

Stevens Community Humane Society  
General Meeting  
September 16, 2003, 7:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: Tracey Anderson, Jim Beauregard, Anna Dronzek, Kathleen Head, Linda Hodgson, Jane Jost, Bruce Klopfleisch, Katie Klopfleisch, Karon White

Karon White welcomed those present and the Board Members introduced themselves.

**1) Secretary's report.** Moved: To approve the minutes from the January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting (Jim Beauregard, Linda Hodgson). No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

**2) Treasurer's report:** Bruce Klopfleisch presented the treasurer's report.

SCHS filed for incorporation in January. On April 7 we received a tax ID number and non-profit status. On July 28, we received tax-exempt status from the IRS, retroactive to April 7, and a 501c3 number so that donations to SCHS are tax-deductible. (Our 501c3 number may be found on our website, [www.stevenscommunityhumanesociety.org](http://www.stevenscommunityhumanesociety.org).)

SCHS has established a checking account at Bremer bank and the current balance is approximately \$3600.

SCHS's greatest expense since its founding has been medical care. All our animals are examined by a vet and we have handled many animals since January. We have paid approximately \$2700 to the Morris vet clinic for exams, procedures, and vaccinations.

Another major expense has been advertising. We have spent \$305 on advertisements in the Morris paper and the Canary. We have also spent approximately \$200 on radio advertising.

Other expenses have been the fees to become incorporated and tax-exempt (\$220), printing and copies (approximately \$100), and general supplies of food and equipment (approximately \$900).

Our income since January has amounted to approximately \$8500. These monies were received from membership fees, surrender and adoption fees, donations and proceeds from our fundraiser in May, Prairie Pioneer Days, and the county fair, and a special appeal for a dog rescued from Traverse County who needed major surgery.

**3) Committee reports.**

**FRIENDS OF THE SOCIETY:** Kathryn Klopfleisch reported on the activities of the Friends of the Society. She explained that it is a group for children approximately 8 and older; adults who want to work with children are also welcome.

Since January, the Friends have been involved in fund-raising by creating posters, helping to sell raffle tickets for the May fundraiser, and baking dog treats for sale at Prairie Pioneer Days.

The major challenge is finding activities to accommodate large groups of children of varied ages. As we are so new, it is also difficult to organize activities on a regular basis. All suggestions are welcome.

**ADOPTION COMMITTEE:** Tracey Anderson reported on the activities of the Adoption Committee. This committee has developed guidelines for animals to be adopted and requirements for potential adopters, to make sure that good pets are getting placed in good homes. They have also been involved in advertising the available animals through placing a Pet of the Week each week in the Morris paper, and listing animals on SCHS's website and on Petfinder.com.

The Adoption Committee was also involved in organizing our successful Adoption Day in July, which resulted in 9 of 14 pets finding new homes. Members who helped with the Adoption Day included Jenny Nellis, Jennifer Schmidgall, and Curt Barber, and they deserve our thanks. The Committee plans to hold another Adoption Day soon.

Tracey especially wanted to acknowledge the work of the foster families, who are crucial to SCHS's success. Our animals are good to go because they have good foster homes. Those homes are also always full so any more volunteers would be welcome!

**FOSTER CARE COMMITTEE:** Linda Hodgson reported on the Foster Care Committee. She reported that what SCHS needs most are more foster homes and that we are very thankful to have the ones that we do. We especially need more homes for cats, including places where animals can be quarantined for 5 days prior to mixing with other animals. All cats will be leukemia tested before being mixed with other cats. All animals currently living in homes where foster animals will be placed need to be current on their vaccinations.

**ANIMAL RESCUE COMMITTEE:** Kathleen Head reported on the Animal Rescue Committee. She began by gratefully acknowledging the foster families here tonight. June Anderson has generously fostered a problem cat long-term. Cathy Boe has been our savior because she takes all the animals we send her and assesses their behaviors, giving us the information to place animals more successfully. Beckie and Anna Hadler have also been wonderful and have never complained about ending up with all the pregnant cats; Linda Hodgson has also generously opened her home to needy animals.

The work of the Animal Rescue Committee generally involves collecting abandoned animals and placing them in homes. A typical example might be kittens dumped at a house; they are brought to the clinic or someone from the Animal Rescue Committee collects them and arranges for their housing.

SCHS has become much more involved in horse rescue than was originally expected, acting as a resource in a number of investigations of horse abuse or neglect since January. This has involved lots of learning on the job. We have been able to rescue and place one abused horse, and currently have 8 more involved in a pending court case.

A member asked what the adoption fee was for horses. Kathleen answered that it depends on the horse's age and condition and the amount of our investment in the animal.

A member asked if the people involved in the court cases have had to pay restitutions. Kathleen answered that it depends on the individual court case and on the amount of neglect or abuse.

**FERAL CAT COMMITTEE:** Jane Jost reported on the Feral Cat Committee. She explained first that feral cats are wild cats and generally are not adoptable. They have either had no contact with humans since they were born or have been abandoned and become wild. Feral cats live in groups, or colonies, and are found living around people because they rely on humans for food and shelter. They are animals the least likely to be helped and they are extremely resistant to rescue.

The lives of feral cats are brutal, full of struggle, and short; a typical feral cat lives 3-5 years. Feral cats usually die terrible deaths from disease, injury, or exposure. They are often subject to abuse from humans.

Feral cats can have 2-3 litters of kittens a year, and therefore their population increases very rapidly, especially if they find a food source. The feral cat population in the United States is estimated at 6 million, the same number of indoor pet cats. These cats live very unstable lives because they are dependent on unreliable food sources (for instance, an open dumpster which may one day be shut) and unreliable shelter (for instance, an abandoned building which may one day be pulled down). Feral cats are territorial and inclined to fight to defend their territory, so they are extremely difficult to rescue, extremely difficult to socialize, and should not be moved around. Adult feral cats are virtually impossible to tame. Feral kittens are relatively easy to tame given the time and energy.

Given these difficulties, what can we do about feral cats? There are three options. The first is to do nothing, which is not a good option because their population goes up and nothing is done to address their suffering.

The second option is to trap, neuter, and release feral cats (TNR). This is a better option. It is more feasible in warmer states and it requires: a place where the cats are welcome; money to pay for the neutering (a female cat costs approximately \$135 to neuter); and a caretaker who will monitor the colony, make sure that they have food and shelter, care for injured and sick cats, and arrange for new cats entering the colony to be trapped and neutered. SCHS is interested in establishing a TNR colony, possibly on the university campus, and would welcome interested volunteers.

The final option is to trap and euthanize feral cats. This is a sad option but often necessary. Often feral cats are sick and this option spares the cat a lingering death and it halts the cycle of reproduction. Euthanasia also costs \$35, significantly less than neutering and maintaining a colony. For a humane society, cost certainly presents a problem.

A member asked how many feral cats are in Morris. Jane replied that there are very many. A member asked if they were mostly at the university and Jane replied that this was not the case. Linda Hodgson reported that there are colonies at the Villa, the

Key Row apartments, and the floral shop on Main Street, as well as at the university. A member asked if we should feed colonies. Jane replied that unless part of a TNR program, it was best not to feed feral cat colonies. She added that this is difficult to do and that she personally does feed cats. Jim Beauregard suggested that people report colonies to the police department. Jane suggested that we will need a caretaker and urged members to get involved. She added that the issue of what to do with feral cats is controversial and that as this Board has become more involved with the problem it has become less shocking to euthanize cats when there are more cats than people to care for them. She concluded by saying that SCHS has dealt with 25 strays since January.

**FUND-RAISING:** Karon White reported on the Fund-Raising Committee. She noted that Jennifer Schmidgall, the chair of the committee, was supposed to make the report but was called away by a family emergency. The committee has been very active. We held a fundraiser in May which was a great success and which we plan to make an annual event. She thanked those who were involved, including Sheila Heming, Wendel Cox, Rick Kramer, and Bruce Johnson, as well as any others whose names were overlooked.

The fundraising committee also plans to hold an annual fall fundraiser. This fall's fundraiser will be a rummage sale; looking further ahead, in fall 2004, we plan to hold a run. This fall's rummage sale will be on November 8 and Jennifer Schmidgall will take donations, which will be tax-deductible.

A member asked how successful the donation cans placed in local businesses were. Karon replied that they were not as successful as we would have hoped and that, for instance, a can placed in Donnelly collected \$4. She added that we earned \$63 as Charity of the Month at Common Cup. At Prairie Pioneer Days and the county fair we sold buttons and T-shirts. We are planning a program for memorial donations which will be up on the website soon.

We have received donations from the Kiwanis and Lions that have allowed us to buy steel cages to use for quarantine periods in foster homes, as they provide a better living environment. These are marked with plaques commemorating the donors.

Bruce Klopfleisch pointed out that we will be going to more local groups for donations, as well as the city and the county, and that every little bit helps.

A member asked where animals were taken once they were surrendered. Kathleen Head answered that SCHS is trying to avoid the vet clinic's becoming a dumping ground for surrendered animals, especially to avoid a mix of healthy and potentially sick animals. Animals are taken to foster homes as quickly as possible unless they are sick, in which case they are kept in the clinic. Karon White pointed out that this highlights our constant need for foster homes, and Tracey Anderson added that it was kitten season, which intensified the demand for foster homes.

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE:** Jane Jost reported on the Education Committee. She said that the Education Committee had begun with a number of goals, not all of which were

accomplished simply due to the volume of animals that SCHS has faced! The Education Committee has placed flyers in the community addressing overpopulation and made these available at the fundraiser, Prairie Pioneer Days, and the fair. The Education Committee would like to speak to groups and in the schools, but we need help because we have been so busy with the animals.

**MEMBERSHIP/PR COMMITTEE:** Anna Dronzek reported on the Membership/PR Committee. She thanked Jim Beauregard for his help with this work and noted that so far each committee has done a great deal to promote SCHS.

Early Bird memberships for \$5 drew in a large number of people initially but we still regularly attract new members at our regular fee of \$15 (individual), \$25 (family), and \$5 (kids 12 and under). We will notify members when each year's membership is up and provide the opportunity to renew in advance. We currently have 126 members.

As for promoting SCHS, Jane Jost has done a great job of putting up posters around town, featuring our current animals for adoption. We had booths at Prairie Pioneer Days and at the county fair, and a float at Prairie Pioneer Days, into which Jim Beauregard, Karon White, and Katie Klopffleisch put a lot of work. We also advertise our animals on Petfinder.com, a free, national online clearing-house for animal adoptions.

Our future goals include continuing to promote SCHS at community events and coordinating advertising for SCHS events and animals.

Karon White asked if there were further questions about the committee reports. A member asked if we take other kinds of animals. Kathleen Head answered that we have had a lot of calls about wildlife and that we are not certified by the state to handle wildlife animals. If you contact SCHS, however, we have the numbers for whom you can contact about wildlife.

#### **4) President's Report.**

Karon White thanked the membership for their support and said that we value all efforts on our behalf. As a very new organization, we have learned mostly through trial and error, but we have come a long way. She received a call from Wright County who are impressed with us and how well our membership has taken hold; as Wright County is much bigger than we are we should take this to mean we are doing very well indeed. We are not an anti-agricultural society but a society working to help animals.

Karon emphasized that this success was thanks to the membership and that we are still growing and learning. She wanted to thank Jill Beauregard for her work maintaining the website and Info-Link for donating server space for the website. She said that we have had great support from the community, especially the Schmidgall family.

She also stated that SCHS would like to recognize annually a Member of the Year, and that at this meeting we had planned to honor Jennifer Schmidgall, for her efforts as chair of the Fund-Raising Committee and in taking in special-needs cats.

Because of her family emergency Jennifer could not be at the meeting tonight but we wanted to acknowledge her work just the same.

Karon concluded by thanking the Board members and stating that we welcome all ideas and input and urging people to sign up for committees that interest them.

#### **5) Old Business.**

A member commented that the fundraiser went very well but in the future any silent auctions should be listed on the event posters.

#### **6) New Business.**

The Board proposes a revision to Article IV (Board of Directors), Section 4 – Authority of SCHS's by-laws, which requires approval by the general membership.

Current wording:

“The Board shall elect officers for the Society. The Board shall have control and responsibility for managing the affairs of the society. They shall also have authority to fill vacancies for the Board for the remainder of a term if circumstances dictate the need to do so. The Board shall establish and/or dissolve committees as necessary. The Board shall also approve and appoint all appropriate committee membership.”

Proposed amendment (changes in **bold**):

“The Board shall elect officers for the Society. The Board shall have control and responsibility for managing the affairs of the society. They shall also have authority to fill vacancies for the Board for the remainder of a term if circumstances dictate the need to do so. The Board shall establish and/or dissolve committees as necessary. The Board shall ~~also~~ approve and appoint all appropriate committee membership. **The Board shall also set fees for memberships, adoptions/surrenders, care and upkeep of animals in Society custody, and other fees associated with the affairs of the Society.**”

Motion: to approve the proposed change (Bruce Klopfleisch, Jenny Nellis). No further discussion. Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m. The next general meeting will be held in March 2004.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anna Dronzek, Secretary