

PRESIDENT
Robert James

TREASURER
John Gilbert

TRUSTEES
Rick Bourne
Andrea Johnstone
Melanie Lattin

ABOUT OUR BOARD

Bob James is a partner in the law firm of Ugrin, Alexander, Zadick & Higgins and has been a trial lawyer for 27 years. Bob and his wife Cindy have five grown children, three cats, and two dogs.

Rick Bourne, the president and chief executive officer of Spectrum Medical, Inc., has been in the home care administration field for 22 years. Rick and his wife Peggy share their home with two dogs.

John Gilbert is a business appraiser and forensic financial analyst. He and his dog Beemer “work” in the same office downtown, although Beemer spends most of the day asleep on the conference table.

Andrea Johnstone has been the owner of a decorative plumbing and tile business for 24 years, and currently has a business with locations in Minneapolis and Bozeman. Andrea and her husband have two sons and two very large dogs.

Melanie Lattin works for the City of Great Falls and is a canine and human massage practitioner. She is past president of the Humane Society of Cascade County. Melanie’s animal companions include two dogs and one rowdy cat.

Humane Society Foundation Formed To Help Make New Shelter A Reality

We would like to introduce you to the Humane Society Foundation of Cascade County. We have formed a non-profit organization to assist with improving animal welfare in Great Falls and the surrounding area.

Our group’s purpose is twofold:

To assist the Humane Society of Cascade County realize its dream of building a state-of-the-art animal shelter.

To help the Humane Society of Cascade County raise funds for its programs.

The current animal shelter is cramped, outdated, and fails to meet the needs of our community members—both animal and human. A new shelter will provide not only a healthier, more comfortable temporary environment for the animals, but will also lead to increased adoptions and provide space to better address community-wide animal concerns.

The dual purpose of the Humane Society Foundation reflects our belief that a building alone will not serve the animals’ needs—it will take active programs such as spay/neutering, foster homes, dog training, and community education, to name just a few.

Along with the construction of a new animal shelter, we plan to create an adjacent dog park where canines are free to run and play with their friends “off leash.” We have identified several potential locations for the facility and dog park and hope to secure land for the project in the very near future.

Thank you to those who have already helped us to begin this exciting journey. We welcome and need the support of as many people as possible to make the new shelter and dog park a reality.

Bob James
President, Humane Society Foundation

Foundation Aids Collie Rescue Effort And Plans Ahead

Soon after the Foundation was formed, the now infamous news of nearly 200 abused Collies detained at the US/Canada border came to our attention. Our group worked with the many other organizations and individuals who helped support these poorly treated animals. A complete story of Camp Collie is contained inside these pages. Since the closure of the Camp, the Foundation has been focusing its efforts on the necessary groundwork toward our mission of creating a new animal shelter and expanding animal welfare programs.



The Story of Camp Collie



On October 31, 2002, a truck filled with almost 200 dogs, largely Collies, and ten cats was stopped at the border between Canada and Montana. *No Halloween horror story can surpass what officials found inside the truck—animals malnourished, dehydrated, full of parasites and soaked in feces and urine. One Collie was dead.*

The animals' owners, Jonathan Lewis Harman and Athena Lethcoe-Harman, had negligently decided to transport their kennel almost 2,000 miles in a 45 x 7-foot truck bound from Alaska to Arizona. Dave Pauli, Regional Director of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), positioned in Billings, Montana, said this was *"probably the worst single case of overcrowding and inhumane hauling of animals"* that he had ever seen.

Dedicated volunteers and professionals at the Shelby Fairgrounds nursed the ailing dogs and cats for six months. Prior facility obligations dictated that the group find shelter elsewhere and they were carefully transported in more than 30 vehicles to Great Falls, where volunteers, veterinarians, security and animal care specialists cared for them around the clock for more than three months.

The transfer from Shelby to Great Falls involved the longest criminal "chain of custody" over the greatest distance in the history of the HSUS. The string of vehicles measured more than one mile in length and transported the animals 90 miles.

Following a protracted mistrial, and a second trial, the defendants were found guilty of 180 counts of animal cruelty and were sentenced to ten years in jail, all suspended. The court ordered the Lethcoe-Harmans to forfeit all but three of their animals. In June 2003, the largest known animal abuse court case in the history of Montana was at last concluded.

Over 100 dogs were spayed or neutered in a two-and-a-half day clinic and returned to Camp Collie Great Falls (CCGF) anticipating adoption. The animals were then microchipped for identification by injecting a small numbered chip about the size of a grain of rice underneath their skin. The adoption process began; all animals found homes or appropriate accommodation and the camp closed on August 3, 2003, after operating for over nine months in Shelby and Great Falls.

The Camp Collie situation highlighted the inadequacy of Montana's existing animal cruelty laws and the Montana legislature adopted an enhanced animal cruelty law after several attempts in previous years had failed.

The saga of Camp Collie portrays the immense difference that volunteers make toward improving animal welfare. With the expertise of the HSUS, vets, the American Working Collie Association (AWCA) and various humane societies from Montana leading the way, *people from all walks of life helped abused and neglected animals back to good physical and spiritual health.*

We thank the hundreds of volunteers, the REDHORSE Squadron, businesses, animal welfare experts, and organizations who cared for these animals and continue to do so in their recovery. Many people contributed money to the Foundation to help underwrite the cost of the Camp.

For more information on the Montana Collie story, go to HSUS.org. Search for "Collie" and see stories and a six-minute video about the Camps.

Look at them today, the benefit is right there—you can look at it, you can touch it, you can walk it—that's pretty cool stuff.

—Dave Pauli, HSUS



Healing The Breach of Trust By Erin Clarke Tropila

Possibly the most compelling human-interest story in Montana in 2002-2003 has been the ongoing story of the Camp Collie animals. I personally don't know of any other situation that has shed such a bright light on the true goodness of my fellow man in the midst of the most deplorable act of animal cruelty ever in my proximity.

My good friends traveled numerous times to Shelby to assist in the care of the dogs. I wanted to help too, but after deciding that my animal-induced asthma would not tolerate a fairground arena full of dogs and cats, I decided to be content with my friends' stories of their experiences.

When the animals were caravanned to Great Falls, I was thrilled because even though I couldn't help, the idea that these glorious animals were in my town was beyond exciting. It seemed like a step toward the resolution to this story. Knowing that the abusers of these noble animals would not suffer greatly under the animal cruelty law of the time, I threw my efforts in with many wonderful people to encourage our legislators to beef up our animal cruelty law. Once again, the overwhelming support and passage of a new law spotlights the integrity of our legislators.

After the court case was settled (and I found the judgement judicially fair but emotionally deficient), I realized that the dogs and cats were going to need good homes with patient and loving humans. I telephoned Toole County to place my name on the list of potential adopters. I never truly thought that one of the Collies would live in my home—it appeared that so many people were interested in adopting them that my odds seemed unlikely.

I offhandedly mentioned to friends that I would like to be considered for a dog adoption and had a number of conversations with Camp Collie volunteers about the mental and physical challenges of the dogs. When a close friend mentioned that CCGF Volunteer Coordinator Cindy James was looking for someone to adopt her Collie's penmate, I telephoned her. We discussed everything that I could think to ask and many things that Cindy thought that I should know. Cindy had her dog at home and although it had not been for very long, the love in her voice was so strong when she discussed her new friend and the dog left behind that I was compelled to visit "Kate" at Camp Collie.

That was all it took. *I was hooked. I could tell that she was an older dog, that she was shell-shocked and needed someone—and I wanted to be that someone.* My husband was at first resistant because we have busy lives, but when he met her the next day, it was all over for him too.

Erin & Mitch Tropila pose with Santa and Camp Collie alum Peigi during Santa Paws 2003.



Many hardworking volunteers made a big difference for the residents of Camp Collie Great Falls.

We took "Kate" now "Peigi" home within ten or twelve days. She was in heat and could not be spayed, so it was quite a challenge to vigilantly supervise her. A huge male dog came right over our more than 5-foot fence shortly after she came home with us. I had never seen such a thing before. "Don't worry, no more puppies for you," I assured her.

Surgery was difficult for Peigi. Our vet estimates her age as anywhere from seven to nine years. She was in considerable pain and I let her sleep on the couch for a day.

Every time I mention our friend Peigi, someone has something to say about this story and these special animals. My mother-in-law, who is not a dog person, stops by to see Peigi regularly and babysits her as well. She feels a special affinity for a soul that has had such a burden to bear. We do not know what the entire story is for these friends, but we are the beneficiaries of this story. *What started as our love for these special animals has been returned by our new companions many times over.*

Peigi has been with us for almost five months now and she shares the center of our world with our cat. She is a fine spirit and we feel privileged to share our days with her. She is her own girl and although it is clear that she has had a rough journey, she has enough faith in us to love us back. It truly defies reason that anyone would dishonor the pact of trust and honor that humans and animals should share. It inspires me that our animal friends can truly rise above that breach of trust.



Monetary Contributions to the Foundation & Camp Collie Great Falls

Through December 1, 2003

\$1000 or Greater

Susan Carpenter

\$500 through \$999

Phil & Stella Palm

\$100 through \$499

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& Gallery

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Donations

Davidson Companies

Many more donations of time and goods were previously acknowledged in a Tribune ad. We make every effort to get names and amounts correct. If we have made an error or omission, please let us know and accept our sincere apology.



*Humane Society Foundation
of Cascade County, Montana*

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Great Falls, MT 59403



A former resident of Camp Collie Great Falls pauses at the camp welcome sign as she leaves for her new home.