

Subject: STH.org Contact Form Submission
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From: Karter Neal [REDACTED]

It is a shame that this blog disseminates such hateful information. Since my involvement at the Hermitage, I can truly say that the building is cleaner and more humane and the cats are healthier and happier.

The high levels of severe and painful stomatitis in these poor cats were a direct result of the chronic overcrowding and severe levels of stress and disease transmission from the years of poor management and severe crowding at the Hermitage. It was the perfect example of a "no-kill" actually killing with kindness by trying to take on too much. How inappropriate it is that a staff of cat care professionals could not recognize the resulting disease and suffering these cats were subjected to over the years due to the overcrowding and filth.

After years of practice, I have seen how difficult it can be to treat cats with stomatitis, even after pulling all their teeth and putting them through the rigours of daily treatment. Please explain to me how it is humane to daily trap feral cats and force them to be handled by humans to control their difficult disease? It is inhumane due to the very nature of a feral cat not wanting to be handled. The treatment is rigorous enough for a docile cat.

And, by the way, the amount of Depo-Medrol induced diabetes in this group of cats from chronic overuse of steroid treatment is shameful.

Because their stomatitis seems more a result of calicivirus than from auto-immune disease related to plaque on the teeth; our attempts at doing full mouth extractions on several of the cats have not been able to clear the stomatitis. They are left with intractable pain even after having undergone a major procedure; for example Digger.

Also, when I began examining cats in June, I was shocked to find cats in heart failure, chronic renal failure and end-stage cancer who obviously had these problems for months and were not recognized by previous staff as being ill. Ritmo's colon was so big and painful, Cannoli had a baseball size abdominal tumor, Sissy could not eat and defecate on her own and had lost over four pounds in a month, feral cats with bleeding gums and open ulcers on their mouths. These cats simply were not receiving the medical care they needed.

The list is very long indeed and was very distressful to me, the new cat care staff, and my staff at HSSA which have spent months trying to improve the quality of care for these animals. The list of euthanized cats which you posted is a list which I myself created and must have been forwarded from Rosalie. I stand by each decision; these cats were suffering.

Please realize that it is not death which is the "enemy". It is the suffering and pain which these cats underwent for so long. These were all cats that were in pain or had terminal disease, or due to their fractiousness could not have their disease treated humanely. I have testified to law enforcement and medical boards under oath regarding the chronic neglect these cats underwent.

I ask you and the Coalition to show compassion for these cats and their memory, rather than create a hateful forum against the great improvements in the standard of care that have been made. I hope that the Coalition can learn to accept that the Hermitage is a more humane and compassionate place for the cats; despite all the turmoil with staff.

Mary Jo has undergone extreme duress and shown a lot of courage to take on some

very difficult people, but she has done the right thing for these cats. This includes the cats that were so neglected and in pain and that I humanely euthanized them during this difficult process. I will not engage in personal attacks as this blog does. However, I can attest from a medical and behavioral standpoint that the cats at the Hermitage are in a much more humane, appropriate, and healthy environment and I am proud of what Mary Jo, me, and my staff have done to help all of these cats.

Sincerely,
Karter Neal, DVM
Medical Director
Humane Society of Southern Arizona
