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**SUNDAY**  
AUGUST 8, 2004

# The Bakersfield Californian

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## The sad truth about cats and dogs



Two days' worth of euthanized animals sit in barrels in cold storage at the Kern County Animal Shelter on Mount Vernon Avenue. The animal shelter euthanizes about 25,000 animals every year.

DAN OCAMPO / THE CALIFORNIAN

## THROWAWAY animals

The county kills about 25,000 animals every year and turns their carcasses into fertilizer. It's sad, it's appalling and it's preventable. The problem? Money, policy and an aversion to spaying/neutering animals.



Kern County Animal Shelter officers treat the leg of a pit bull terrier with a disinfectant prior to euthanizing the animal.

JENNA BOWLES / THE CALIFORNIAN

By **JAMES BURGER**

Californian staff writer ■ e-mail: jburger@bakersfield.com

**M**etropolitan Bakersfield has too many stray dogs and cats. They run wild. They multiply. They die.

Most often it is our tax dollars that kill them.

A dog or cat slumps softly into death at the end of a needle 68 times on an average day in Kern County.

Each year, Kern County Animal Control delivers lethal injections to around 25,000 animals — disposing of the bodies through a Los Angeles company that uses the carcasses in a process that makes fertilizer.

The city of Bakersfield will spend \$738,000 this fiscal year to collect, hold, adopt and kill its share of those animals. Kern County will spend \$2 million on the same task.

The money pays for everything from dog food to euthanization drugs.

It's a lot of money to spend on a problem that will only grow as Kern's human population increases.

And the problem can be alleviated. Solutions, however, depend on two factors — cooperation and the ability to withstand some political heat, both of which appear to be in short supply in Kern County.

Dramatic decreases in animal overpopulation have been achieved in other counties.

The solutions aren't unknown, but have been rejected locally as too difficult, too expensive or too much trouble.

What's worked elsewhere:

- Mandatory spay and neuter laws that limit breeding.
- Low-cost spay and neuter programs that help people

Please turn to **ANIMALS / A6**

## Kern culture nurtures reluctance to get pets fixed

Casual attitude toward animals, high cost of surgeries make spaying, neutering rare

By **JAMES BURGER**

Californian staff writer  
e-mail: jburger@bakersfield.com

The only sure way to stop animal overpopulation, other than through lethal injection, is to keep puppies and kittens from being born.

They mature quickly and can breed

several times a year — birthing litters of four to 10 animals each time.

The Humane Society of the United States estimates a single female cat and her offspring can produce more than 420,000 cats in seven years.

A single female dog and her pups can produce 67,000 dogs in six years.

Each year between 3 million and 4 million dogs and cats are killed by animal control officers nationwide.

A spay or neuter surgery — which removes a pet's reproductive organs — can stop those kills cold.

But there's a problem locally.

Please turn to **CULTURE / A7**

## Trail leads to al-Qaida operatives

Arrests in last week mark one of biggest strikes against group

By **KATHERINE PFLEGER SHRADER**

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The public focus during the current terror alert is on street closures and fortified buildings, with the country on guard.

But what ultimately may prove more significant is the trail of arrests in the last week, beginning in Pakistan and shifting to Britain, as the United States and its allies apparently close in on al-Qaida operatives who had their sights set on striking U.S. soil.

It is unclear — and perhaps unknown — whether the plot was abandoned years ago or remained active. This is a question with political implications because some critics accuse the Bush administration of rais-

ing terror warnings to bumish the president's image as commander in chief ahead of the November election.

Regardless, it seems clear that last week brought some of the biggest and most significant actions against al-Qaida since the March 2003 capture of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the terror network's former third-ranking member who masterminded the Sept. 11 attacks.

It was on July 29, at the CIA director's regular late-afternoon meeting, that acting chief John McLaughlin discussed some of the alarming information that had recently been received. That included extensive surveillance reports of five buildings in New York, Washington and Newark, N.J., he told senior agency operatives and analysts, FBI representatives and others from different intelligence agencies.

Those casing the buildings had recorded meticulous details — the type of planning details that countert-

Please turn to **TERROR / A7**

## Looking to ditch date? Phone services deliver

Cingular, Virgin will call with taped fake emergency to aid in your escape

By **VERENA DOBNIK**

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The peak time for dates from hell in New York City is Friday at 8 p.m. — at least, judged by the cell phone calls delivering emergency excuses to bolt.

Truth is, they're fake "rescue" calls — prerecorded messages created by two legitimate cell phone providers, Cingular Wireless and Virgin Mobile USA, in California's Silicon Valley. In an era of Internet-set dates, it's just customer service — a hip way to wriggle out of an uncomfortable encounter.

"The phone is being used as a lifestyle accessory," says Sarah Koenig, spokeswoman for Virgin Mobile, which targets the youth market. "It's about having fun."

At a high-tech central command in Silicon Valley, five people with Ph.D.s in linguistics dream up excuses for folks to repeat before suddenly dropping a date gone sour.

"The call numbers go up on week-ends. Friday nights are the worst for bad dates. In New York, the peak time is 8 p.m.," says Dan Enthoven, director of marketing for BeVocal, which designs complex voice-driven software for the telecom market from its Silicon Valley offices in Mountain View.

Please turn to **RESCUE / A5**

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### WEATHER



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### THROWAWAY animals

A two-day series examining local efforts to control pet overpopulation.

- Today:**
- The scope of the problem
  - Possible solutions
- Monday:**
- Rescue groups combat pet euthanasia

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**RESCUE:** Services let customers arrange 'emergency' call for predetermined time

Continued from A1

BeVocal's two rescue-call clients in North America, Cingular and Virgin Mobile, generate at least 10,000 such calls a month, says Enthoven.

With both Cingular's Escape-A-Date and Virgin Mobile's Rescue Ring service, a customer can arrange to be called at a set time.

When the cell rings, one of Cingular's eight "emergency" messages says: "Hey, this is your Escape-A-Date call. If you're looking for an excuse, I got it. Just repeat after me, and you'll be on

your way! 'Not again! Why does that always happen to you? ... All right, I'll be right there.' Now tell 'em that your roommate got locked out, and you have to go let them in. Good luck!"

At the end of Virgin Mobile's 30-second pretend call comes a cheerful kicker: "Now get out of there and start having a better day!"

You tell your fib and dash off, maybe leaving a half-eaten steak and a half-gone bottle of wine.

Whew! Bad date is history. The rescue call service is part of

Atlanta-based Cingular's Voice Connect package, which costs \$4.99 a month and also allows you to dial by voice or to link to your desktop e-mail.

Virgin Mobile USA, the New Jersey-based joint venture of Sprint PCS and the Virgin Group, offers its Rescue Ring at 25 cents a pop, plus the price of the call. Customers may select an excuse from a prerecorded menu—or it can be a surprise.

Of course, a call can also get a person out of a meeting or a class.

The ethics of helping people lie

doesn't seem to worry the providers.

Says Patti Keller, Cingular's Voice Connect product manager, "The calls are more humorous than dishonest. Besides, when you're on a bad date, you don't want to be with each other. This is good for everyone."

**ON THE INTERNET**

Cingular Wireless:  
[www.cingular.com/voiceconnect](http://www.cingular.com/voiceconnect)

Virgin Mobile USA:  
[www.virginmobileusa.com](http://www.virginmobileusa.com)

**Man's appeal rejected in tree case**

The Associated Press

OJAI — A man convicted of bulldozing 300 trees from his Ojai Valley property will head to jail after his appeal for a new trial was denied.

William Kaddis was found guilty last year of clearing nearly half of his 44-acre property. He was convicted of 11 criminal counts and ordered to serve 210 days in a Ventura County jail and pay \$500,000 to the Ojai Land Conservancy for an oak tree restoration program.

Kaddis appealed his conviction, but

a three-judge panel of appellate judges rejected his arguments that his land was protected under an 1848 treaty that ended the Mexican-American war and therefore not subject to the state's regulatory control.

"The cases cited do not support such a whimsical proposition, and we reject it," the judges said in their ruling.

Kaddis is out on bail and could not be reached for comment. He faces an Oct. 5 hearing over probation violations that could extend his sentence by another 120 days.



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## THROWAWAY animals

# ANIMALS: Officials point to various problems for county's struggles in dealing with strays

Continued from A1

fix their pets for a minimal cost.

- Foster care programs that help sick, injured or aggressive animals become adoptable pets.
- Animal rescue programs that take animals out of the county animal shelter and foster them.

If they were used in Kern County, these solutions could save thousands of animals, as they already have in other counties.

### Roadside hound

The orange dog knows the man's minivan and comes bounding down the embankment of Alfred Harrell Highway as the driver pulls onto the shoulder, stirring a small cloud of dust.

We'll call him Richard.

We'll call her Roadie.

Neither name is real.

She doesn't have a name and he doesn't want to draw attention to his identity or what he's doing. Richard said he's worried about animal control officers and what they will do if they catch Roadie.

He's worried they will put her to sleep.

He's right to worry.

Three out of every four animals picked up by animal control are dead within a week.

"Come on baby, let's get your dinner," he says as the morning sun starts its climb up the sky. "You're a good dog, not a bad dog."

Someone dumped Roadie here at the edge of Bakersfield.

Or maybe she ran away. Since then, Richard thinks, Roadie has birthed a litter of puppies in her hideout on Alfred Harrell.

There are tens of thousands of animals like her scattered across Kern County — lost, alone and suffering.

Roadie was rail thin and starving by the time bicyclists and runners noticed her and started putting out dry kibble and water.

Richard came later, noticing Roadie as he took his own dogs out to Hart Park for a walk.

She was skittish at first.

But he tamed her with food, kind words and daily brushing. He killed her fleas and dewormed her.

Roadie came to him each morning, tail wagging, head down, bounding and playful.

Since then he's found a home for her with a family in a big home where she will be spayed and loved. Roadie has her safe haven.

But countless other strays are still loose and breeding.

The problem is growing.

### Harsh measures

Steve McCalley and Matt Constantine are used to being blamed as the bad guys of Bakersfield animal control.

Most of the animal lovers in Kern County treat the pair, who run the Kern County Animal Control Services Division, with suspicion. Often they're met with thinly veiled hatred.

The pair are, admittedly, in charge of killing around 28,000 animals a year.

But they don't see themselves as villains. They see themselves as the guys being honest about a big problem nobody wants to look at.

Ask them how many animals they've killed in the past 10 years and they'll tell you bluntly. They'll give you charts.

Maybe, they said, if we make a big enough deal out of this, people will do something about it.

So far it isn't working.

For years, McCalley said, county officials and some community members have talked about creating new laws, foster care programs, rescue relationships and a way to do large numbers of low-cost spay and neuter operations.

None of those programs have seen the light of day.

Those programs cost money that the county doesn't have and, in the current tough financial times, isn't likely to get, McCalley said.

Only a massive commitment of volunteer help will solve the problem, he said.

But the county has yet to organize that community army, doing little, if any, outreach. Animal lovers around Bakersfield aren't taking it upon themselves to team up, either.

### Entrenched positions

Right now, most of the thousands of committed animal volunteers in Kern County are focused on their own causes — feral cats, thrift stores, smaller no-kill shelters or rescuing specific breeds.

And large segments of that animal-friendly community are not at all friendly with each other.

Most groups grumble about other groups, grouse about the city and the county, or take potshots at individuals within their own group.

Marilyn Stewart, who runs the no-kill ALPHA Canine Sanctuary, said she made enemies by routinely pointing out how many animals Kern Coun-



Kern County Animal Control officer Rick De La Rosa pets a stray dog he took from the back yard of an Oildale residence. The dog had followed a walker home.

ty and the SPCA were euthanizing. "When it's been shoved under the rug for a long time, the person who points it out gets their butts kicked," she said. "I can sit on cactus now."

Such bickering is not unique to Bakersfield and it can be extremely destructive to the cause of animal rescue.

"One of the biggest enemies of decreasing animal overpopulation is I love them more than you do," said John Snyder, director of companion animals for The Humane Society of the United States.

Rick Blackwell, animal services manager for the county of Merced, said political infighting had fractured efforts to help animals in his territory.

So the county pulled together a citizens' group to try and rebuild good relationships.

"What we have done is we keep it open. We have nothing to hide. We do not bash groups. We don't respond to attacks," Blackwell said. "The volunteer group is concentrating on networking, trust."

Despite Kern's history of infighting, Stewart said she is starting to see signs of hope in Bakersfield.

People who used to be archenemies are talking to each other and teaming up on programs.

"You don't forget about (the past), but you put it aside," Stewart said.

### Reactive effort

McCalley said Kern County created the Animal Control Care Education and Support Services committee several years ago to create change within government.

The committee has talked about mandatory spay/neuter ordinances, foster programs, rescue systems and government subsidized spay/neuter operations.

Some ideas were taken to the Board of Supervisors where they were rejected, said Stewart, a member of the group.

"All our tax money is being spent

on reactive things — which means collecting and killing animals," Stewart said.

County money should help pay for education programs and low-cost spay and neuter efforts rather than lethal injections, she said.

McCalley said the county has been bogged down in rules and regulations and hampered by the bad relationships among groups. But he doesn't believe throwing money at animal overpopulation is the solution.

For real change, he said, there needs to be popular support from the community.

"The problem that we have is how do we engage the community in this when the community doesn't want to engage itself?" McCalley said.

### Success stories — elsewhere

Coastal Santa Cruz County is decades ahead of Bakersfield in animal control efforts.

In 2003, the Santa Cruz County Animal Services Authority collected 3,634 animals around the county. Of those, 1,449 were adopted and only 1,245 were euthanized.

That's a euthanization rate of around 34 percent — less than half the kill rate in Kern County.

And, since 1997, Santa Cruz County has been able to cut the number of animals impounded by 57 percent, maintain adoption rates and decrease euthanizations.

Santa Cruz's Animal Services' annual budget is \$1.9 million, around \$800,000 less than what larger, more populous Kern County pays to maintain a euthanization rate of more than 70 percent.

The biggest factor in changing the situation in Santa Cruz, said animal services coordinator Tricia Geisreiter, is a local law passed in 1994 that requires animals to be spayed or neutered.

"I think that our mandatory spay/neuter law has given us a tremendous tool in reducing the num-

ber of animals that come into the shelter," Geisreiter said.

Santa Cruz volunteers go into the county shelter to pet and play with animals — teaching them to get along with people and other animals.

Geisreiter also has access to a small army of animal foster parents she has trained to take sick, infant or troubled animals out of the shelter before they are euthanized.

"One day we had 170 kittens out in foster care," she said.

The animals are raised, tended and taught manners until they are safe to go back to the shelter and be put up for adoption.

### Spay and neuter

Kern County has done little to reduce overpopulation other than encouraging owners by reducing license fees if an animal is spayed or neutered. There is no law in Kern requiring owners to alter their animals. And there is no program to help low-income owners with costs.

A few nonprofit groups — the Cat People and the Kern County Humane Society — fund small programs that reduce the cost of spaying and neutering a dog or cat.

But early each month the Humane Society runs out of money for its \$20 vouchers — paid for through its downtown thrift shop. The Cat People offer \$25 vouchers when they have the cash to do so.

But vouchers can only make a dent in the surgery costs, which run between \$40 and \$200 depending on the sex of the animal and how big it is.

The Bakersfield Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals bought a new mobile spay and neuter van several years ago. The hope was that veterinarians would donate their time to the cause of curbing overpopulation.

The van has sat idle.

Foster care and in-shelter petting programs like those in Santa Cruz do exist in Bakersfield.



Kern County Animal Control officer Rick De La Rosa removes a dead dog from Snow Road near Fruitvale Avenue.

### Animal control comparison

#### Kern County Animal Control

Year	Impounds	Retrieved	Adopted	Euthanized	Adoption percentage	Euthanized percentage
1998	23,524	706	923	21,159	3.9%	89.95%
1999	24,494	581	1,645	19,266	6.7%	78.66%
2000	25,360	752	2,171	19,512	8.5%	76.94%
2001	22,381	651	2,522	16,443	11.2%	73.47%
2002	18,938	643	2,118	14,380	11.2%	75.93%
2003	19,206	502	1,333	15,317	6.9%	79.75%

Does not include city of Bakersfield numbers

#### Santa Cruz County Animal Services Authority

Year	Impounds	Adopted	Euthanized	Adoption percentage	Euthanized percentage
1998	8,193	2,000	2,361	24.4%	28.8%
1999	6,619	1,950	1,884	29.4%	28.4%
2000	4,676	1,525	1,321	32.6%	28.2%
2001	5,870	1,930	1,717	32.8%	29.2%
2002*	4,076	1,181	975	28.9%	23.9%
2003	3,634	1,449	1,245	39.8%	34.2%

\*Transition year from SPCA

#### Merced County Animal Control

Year	Impounds	Rescued	Adopted	Euthanized	Adoption percentage	Euthanized percentage
1999-2000	12,336	180	796	9,435	6.4%	76%
2000-2001	10,798	226	627	7,684	5.8%	71%
2001-2002	11,806	336	851	9,797	7.2%	83%
2002-2003	11,041	418	800	8,044	7.2%	73%
2003-2004	11,180	1,131	929	7,022	8.3%	63%

Source: Kern, Merced, Santa Cruz counties

THE CALIFORNIAN

But they aren't as active — boasting only a handful of volunteers at most.

In many places, even valley communities like Merced County, rescue organizations come into the animal shelter and pull animals out, signing on to spay and neuter them and adopt them out.

Here in Kern County, that doesn't take place often.

### Feinting at change

New faces constantly rotate into Bakersfield's pro-animal community.

But, frustrated by the lack of coordination and cooperation, they often give up or wage Richard's war — saving one animal at a time.

Some, however, try to find a way to create change as best they can.

Patty Hock became the dispatcher and point person for the city of Bakersfield's animal control department after a dispute with the Bakersfield SPCA ended the nonprofit's capture-and-kill contract with the city in July 2003.

For the first year, the city department, smaller than the SPCAs and operating with cobbled-together trucks and a simple office structure, worked almost exclusively just to pick up animals.

But Hock has taken the first step to making the city department more than just a dog-catching agency.

She has created the HERO — Humane Education for Responsible Ownership — program to go out into schools and teach children to care for, spay, neuter and respect animals.

It's not a new idea.

The county of Kern does educational outreach programs at schools and for community groups on occasion.

Hock thinks her HERO program can help change the culture of animal abandonment and neglect in the county.

But she needs help. Right now she's spending her own money on supplies for the program.

"I need presenters. I need someone to be willing to go and teach. I need people to make copies," Hock said.

At first her attempts to get people from animal nonprofits to chip in their time met with only minimal success. "They're all involved in their own

things — but why can't we all be involved in the same thing?" Hock said.

Since then the Kern Humane Society, the SPCA and The Cat People have teamed up on the program.

Helen Acosta has a different, more ambitious, goal.

Acosta teaches public speaking and communication classes at Bakersfield College.

She's seen Bakersfield's animal troubles. She's seen Santa Cruz's successes.

And now she wants to create a mandatory spay/neuter ordinance in Bakersfield with her Kern Pet Project.

"We don't have to kill all these animals. There's a solution," she said.

"The problem is that our animal control services cannot effectively do their jobs because they aren't adequately funded and we don't give them adequate authority."

But she has come up against the same indifference and territorialism that has hampered Hock, the city and county animal control.

The people who love animals most in Bakersfield won't work with one another to create a big-picture solution.

"What I've been trying to do is talk with people who are trying to make animals' lives better," Acosta said. "The problem is negotiating all the entrenched positions."

Acosta and McCalley agree — real change won't happen without those people breaking down the walls and working together.

"If community groups who already do the work aren't included in the process, whatever the city and the county put in place will be questioned," Acosta said.

### What's to be done

Right now, a trip to the Kern County animal shelter is a death sentence for around three-quarters of the animals who take that ride.

Animal care groups and individuals with kind hearts are doing what they believe is right.

But the big picture shows that the effort is still unfocused and the problem persists.

# THROWAWAY animals



Dr. Paul Ulrich gives a dog a preliminary checkup before he performs surgery on it to make it sterile.

HENRY A. BARRIOS / THE CALIFORNIAN



Dr. Paul Ulrich performs veterinary surgery on a dog to make the animal sterile.

## CULTURE: Though it worked in Santa Cruz, many think mandatory spay/neuter ordinance wouldn't fare well in Kern

Continued from A1

In Kern County, the surgery is optional, can cost up to \$200 and there is a cultural reluctance to neuter male animals.

That leads to overpopulation and millions of tax dollars each year to catch, hold and kill unwanted and homeless animals.

### Mad scramble

Kern County Animal Control dispatcher Stacey Achen's fingers fly over the keys of her phone on a busy Tuesday morning. Her desk supports three coffee cups of various sizes. She needs the caffeine.

The computer system is down. Achen is taking information down on a legal pad.

Calls come rapid-fire. Loose dog. Dead dog. Dead dog. Dog bite. Stray. Dead. Loose. Cats locked in an apartment. Dog with its head stuck in the spokes of a car's wheel rim.

She listens to the traumatic lives and deaths of Kern's creatures and sends animal control officers to clean up the mess.

She gets between 100 and 160 calls each day. She clocked 2,645 distress calls in June.

The lack of care people have for animals frustrates her.

"They just let their animals overpopulate. Spay and neuter them, that's the bottom line," she said.

### Cultural barriers

If only it were that simple. Cost can be a critical barrier to altering animals. It can cost between \$40 and \$200 to fix an animal depending on its sex and size.

That's a lot of money for many families and there is very limited help to defray those costs.

The county and city don't offer any vouchers. The Humane Society and the Cat People organization do offer limited vouchers, but only for about \$20 to \$25.

And there are other barriers. Kern County's rural heritage is blamed for a casual attitude toward animals, say animal control officials and activists. Spaying and neutering are uncommon.

"We have many people in the community who do not believe it's appropriate to neuter the male," said Barbara Hays, a leader of The Cat People, a local nonprofit group that cares for homeless cats.

That attitude is tied, often, to the ego of male humans who feel uncomfortable if their male animals aren't able to breed, say animal rescuers and shelter officers across the county.

In addition, the city and county have few rules governing cats. They aren't required to be licensed.

"Cats are not valued. They are just property," Hays said. "The same family that won't spay a cat will go out and buy a widescreen TV."

Countering that culture may take radical action — action for which county officials aren't sure residents are ready.

New county dog limits drew heated opposition from residents that has yet to cool down.

A law that would force owners to spay and neuter their pets could be worse.

Kern County Environmental Health Services Director Steve McCalley isn't sure county residents would stand for such a law.

But that is exactly what Santa Cruz County did.

Jody Cramer was the executive director of the Santa Cruz Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals during most of the 1990s — before SPCA turned over animal control and euthanization duties to the county.

She spearheaded ordinances in Santa Cruz County, and most of its cities, that demanded all animals be altered. Breeding was only allowed with a special permit.

Cramer said the 18-month fight was vicious — even in a community where love of animals is nearly universal.

"I was called a fascist and people threw things at me. But it made people think about this like they never thought about it before," she said.

What people don't understand, she said, is the scope of the animal overpopulation problem.

She had to shock even the most knowledgeable of politicians just to bring the situation home to them.

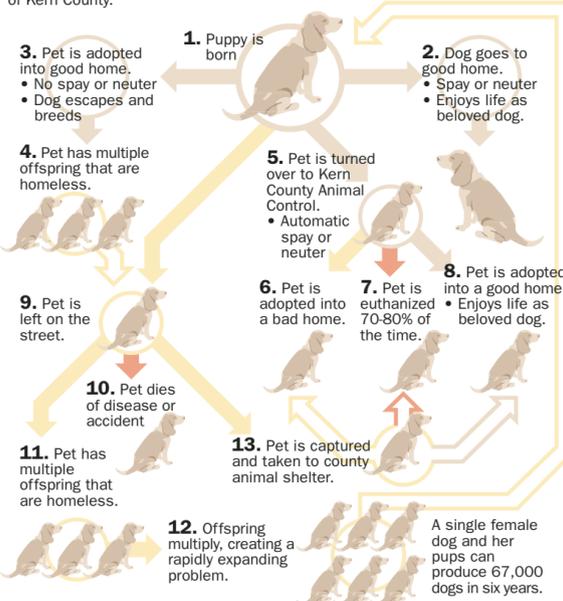
"I invited every elected official to come, one at a time, to the animal shelter. Then I took them into the euthanization room. I don't care if they were uncomfortable and there was blood on the floor," Cramer said.

She won her fight. The number of homeless animals taken to Santa Cruz County's animal shelter has dropped by more than half in the past seven years. Euthanization rates have plummeted.

The solution worked.

### The dog problem

Neglect leads to tragedy for animals and an expensive problem for the taxpayers of Kern County.



Sources: Humane Society of the United States

THE CALIFORNIAN

### Localizing change

But can that solution work in Kern County?

Bakersfield officials said it would be impossible without a large community effort.

Helen Acosta, a Bakersfield College teacher, is trying to follow in Cramer's footsteps. But she knows the Santa Cruz plan has to be adapted to Bakersfield.

Kern County is less affluent than Santa Cruz. It is not a community known for activism. A spay/neuter ordinance would need to look different.

"If you're going to make it mandatory, what you need to do is make it low cost," Acosta said.

It can cost up to \$200 for a large female dog.

Dr. Paul Ulrich of Bakersfield Veterinary Hospital said it is hard for local veterinarians to offer more than a smattering of time for charity spay-and-neuter work.

"People are spending everything from 40 to 70 hours on their own practices," he said. "These (surgeries) are

very labor-intensive."

He said the real source of the problem is owners who are careless about spaying, neutering, confining and caring for their pets.

Creating a low-cost spay-and-neuter program would require government or the private sector to pay for the veterinarians' work.

"It would have to be subsidized in some way," Ulrich said.

Acosta stands behind the vets.

"Every veterinarian in town is very busy," she said. "A lot of people have said, over the years, that our vets are just greedy. No, they're overworked."

There are programs, mainly run by The Cat People and the Kern County Humane Society, that offer people vouchers that help them get low-cost spay-and-neuter surgeries.

But they can't keep up with the need, and government, which used to help out with cash, can't afford to assist any more.

McCalley said the county used to be able to spend around \$20,000 to \$25,000 a year on spay-and-neuter vouchers. But, he said, the state start-

### How to help

#### Kern County Animal Shelter

**The organization:** Animal control shelter operated by the county of Kern.

**Needs:** Volunteers to help people find lost pets at the shelter, adopt new pets and help teach good pet ownership.

**Future needs:** Volunteers to foster animals until they are adoptable.

**How to help:** Call Karen Duke, volunteer coordinator, at 868-7105. Visit the county animal control Web site at [www.co.kern.ca.us/acd](http://www.co.kern.ca.us/acd) and click on the "Be a Volunteer" link.

#### ALPHA Canine Sanctuary

**The organization:** Nonprofit shelter for 100 dogs.

**Needs:** Volunteers to help hold adoption events, to play with dogs at ALPHA's shelter north of town, to deliver newsletters, take dogs to the vet or work on dog runs at the shelter. Volunteers to foster a dog for a day or a month while space opens up at the shelter.

**How to help:** Call Marilyn Stewart at 391-8212.

#### Bakersfield Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

**The organization:** Nonprofit shelter for 74 dogs and 80 cats.

**Needs:** Volunteers for foster programs, pet playing, kennel cleaning and other programs.

**How to help:** Call the SPCA at 323-8353.

#### The Cat People

**The organization:** Nonprofit group that provides food for, and spays and neuters, colonies of feral cats.

**Needs:** Volunteers for feeding programs. Money for spay and neuter programs.

**How to help:** Call The Cat People at 327-4706.

#### HERO

**The organization:** Humane education program organized by the city of Bakersfield's Animal Control Department. Volunteer visits schools to talk about proper animal care and responsible ownership.

**Needs:** Volunteers to teach school classes. Funds to help pay for supplies.

**How to help:** Call Patty Hock, city animal control clerk, at 326-3435.

#### Kern Pet Project

**The organization:** Group of concerned individuals trying to organize proactive solutions to Bakersfield's animal overpopulation problem.

**Needs:** Individuals willing to speak out to protect animals.

**How to help:** Go to [www.kernpetproject.org](http://www.kernpetproject.org) and click on the JOIN! link.

#### City and county government

**The organization:** The city of Bakersfield and county of Kern make animal laws for metropolitan Bakersfield.

**Needs:** To hear the concerns and desires of the public about animals and local laws.

**How to help:** Call the seven Bakersfield City Council members at 326-3767 or e-mail them at [city\\_council@ci.bakersfield.ca.us](mailto:city_council@ci.bakersfield.ca.us) Call the five Kern County supervisors at 868-3601 or e-mail them at [board@co.kern.ca.us](mailto:board@co.kern.ca.us)

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requiring the county to spay and neuter every animal adopted out of the county's shelter, so the money went to that.

Rick Blackwell, of Merced County Animal Control, said he expects to have a county-sponsored low-cost spay-neuter program up and running in the next couple of months.

He's in negotiations with area veterinarians about how to organize the program. Merced County would provide vouchers.

In the end, the problem of pet over-

population is a simple one with difficult solutions.

"We are never going to adopt our way out of animal overpopulation," said John Snyder, director of companion animals for The Humane Society of the United States.

It comes down to Bakersfield's culture, animal advocates said. This city throws away animals.

"Changing the community culture is like trying to navigate the Exxon Valdez in Truxtun Lake," McCalley said.

## TERROR: Information from arrest of young computer expert in Pakistan led authorities to suspects in Britain

Continued from A1

errorism experts say are often not discovered until after an attack — in hundreds of photos, drawings and written documents.

The surveillance dated from both before Sept. 11, 2001, and after — as far back as four years ago. It is not clear how recently some of it may have been updated.

The information had come to light after Pakistan in mid-July arrested a young computer expert, Mohammed Naem Noor Khan, using information the CIA had shared with Pakistani intelligence, a U.S. counterterrorism official said, speaking on the condition

of anonymity.

Khan's arrest led authorities to a computer, discs and other information, also in Pakistan, that pulled the curtain back on extensive, methodical surveillance work.

It also led them to Britain. Much of the surveillance work had been done in 2000, U.S. officials say, by a militant they consider to be a senior al-Qaida operative, known as Abu Eisa al-Hindi or Abu Musa al-Hindi.

On Saturday, U.S. officials and government documents showed that al-Hindi was personally sent to the United States in early 2001 by Khalid Shaikh Mohammed to perform the sur-

veillance on economic targets in New York.

Still, many questions remain, among them:

- The role, if any, played by Babar Ahmad, a cousin of Khan's who was arrested last week in Britain. He is wanted in the United States for using U.S.-based Web sites to recruit fighters and raise support for Taliban forces in Afghanistan. Ahmad had a document on battle group plans for Navy vessels in the Persian Gulf, lawyers representing the United States said Friday at Ahmad's first court appearance in London.
- Whether al-Hindi or any other

detainees are involved with a radical cleric in Britain, Abu Hamza al-Masri, who was arrested by London police in May after an American extradition request. Al-Masri is accused of trying to establish a terrorist training camp in Oregon while providing aid to both al-Qaida and the Taliban. His mosque has been linked to Sept. 11 suspect Zacarias Moussaoui and would-be shoe bomber Richard Reid.

- Whether the plot was still active, set aside for possible future use or abandoned.

- Most important for Americans, are there other plotters still out there? Democratic Senate intelligence

agencies put it this way: Intelligence agencies have had a few good weeks, but al-Qaida cells are multiplying faster than authorities can keep up with them.

The Bush administration says this: "We have, as we've said before, reason to believe that we are in a very serious threat environment." Deputy Attorney General James Comey said last week. "And we're working like crazy to try and make sure that threat does not come to fruition."

**Katherine Pflieger Shrader covers intelligence and national security issues for The Associated Press in Washington.**

**ELSEWHERE** African diamonds may have been al-Qaida's "best friend," according to several witnesses who say six of the organization's top leaders bought around \$15 million worth of diamonds in Africa prior to Sept. 11, 2001. The gems offered the terrorist group a way to have easily convertible, untraceable financial resources after the United States and other countries froze al-Qaida bank accounts in 1999, according to a confidential report by U.N.-backed prosecutors and obtained by the Associated Press. The al-Qaida figures dealt directly with then-President Charles Taylor and other leaders in Liberia from 1999 on, according to the accounts.