by Connie Kondravy

A SUMMER SHAME

Must the carnival of horror continue then? Will we add one more desensitizing experience to our children's lives?

Warm the night, clear the sky, one lone star twinkles in the gathering darkness — a perfect ending to a summer day. The groups of people who have spent the late afternoon and evening choosing the best watermelon for the weekend picnic, buying tender corn on the cob, and picking fresh rolls and pastries to finish off the feast pause outside the farmers' market for one more attraction before heading home.

A crowd of adults, children, toddlers in strollers create a half circle around a large white truck whose back door is partially rolled up to reveal an interior lined with wire cages. Children gulping down pieces of cotton candy and adults munching on buttered popcorn stare in fascination towards the deck of the truck.

Two bunchers hoist a barrel of collie-type puppies on board, then rapidly grab a puppy in each hand and fling them toward the buncher who cages them into a bottom pen. Next comes an adult male beagle, then a shepherd mix, then a pregnant lab who is shoved into a top pen.

When the dog bunchers pause to wipe the sweat from their brows and smoke a cigarette, the crowds' attention shifts to the cat man who culls cats from chicken crates, cardboard boxes, hat boxes —indeed every kind of container imaginable. Because the cats are feisty, the cat man quickly grabs them by the scruff of the neck, then skillfully hurls them into the crates that he will use to transport them to their final destination sometime near dawn.

As some of the crowd becomes bored with the repetitive actions of the bunchers and the cat man, they start to move towards the parking lot. Just then a van pulls up near the dog truck. The back doors open and several young teenagers leap out. Together two of the teens carry an adult beagle to the bunchers' truck while the other teen coaxes a Benji-type dog from the van. But, the Benji, confused and frightened, leaps to one side and darts under the vehicle.

The crowd surges towards the van; adults push youngsters forward for a better view. The Benji tries to elude the teen and his parents who by now are crawling around at the sides of the van. The Benji lunges toward an opening; the crowd cheers; the teen rolls under the van in front of the dog; the crowd cheers. Finally, the Benji is dragged from beneath the van and handed to the bunchers by the victorious teen.

Four animal-welfare workers, disguised as casual shoppers, witness this scene. They work daily to save starving, abused, neglected, and abandoned cats, kittens, dogs, and puppies. Often they hold the lost and lone animal in their arms as they end its suffering and give it a final peace. But, always, they seek to save the animals.

Must the carnival of horror continue then? Will we add one more desensitizing experience to our children's lives? Alone, as one individual whether writing or reading this story, we can do nothing, but together we can make a significant protest. We can each refuse to buy produce, foodstuffs, and merchandise from any farmers' market which allows bunchers of dogs and cats to operate on their property. Those farmer's markets are successful without the profits from these animal cullers. The markets' financial existence does not depend upon this inhumane operation. Once we decide to stop shopping at such places, we must then either call the management of the market and say that we will not shop there until the bunchers are eliminated, or we must write a letter to this effect.

Warm the night, clear the sky, multitudes of stars twinkle in the heavens above; but, here on earth, right here in our own county, man's inhumanity, his callousness to the creatures with whom he shares his life, tarnishes the starry vere. ■■

(Ed. Note: Ms. Kondravy is the "Pet Set" columnist for *The Sunday News*, Lancaster Newspapers, Inc., PA.)

TRIBUTES

A donation in any amount as a loving tribute to a relative, friend or pet will enable us to list in this column the person or pet so honored.

IN MEMORY OF "SARGE," a German Shepherd neglected by his owners but beloved and cared for by kind neighbors on Blackberry Alley for many years. On my visits to his benefactors I looked forward to taking him food treats. On his death on August 11, 1986 he was buried in a wooded area, probably the only thoughtful thing his owners ever did for him. "SARGE," we will never forget your patience and faithfulness, a lesson to us all.

Cathy Heppe
Lakewood, OH

IN MEMORY of our two Poodles who gave us many years of love but who now have gone to doggie heaven.

Mrs. Frank Ludewig
Middletown, OH

IN MEMORY of my dear old cat, "KAREL" (1970-1986), who died September 19, 1986 at 6:25 p.m. "A faithful friend is the medicine of life."

Mimi Hilarius
Hilversum, The Netherlands

IN LOVING MEMORY of my Poodle, "TERRY," who passed away two years ago. I miss you and love you very much. I know we will be together one day. God Bless you, Honey.

Mrs. A. J. Yuochis
Frackville, PA

IN MEMORY OF "MS. MURPHY," the best dog and the best friend I ever had.

Betty Roberts-Ritter
Kingston, NJ

IN LOVING MEMORY of all animals who suffered at the experimenters' hands.

Mrs. Florence Lopes
Brielle, NJ

TO OUR BEST FRIEND for 12 years. We were a threesome, always together, "MAC," our Border Collie, my husband and I. We miss him so much. Our life will never be the same.

Art and Inger Fichtner
Oak Creek, WI

IN LOVING MEMORY of my dog, "HEIDI," who brought me 19 years of love. It hurt so much when I had to put you to sleep but now there will be no more suffering, Baby. I know you're happy once again with Gram, Fluffy and Cindy. I will always love and miss you.

Geralyn Snyder
Baltimore, MD

IN LOVING MEMORY OF DR. AILTHA KIRKOWSKI, who left this world at age 24 and who, in her short time here on earth, dedicated herself to helping God's unfortunate creatures.

Stan, Lucy and Statira
Jersey City, NJ

TO HONOR ST. JUDE and to remember our unforgettable Cocker, "REBA," who gave us 16 years of love and devotion. I know she romps in a corner of God's garden.

Margaret C. Mulholland
Broomall, PA

THE FUTILITY OF EXPERIMENTATION ON ANIMALS as a cure for human-and environmental-induced disease is becoming more and more apparent. The scientists themselves (albeit with some reluctance) question the value of toxicity testing, for instance. We all know that young children and adult alcoholics will swallow anything handy, the first from curiosity and the second from a desire to obliterate reality.

Why spend millions of dollars and countless animals' lives to demonstrate what we already know? Drain cleansers, lavatory pan whiteners, anti-freeze and floor polishes (to name but a few of the noxious substances that are routinely pumped into laboratory animals) are *already* recognized as dangerous to your health. Why continue this lunacy?

The reason is not far to seek. It is because research has become bogged down within the limits of tired tradition and the liberal funding applied only to experimentation involving animals. Most researchers have had little or no education in the use of sophisticated modern instruments with which the effects of drugs and chemicals may be studied. An attitude of "let's try it on the dog . . or rat . . or laboratory mouse" or whatever, prevails within scientific methodology. Most importantly, vivisection is Big Business.

The new methods to replace the use of animals are techniques that have the advantage of speed, economy, accuracy and safety, as well as being ethically acceptable. Why is not funding for these alternatives on the same scale as the lavish grants accorded to endless experiments on animals?

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