

HANDLING ANIMAL COLLECTORS, PART I: INTERVENTIONS THAT WORK

By Geoffrey L. Handy

This article is the first in a two-part series on handling animal collector cases.

The scene is a familiar one to virtually every humane agency in the country: A dilapidated house, or perhaps a trailer or even an old school bus, with the smell of urine noticeable from outside...a dark interior, with animals scurrying about, and an overpowering stench that immediately makes the eyes sting and the lungs lock up...tens or even hundreds of animals, usually cats and dogs but sometimes other animals, some in cages or makeshift pens, others given free reign of the place...animals in various stages of neglect, often diseased and emaciated, with afflictions ranging from fleas and ear mites to mange and respiratory infections...feces everywhere, competing for space with open food cans and other trash strewn across urine-soaked floors...almost always, some horrifying characteristic that sets it apart from other cases, such as maggots crawling in animal corpses or dead cats used as bedding...and, finally, the animals' "keeper," an individual who has lost control of the situation, lives in constant denial, and is clearly "addicted to animals," but who doesn't seem to fit any single psychological profile.

Animal collectors crop up anywhere and everywhere, it seems. Collectors have been the subject of increasing numbers of news reports and articles, with coverage in publications as diverse as the *Chippewa Falls* (Wisconsin) *Herald Telegram* and *Cat Fancy*. Humane agencies from Maine to California have struggled to resolve these cases, with mixed success.

"Collectors are not a new phenomenon," says Samantha Mullen, public affairs and programs administrator for



Susan D. Lewson/Daily Press

San Bernardino County (CA) Animal Control Officer Bob Toliver prepares to remove animals from the home of a 73-year-old woman who had accumulated more than two dozen cats and dogs. Animal collector cases almost always have distinguishing characteristics, and this case was no different: Officials discovered a dead kitten on a paper towel in the collector's oven, apparently put there in an effort to keep the animal warm.

the New York State Humane Association (NYSHA, P.O. Box 284, New Paltz, NY 12561) and an expert on multiple-animal cruelty cases. "What's new is that they have been recognized as a phenomenon, and humane agencies are just beginning to learn how to handle these cases somewhat consistently and effectively."

Unique Challenges

For investigators and their humane agencies, a collector case is one of the toughest to resolve. Four characteristics in particular set collector cases

apart from other cruelty and neglect cases:

- *Collector cases involve large numbers of animals.* Collectors usually accumulate animals for years before being discovered, and the animals are often in such poor condition by the time they are found by humane authorities that a large-scale rescue operation is essential. To be successful, such operations require significant staff time and volunteer assistance, as well as considerable help from veterinarians, nearby shelters, and the community. Then, dur-

ing protracted court cases, shelters often spend thousands of dollars to rehabilitate and care for the rescued animals, costs which are rarely reimbursed. To compound matters, the animals are usually not accustomed to humans, noise, and other stimulation—and sometimes the animals are unusual or exotic—thus requiring special handling, equipment, and veterinary expertise.

• *Collector cases not only attract media coverage, but often result in mixed media messages.* In fact, the media often portray collectors as victims. Headlines such as "They're my family" and "Lover of dogs vows to get animals back" are not uncommon. "There's such a contrast between the image people have of

the collector and the conditions of the animals," says Mullen. Indeed, investigators may be portrayed as heavy-handed officials with unreasonable standards who go in and heartlessly remove a beloved caretaker's cats. Thus, humane agencies not only must be prepared to respond to inquiries from the media and the public, but also must strive to educate them about the realities of animals' conditions and the psychology of animal collectors.

• *Collectors have an extremely high relapse (recidivism) rate.* Take a collector's animals away without any other interventions, and he or she will likely accumulate the same number of animals within a short period of time. In one recent case, animal control

authorities in Baltimore County (MD) rescued more than 50 pets from a collector, only to discover just two days later that the individual had already acquired more than 20 additional animals. "Collectors are obsessed with animals," says Mullen. Persuading a collector to release his or her animals into the humane agency's custody will get those specific animals out of a bad situation. But it will do nothing to prevent the person from starting a new collection and ending up in the same situation as before. A one-time rescue or a prosecution and a fine are rarely, if ever, permanent solutions.

• *Collectors have unusual psychology.* Moreover, they can only be handled

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ANIMAL COLLECTORS

By Randall Lockwood, Ph.D., HSUS Vice President for Training Initiatives

Adapted and condensed from Trends Magazine, December 1993/January 1994, Volume 9, Number 6. Reprinted with permission of the American Animal Hospital Association.

Who are collectors and what is wrong with them?

Although the problem is widespread, psychologists and other scientists have devoted little attention to cases where multiple-animal ownership has resulted in animal cruelty. The earliest formal study was a 1981 review by Dooley Worth and Alan Beck of 31 such cases handled by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and the Bureau of Animal Affairs in New York City. That study gave some support to the traditional characterization of collectors as older "cat ladies" living in isolation, but there was considerable variation in the

demographics of collectors. In that study, more than two-thirds of the people involved were women and 70 percent of them were unmarried.

Most, however, had started their collections early, often in their twenties. In general, these people specialized in either dogs or cats, owning many of one species and a few of the other. Although all of the collectors in this study were somewhat removed from mainstream society, very few had been institutionalized or diagnosed as suffering from acute mental disorders.

Recently, courts have begun to recognize that behavior that can result in such extensive suffering for animals is not a harmless eccentricity. A growing

number of collectors have been referred for psychiatric evaluation as part of the court-ordered assessment of the situation. What has emerged is a rather complicated picture of the processes that can lead someone to allow animal neglect to reach such a severe level.

Very few collector cases simply involve good intentions gone awry, despite the insistence of the collector that he or she loves the animals and wants to save their lives. This is clear to anyone who has witnessed the conditions of filth and decay in which many of these animals are kept and their often advanced state of malnutrition, parasite infestation, and infection. For most collectors, it is likely that their

effectively through an understanding of that psychology. Collectors often exhibit a variety of psychological disorders, with addiction the most prevalent characteristic (see sidebar beginning on page 4). Cases can thus be won or lost on how collectors are understood, approached, and treated. Most collectors can't conveniently be labeled "abusers" and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, nor can they simply

be labeled "ignorant" and educated about proper animal care.

The Prosecution Dilemma

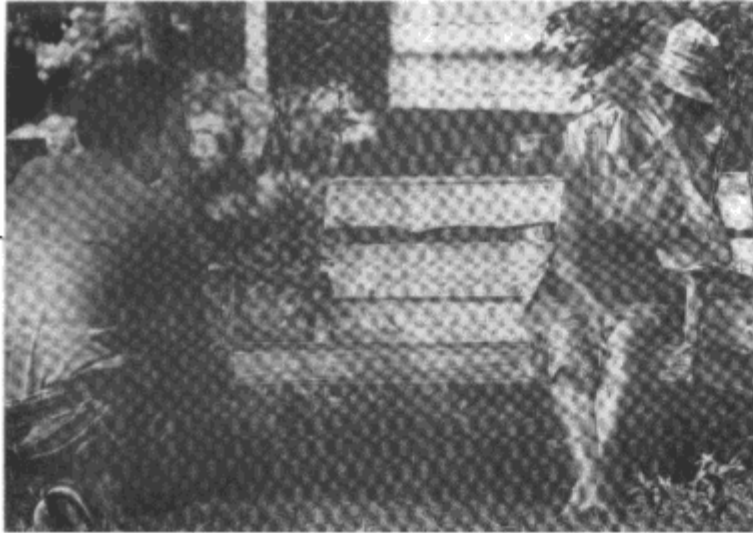
Those four characteristics all contribute to a fundamental dilemma of animal collector cases: Should collectors be criminally prosecuted?

Some argue that collectors are a classic manifestation of good intentions gone awry, and thus criminal

prosecution may not be an appropriate option. However, according to psychologists who have studied collectors, such as The HSUS's Randall Lockwood, collectors' actions are often less a result of good intentions gone bad and more a result of a true pathology.

Furthermore, as Mullen points out, the intentions and motivations of the collector are not the major issue. "The major issue is that animals are suffering, regardless of whether or not the individual in custody of them is mentally ill, inept but well meaning, or just plain mean," she says.

So the question then becomes, is criminal prosecution the most effective way to prevent animal suffering at the hands of collectors? The answer to



Stuart Bauer/The Gainesville Sun

HSUS Investigator Ken Johnson tries to console Hazel Swindel during a rescue operation in which most of the woman's 150 cats had to be euthanized because of various ailments. "They breded [sic], and I gave homeless cats a home," she said, according to The Gainesville Sun. "I don't want my cats killed. I consider them part of my family." They are familiar words to most cruelty investigators who have worked on collector cases.

actions are the result of a true pathology, even though they are still usually able to function quite well in society.

Collectors differ in their attitudes, behavior, and symptoms. Several different models have been suggested to

account for their actions:

- *Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Model.* The impulse to amass a large collection of some item or items...simply for the sake of collecting it, can be symptom-

atic of obsessive-compulsive disorder. What differentiates these people from other collectors is that the collection is often associated with a significant neglect of personal and environmental conditions. Such disorders are more common in women and often have their onset when the person is in her late 20s or 30s. Many animal collectors have been reported to have huge piles of newspapers, bottles, junked cars, and other refuse in addition to their animal collections. In many cases, the onset of the disorder coincides with early or sudden loss of a loved one, usually a parent, spouse, or sibling. This may contribute to the individual's universal resistance to any consideration for euthanasia for their animals and their overriding ability to deny the deteriorating conditions of their animals' health and environment. Such disorders can be quite resistant to treatment. This is certainly true of animal collectors,

that question, too, hinges on the intentions and motivations of the collector, as two recent cases illustrate.

First, take the case of Hazel Swindel, a 61-year-old woman from Starke, Florida, who by last summer had accumulated more than 150 cats in her 600-square-foot ramshackle house. According to HSUS Investigator Ken Johnson, who worked on the case, Swindel seemed to fit the stereotypical collector profile: a person who seemingly means well, takes in homeless animals, abhors euthanasia, loses control of the situation, and ends up causing large-scale animal suffering.

A court ruled that Swindel was unable to properly and humanely care for all of her cats, and all but six of the cats had to be euthanized. The six cats

without serious health problems were treated by a veterinarian, sterilized, and returned to Swindel. Swindel was not prosecuted for cruelty to animals; under direction of the court, however, she is now monitored on a regular basis.

That resolution would not have been appropriate in a different situation, that involving Justin McCarthy of Ellenville, New York. In one of the most notorious collector cases of the last decade, McCarthy kept nearly 1,000 animals in squalid conditions, many of whom were on the brink of death when local law enforcement and humane agencies entered his Animals' Farm Home under court order in November 1987. According to those who worked on the case, the animals on McCarthy's farm did not arrive there

solely by chance; McCarthy actively raised money to operate as a "refuge" and even had a sign-in form for accepting pet owners' animals.

McCarthy was indicted for 25 separate violations of the animal cruelty statute; he pleaded guilty to four of those counts. His ultimate sentence included the stipulation that he and his wife would never again have anything to do with animal sheltering or any related business.

Intervention vs. Prosecution

The Swindel and McCarthy cases illustrate the importance of understanding the profile of the individual collector when deciding how to approach a case. Indeed, the classic "education vs. prosecution" dilemma com-

who almost invariably renew their collections if given the opportunity.

- **Addiction Model.** Several professionals, including City of Houston veterinarian Dr. Karen Kemper, have pointed out many of the parallels between animal collectors and substance abusers, thus they apply the term "animal addicts" to the collectors. Traits common to collectors and substance abusers include a preoccupation with the addiction (animals); denial that the addiction exists; alibis for behavior; isolation from society except those who also deal in the addiction, i.e., enablers; claims of persecution; neglect of personal and environmental conditions; and repetition...of the addictive behavior.

- **Zoophilia Model.** A small number of collectors may fit into the category of zoophilia, a psychosexual disorder in

which animals play a major role in the individual's sexual fantasies or practices. Although reports of bestiality in collector cases are rare, there is occasionally evidence of real or symbolic sexual dependence upon some animal in the care of collectors, and for many of these people, animals are the principle givers and recipients of affection. Some cases involving male animal collectors have been associated with large collections of pornographic material.

- **Need for Power or Control.** Most cases of outright animal abuse (e.g., torture, burning) seem to be motivated by a need to exert power over something on the part of an individual who is often otherwise lacking in skills or abilities that might allow him or her to exert power through more normal channels. Samantha Mullen, public affairs and programs administrator of the New York State Humane Association, feels that this is one of the characteristics of

some of the collectors with whom she has dealt. Some collectors who fit this view may beat or otherwise abuse their captives, despite their insistence on their "love" for the animals.

These models are not mutually exclusive; several may apply to a single individual. Regardless of which model best characterizes a particular animal collector, the important point is that keeping a large number of animals in ill-health and unsanitary conditions is both a crime and symptomatic of an illness.

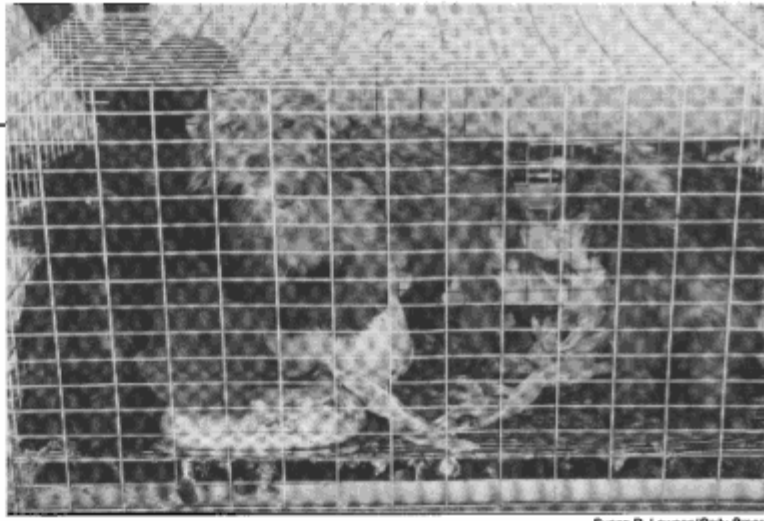
It is ironic that some of the most severe suffering encountered in animal welfare work is perpetrated by collectors who profess to love animals. These tragic situations point out the continuing need to educate our society that animals are not objects to be collected, but living creatures whose physical and emotional needs must be recognized and met. □

mon to many investigations of cruelty has a corollary for collector cases: intervention vs. prosecution.

All collectors need intervention; all collectors do not necessarily need to be criminally prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. For the stereotypical "cat lady" or "dog man"—an individual like Swindel who continues to accumulate homeless animals and who gradually loses control of the situation—to successfully intervene in the case is to get the animals out of the home, treat and sterilize any animals who may be returned to the collector, and monitor the collector to prevent a similar problem from developing in the future. In many cases, assistance from mental health and adult protection professionals is needed as well.

"The Swindel case wasn't a situation where we just went in, removed all the animals, and pushed the prosecutor for a full conviction," says Johnson. "People in the community donated furniture, helped clean her house, and basically tried to improve the quality of life for this woman as well as for the animals whom she was allowed to keep. It's important to look at these collectors as human beings, and try to understand, to a certain extent, why they've gotten themselves in this situation. Criminal prosecution is not always the solution. We felt that this woman, with help from the community, could take care of a limited number of cats and continue to be a pet owner."

In contrast to Swindel, McCarthy did not accumulate animals simply because they showed up on his doorstep. He actively raised money for his "sanctuary," and assured pet owners that their pets would be well taken care of for life. For a case like his, resolution involves not only getting animals out of the situation, but also working toward a conviction of the collector on animal cruelty



Susan D. Lawson/Daily Press

Regardless of the intentions and motivations of animal collectors, the major issue is that animals are suffering.

charges. Jail time, fines, and probation may all be appropriate goals, but the ultimate goal for a collector case like McCarthy's should be to legally prohibit the collector from owning any animals in the future.

Linking Solutions with Causes

Thus, in addition to removal of the animals from the premises, successful case resolution generally involves choosing interventions appropriate for the collector at hand. The key, agrees Lauren Joniaux, assistant director for the San Diego Humane Society and SPCA (887 Sherman St., San Diego, CA 92110-4088), "is concentrating on the individuals and why they have that behavior." Joniaux organized a training session in San Diego last year to educate local humane investigators about the need for interventions on behalf of collectors.

"Sometimes, we get so wrapped up in enforcing the law that we don't stop to think about why that person was in that situation in the first place," she says. "Who's abusing the animals? It's the individual. We need to help that individual so that the situation doesn't develop again."

Humane agencies commonly apply three types of interventions to collector cases, interventions which often overlap in practice. One is a cooperative approach, aimed at working with the collector to improve the animals' conditions and, in many cases, persuading the collector to voluntarily relinquish all or at least some of the animals and to spay or neuter any they may keep. Another is the securing of a court order that limits the number of animals the individual can keep in the future and/or authorizes the humane agency to monitor the individual either indefinitely or for a specified period of time. The third is a social services intervention to help "treat" the collector.

Working With Collectors

The cooperative approach doesn't work for most collector cases; in fact, it is often just the first step in a progression of interventions. Cooperation is, however, the method least likely to take a sudden, large chunk out of the agency's resources. It is also a worthwhile approach in those cases where a judge refuses to grant a warrant based on lack of evidence.

Humane agents for the Toledo Humane Society (1920 Indianwood Cir., Maumee, OH 43537) have used this tactic for years. Investigators first attempt to approach collectors as "equals" and work with them to gain control of the situation.

"I first make a determination about the conditions of the animals," says Diana Murphy, investigations and rescue supervisor for the humane society. "If the animals don't have to be removed, I try to establish a relationship of trust with the person."

Murphy and her colleagues often succeed at helping collectors gradually gain control of their situations. Sometimes, however, the cooperative approach simply doesn't work. After visiting one collector 13 times within a 10-month period, investigators for the Michigan Humane Society (MHS, 7401 Chrysler, Detroit, MI 48211) recently abandoned the approach and secured a search warrant. "We went in with two police officers, a code enforcement officer from the housing department, and a social services worker," says Timothy Clements, chief cruelty investigator for the humane society.

Clements still cooperates with several collectors, frequently exchanging food for permission to take some animals to a veterinarian or have others sterilized.

"Working with collectors requires making a judgement based on how adequately the animals are being cared for," says Mullen. "But where do you draw the line? If you can't convince a judge to issue a warrant, then helping collectors care for their animals may be the only choice. Yet it's not always realistic to expect an agency to provide the staff needed to conscientiously monitor a collector indefinitely. It's a bit like asking the humane agency to assign a team of social workers to each collector."



Janis Kincaid/Daily Standard

Armed with a search warrant, Clay County (MO) Sheriff's Detective Duane Wiersma searches for animals during an investigation of a suspected animal collector last year.

The Court Order

While the cooperative approach can indeed be time-intensive for humane officers, its value lies in helping a collector gain control of his or her situation and in possibly saving the humane agency from the financial drain of a major rescue operation, multiple-animal impoundment, and court-related actions. But the cooperative approach is clearly inappropriate when animals are in dire need of rescue and ineffectual when attempts at cooperation fail. In those cases, court-related actions usually become essential.

In cases where animals are not in need of immediate rescue, but the collector proves unresponsive to humane agents' requirements, investigators in some states can try to persuade the court to use a tactic called deferred prosecution. Under deferred prosecution, the collector is charged with cruelty but is allowed to keep his or her animals as long as certain conditions are met—such as providing proper veterinary care, food and water, and exercise, or having all animals spayed or neutered. Only after the person fails to meet those requirements are charges activated and the animals seized.

Typically, though, humane investigators must charge the collector with animal cruelty and/or related charges and have the animals removed. (In some cases, agencies may opt to tem-

porarily keep the animals on the premises under the agency's supervision—a tactic called "on-site impoundment"—until permanent resolution of the case. In other cases, animals can be removed on the basis of zoning or animal limitation ordinances, or through actions in court to abate nuisances.)

Investigators must then push prosecutors for a full conviction—and the goal, in most cases, is to secure a court order. "Investigators may wonder, 'What do I have to gain from prosecuting an 82-year-old woman?'" says Belinda Lewis, director of animal control for Fort Wayne, Indiana (2225 Dwenger Ave., Fort Wayne, IN 46803). "What you have to gain is the court order that limits the number of animals that this individual can own. It also allows for ongoing monitoring by your agency. Without that court order, you may never get back [on the premises] again."

Lewis and Mullen both emphasize that, in most cases, a plea bargain (also called a pre-trial diversion) that includes a court order should be considered a desirable outcome of a collector case. "But to get that court order, humane agencies and the prosecutors they work with must be willing to push for full conviction if the collector and his or her attorney prove uncooperative," says Mullen. "In other words, remember that a plea bargain is a deal made with the defendant; if the defendant isn't willing to make a deal you find acceptable, be prepared to take the case all the way to a jury."

"It's your responsibility to educate your judge or prosecutor," says Lewis, whose agency has stopped 14 of the last 15 collectors it has investigated. "They're not going to automatically know that the protective order must state that your agency has the right to inspect the premises at any given time



Craig Van Steenburgh

Because state and local laws vary significantly with regard to both substance and procedure, humane agencies must work closely with local judges, prosecutors, or other attorneys in pursuing legal remedies.

over the next 'X' number of years, that adult protective services has access to inspect the premises, or that only 'X' number of animals may be owned by this individual over the next 'X' number of years."

It's also essential, stresses Mullen, for shelters to specify to the judge or prosecutor that the order include the requirement that any animals returned to the collector be spayed or neutered. "This may sound like an obvious point," she says. "But if it's not specified, it's like giving collectors their seed crop."

Effective court orders typically include the following provisions:

- a total ban or limit on animal ownership indefinitely or for a specified period of time;
- a requirement that any animals returned to the collector be sterilized;
- authorization for the humane agency to monitor the collector indefinitely or for a specified period of time, including specific provisions for home inspections;
- a requirement that the collector reimburse the humane agency for the costs of treating and caring for seized animals; and
- release of veterinary records, if needed.

One requirement that should defi-

nately *not* be included in a court order or sentence is that the collector perform community service work at a shelter. This is because working in a shelter will only fuel the collector's addiction, likely causing problems for the shelter. "Requiring a collector to work in a shelter for community service is akin to requiring an alcoholic to work as a bartender," says Susan McDonough, president of NYSHA and an investigator for the New York State Police.

Collaborative Interventions

Judges can also include social service or mental health requirements in their orders—such as the stipulation that a collector be assigned a caseworker from the local elder services department. Courts usually include such provisions only in those cases where the applicable agencies have already intervened on behalf of the collector.

Lewis suggests that humane groups strive to develop working relationships with the local mental health department, housing department, and other applicable social service offices—and involve those agencies early in collector cases. This usually means educating them about the psychology of collectors and the fact that collectors, while they often can function in society, nonetheless need social services.

Lewis's agency now approaches every collector case in tandem with the Adult Protective Services (APS) department of the Allen County Mental Health Association. "That way, we handle the animal interventions, and APS handles the human interventions," says Lewis. "In many cases, we actually are perceived as the good guys. I think it's vital that animal care agencies approach collectors as a mental health problem with assistance from other agencies and not attempt to

resolve the cases alone."

Sometimes, humane groups can take advantage of specific actions taken by these other agencies. For instance, a health or housing official can often make demands on the collector based on the environmental and zoonotic problems usually created as a result of the collection. They may require, for example, that the house and yard be cleaned up or that an exterminator be hired. Under these circumstances, the collector may perceive the humane investigator to be the "good guy" who offers to take in animals to help him or her comply with the "bad guy's" demands.

Other collaborative actions may be social-service interventions on behalf of the collectors themselves. Humane agencies can ride the coattails of these interventions, too. They include:

- **Eviction.** Collectors often live in violation of health or housing standards, and eviction may be ordered by the local health or housing department. The humane agency then offers to care for the animals until the collector can find a place for them; faced with the prospect of abandonment, the collector accepts. "We have an impound fee, and this is an emergency impound for us," says Lewis about the collector evictions her department has handled. "We essentially price the collector out of getting the animals back." (This strategy can backfire, however, when the collector knows like-minded individuals who may agree to temporarily house the animals. Thus humane agencies must be prepared to secure a warrant in situations where the animals are in need of immediate rescue.)

72-hour evaluation. Sometimes called a 72-hour commitment, this occurs when a person appears to be mentally ill and poses a danger to himself or herself. The mental health agency peti-



Mike Urban/Times News

This police officer and board of health officer accompanied investigators from the Tamaqua (PA) SPCA during a recent search of a home of two suspected animal collectors.

tions the court for an order to have the collector placed in a psychiatric facility for evaluation for 72 hours. Here, too, the animals are involuntarily abandoned, and the humane agency may be able to impound them without a warrant of its own (although a separate warrant secured by the humane agency is always recommended). Under 72-hour commitments, patients are often judged to have some kind of mental incapacity; thus, the humane agency can later make a strong case, in arguing for a court order prohibiting or limiting future ownership of animals, that the collector's mental health problem led to the conditions of the animals.

- **Guardianship.** In cases of severe mental impairment, another adult is appointed the guardian of the collector and is responsible for acting on behalf of the collector in every legal capacity. Not only can guardians immediately sign animals over to the shelter, but they can also assist the agency in monitoring the collector in the future so that recidivism is prevented.

These collaborative interventions only work when the humane agency has developed a good working relationship with social service organizations. More common and frustrating, however, are those cases where individuals are judged mentally and/or emotion-

ally competent by social service professionals or those professionals prove unresponsive to humane agencies' requests for assistance. In these cases, humane officers themselves are frequently thrust into the role of counselor or psychiatrist, and they must rely on cooperation or court-related interventions to resolve the case.

An Ounce of Prevention...

Regardless of other interventions—including any specific requirements mandated by a court order—a long-term solution involves continual monitoring to prevent the collector from starting the collection anew. Such monitoring is always time-intensive, but failure to follow up on a court order can have disastrous consequences. In one case in the Midwest less than two years ago, a humane society was successful in securing a court order limiting a collector to seven cats, all of whom were sterilized. Accompanied by a veterinarian, the agency rechecked the animals one month later and found only minor problems with the animals' care. But humane society personnel were devastated earlier this year when the collector's house burned to the ground: Among the ruins were the charred bodies of more than 20 cats.

Developing a cooperative relationship with the collector can be particularly helpful in monitoring the individual's behavior. "When the collector trusts you enough to call on you when there's a problem, or when you are welcome in their home, you're generally going to have better luck at making sure the animals are being taken care of properly," says Toledo's Murphy.

Regardless of the level of cooperation, however, humane officers should take responsible action when a known collector moves: they should notify their counterparts in the area of the

collector's new address so that regular monitoring can continue.

Finally, humane agencies should keep in mind that collectors don't accumulate animals overnight. "Animal collectors are generally people who function normally in society and begin by taking in strays or accepting pets discarded by others," says Robin Weirauch, program coordinator for The HSUS Great Lakes Regional Office. "At some point, they find they have trouble keeping their home clean, and stop inviting people over. Eventually, they lose control."

But until that loss of perspective becomes apparent from the outside, collectors are usually hard to spot. Mullen says she often recounts the story of a rescue in a home in South Carolina, where investigators discovered five cats and a dead dog amid piles of garbage and leftover food. In the bathroom hung a sparkling, freshly washed nurse's uniform.

"Those kinds of situations make prevention difficult," says Weirauch. "How can you know what's going on inside someone's home? But what humane agencies *can* do, as a routine matter, is investigate reports of potential collector situations on a regular basis. These are the calls about 'an awful stench coming from next door,' general complaints about neighbors 'who seem to have a lot of cats,' or other curious reports. After all, the best way to handle collectors is to try to prevent them from becoming collectors." □

Part 2 of this article, to be published in the July 1994 issue, will provide information about managing multiple-animal rescue operations, identifying legal justifications for removing animals, finding ways to defray impoundment and related costs, dealing with the media and the public, and handling adoptions of rescued animals.