat exercise and adoption room.

This will allow those wishing to adopt a kitten or cat a chance to interact with the animal privately.

Cat isolation building

A separate holding area for newly arrived cats is located just up the hill from the trailer.

Here cats are screened for disease and behavior before being allowed in the trailer and exposing them to the general cat population.

In the next room is a clinic outfitted with a stainless steel examination table donated by Veterinarian Mark Roberts of Berkeley Springs Animal Clinic.

The room also has a grooming table, a refrigerator to store medicine, cabinets, counter space and sink with running water.

All buildings at the shelter are air conditioned except for the dog kennel.

Dog play areas

Morgan County resident Laura Metzner-Fisher donated the money to build two large fenced dog play/exercise areas.

The trees on the lot behind the dog kennel were cleared to make space and chain link fences installed around each area.

Not only does this give volunteers a place to exercise the dogs, but it allows those thinking of adopting a dog a chance to get to know the pet.

Volunteer of the year

The Humane Society volunteer of the year, Susan



SHOWING OFF the Humane Society's new dog and cat mascots are **Mary Beth Fritz** as Berkeley the Dog and **Jennifer Dailey** as Morgan the Cat.

Kemenyas, was introduced to the crowd by Duncan, who said Kemenyas was “a driving force behind our fund raising efforts and public relations.”

Duncan presented Kemenyas with a plaque and a gift certificate to Lot 12 Public House.

Myths and truths

Langley said there were three common myths about the Morgan County Humane Society:

First, the society is not part of county government. It is supported by private donations and volunteers.

Second, the society does not kill animals. Any animal that is not adopted is housed there for life.

Third, the society does not sell animals. Instead, people adopting a cat or dog are asked for a donation.

Duncan said many people think we don't take in animals, but that is not the case. The society does take in animals when space is available.

The facilities have limited space and can only handle a maximum of 45 cats and 20

dogs. Once those numbers are reached, no more animals are accepted, Duncan said.

Adopting a pet

“We have been having a fair amount of success with our adoptions,” Duncan said.

The society newsletter reports that over the past 12 months “forever homes” were found for 126 dogs and 137 cats.

Due to a donation from Mr. and Mrs. Terry Bienstock, 147 cats and 52 dogs have been spayed or neutered in the county the past year.

All pets adopted from the society are spayed or neutered except for those too young, in which case a certificate to pay for the procedure is given to the person adopting the pet, Duncan said.

The Morgan County Humane Society is open Tuesday – Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information about the Humane Society, visit its web site at www.hsmc-wv.org or call 304-258-5592.



MORGAN COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY Board of Directors, left to right, President **Ed Duncan**, Secretary **Sandy Ziegler**, Treasurer **Kelvin Langley**, Board Members **Andrea Anderson**, **Paul Murtha** and Volunteer of the Year **Susan Kemenyas** with **Rudy**. Not pictured is Board Member Ed Vogel.