

# Sheltie Connection

UTAH SHETLAND SHEEPDOG ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER,

## Editor:

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## Submission

Deadline is the

20th of each month.

Club Meetings are the 3rd

Wednesday of each Month.

**ANNUAL  
MEETING AND  
ELECTION OF  
OFFICERS  
WILL BE  
WEDNESDAY  
OCTOBER 21,  
2009 AT 7PM**

## Note

**There were no  
nominations  
from the floor  
in September.**

## Presidents Message

First I want to correct an error from the meeting last month. I forgot to thank Judy for being taking care of the picnic in August. Thank you Judy.

If you missed last month's meeting you missed an excellent presentation on Alternative Medicine by Dr. Kimberly Hennemann.

She recommended the following books for our own personal education:

- Healing With Whole Foods by Paul Pitchford
- Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs

and Cats by Richard Pitcairn, DVM, Ph.D

- Four Paws Five Directions by Cheryl Schwartz, DVM
- Homeopathic Care For Cats and Dogs by Don Hamilton

Also this month I need to remind everyone that your dues are due for the upcoming year. Please send them or give them to the recording secretary.

I know this newsletter is later than normal and I apologize for that but I have for the past year

and a half been working six to seven days a week with a one hour commute to and one hour commute from work. As a result I have not had the energy or desire in a lot of cases to do anything other than have dinner and go to bed. I am willing to keep doing it until we find someone that has the time to do it, but I will not promise to have it out at the beginning of each month.

Lastly thank you for letting be President of this club for the past two years and I hope you will give your whole hearted support to Julene for the upcoming year.

Jim

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## Pickering Award Nomination For Cindy Wilkinson Submitted by Julene

### Mathews

I wish to nominate for this years Pickering award a member who has shown the members and all those who know her, a real work ethic in her accepted duties in the club.

Over the years, she has come to be known as the person who stands up for what she feels is appropriate for the club and backs that up with a willingness to serve. Always the person who can be counted on to complete a dif-

ficult task of taking care of the challenging job of heading up the performance end of the specialties, she always makes it fun for participants. She makes sure that the expenses are met, and beyond, and goes above and beyond to see that each participant walks away a winner! She is recognized not only for her beautiful dogs, but the versatility she exhibits with her dogs, being a real example of the importance of work-

ing with our dogs in as many venues as possible to refine a well rounded Shetland Sheepdog. I am proud to present for your consideration, Cindy Wilkinson for this years Pickering award winner as a club member who exemplifies the importance of participation by each club member and the individual impact each person has in a club. Thank you to Cindy for your hard work this past year and all the other years!

## Pickering Award Nomination For Peggy Newman Submitted by Julene

### Mathews

For your consideration for this years Pickering award, I wish to present to you a member who has exhibited a willingness to serve combined with an extraordinary ability to multi-task in our club setting. This member accepted and

carried out a variety of jobs in the club not just this year, but in years in the past as well, and completed them using all of her energy and untold hours spent on behalf of the clubs needs. I would like you to consider for this

years Pickering Award, Peggy Newman. The club certainly thanks Peggy for her very hard work to keep the clubs engines running!

# Inside Story Headline

Hi All,

This month's article is rather long and beyond what most people will be willing to wade through. However I'm presenting it in its entirety because it's so indicative of what has been happening all across the nation with animal rights legislation – and because it can be effectively used as a tool, when presented to legislators.

However, if any of you would like to shorten the “pain” and cut to the chase:

- 1 - scroll to the bottom and read the “**Conclusion**” first
- 2 – then scroll back to the beginning and read the “**ABSTRACT**” section
- 3 – then read the “**Introduction**”

This will give you an overview of what this article is all about. If your interest is peaked, then you can go on, if not, just look for the highlights – or quit there. As I said, if presented to legislators, they will find it indicative of how special interest groups, such as the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) are pushing an animal rights agenda on localities. To be forewarned is to be forearmed!

David

## Sneaking the “Big Lie” through the Back Door: How Special Interest Groups are Hijacking Local Legislation

Margaret Anne Cleek

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### **ABSTRACT**

*An open process for drafting legislation would assure that from the onset all camps are heard from and all data considered. “Sunshine” or open meeting laws are in place to assure this. Instead of this happening, proponents of special-interest ordinances are being advised on websites and at legislative workshops to establish “coalitions” or “taskforces” which are independent of the legislative body of the municipality. Thus they are not subject to the open meeting laws and sunshine laws which exist. City or county staff is co-opted and a proposed ordinance is presented by staff. Public trust in government is eroded when legislation to be proposed is drafted in private and votes are solicited in private without public knowledge or debate, and without those opposed being given sufficient warning to garner opposition or participate in the process. Such a situation operates within the guidelines of the letter of the sunshine principle, but not within the spirit of the sunshine principle, for the legislation is the product of a private coalition where openness, inclusion, and unanimity is falsely maintained.. Not honoring the spirit as well as the letter of sunshine laws allows special interests to hijack local government.*

## INTRODUCTION

It is maintained that municipalities are being targeted for legislation by special interest groups who correctly believe that strategic grassroots organization and legislating at the local level is a viable path to enacting their personal agenda and legislating the social change they envision for society. While the public is usually made aware of federal and state legislation impinging on privacy, property, and personal freedoms, and broad-based opposition is launched, they may not be aware of local legislation being considered until it is brought to a vote before a council or board. It is further maintained that the enactment of such legislation is planned to be enacted as quietly and as quickly as possible and that programs exist which teach how to go about enacting legislation which particularly directs supporters to follow certain processes which serve to circumvent open meeting and "sunshine laws."

The threat is greatest at the local level because special-interest groups, most notably, animal right activists, are following a quiet plan to enact community by community legislation which supports their vision.

Programs on how to enact legislation have been developed by special interest organizations and outlined on websites and in seminars. Action steps are provided with literature, sample wording, canned letters, and a plan showing how to proceed. Those seeking to enact legislation are told not to reveal that a new ordinance is the objective, but rather to form a taskforce to address broader and vaguer issues relating to animal welfare, to decrease shelter euthanasia, or to promote the public health. Also, the advice is given to remain informal and to not have a committee appointed by the municipality's board or council as this avoids being subject to "sunshine laws" which may exist to assure open and public process (Schwing, 1994).

Those seeking to enact legislation are urged to lay the groundwork and assure support from staff before going public. Thus the public is not aware that behind closed doors special interest groups are drafting an ordinance to suit their agenda. By the time legislation is placed on a calendar for a vote, its passage is a "done deal" and there is no opportunity to successfully oppose it.

## THE INTENDED FUNCTION OF "SUNSHINE" AND OPEN MEETING LAWS

Democracy flourishes when government operates in the sunshine, available to the citizens it serves and open to public scrutiny. To preserve and encourage openness, open meetings and public records acts have been enacted, collectively known as the "Sunshine Laws."

Sunshine laws, also called open meeting laws, open government laws, open door laws, freedom of access acts, right to know laws, or public meeting laws, are federal and state laws which require meetings, records and decisions of public bodies and agencies to be accessible to the public. The state of Georgia (Baker, 2001) articulates the purpose of its Open Government law in its "Citizen's Guide to Open Government."

A democratic government assumes that those who elect public officials will have free access to what those public officials are doing. Access to government meetings and records provides citizens with the information they need to participate in the democratic process and to insist that government officials are held accountable for their actions. Justice Brandeis once said, 'Sunlight is the best disinfectant.'

Such lofty rhetoric would imply that the principles of sunshine laws reflect long held American or even Anglo-American values. However, that is not the case. Although subject to criticism, the constitutional convention in 1787 and the Congressional deliberations about the Bill of Rights occurred in secrecy. Congress and the Executive Branch have no Constitutional requirement to meet in public, and there is no state or federal common law right for the public or press to be present when governmental entities meet. ((Schwing, 2000).

Schwing (2000) continues, that sunshine laws are relatively recent phenomena. Twenty states adopted open meeting laws by 1959. By 1976, all states passed some form of open meeting laws. (5) Much of this activity is related to passing or strengthening sunshine laws after the public's reaction to the crisis created by Watergate. In 1974, Chief Justice Earl Warren stated," if anything is to be learned from our present difficulties, compendiously know as Watergate, it is that we must open our public affairs to public scrutiny on every level of government." (Warren, 1974).

Schwing (1994) writes, that court decisions and attorney general decisions have identified the following interrelated purposes of open meeting laws: "promotion of stability and public confidence in government; improved ability of the people to evaluate public official and their activities by being privy to the decision-making process so that the public can vote intelligently in elections; improved understanding of the decision-making process that enable people to consider future government development and the consequences of those development; enhancement of the fact-finding process, because discrepancies and omissions can be discovered and revealed, persons giving evidence are less able to conceal falsehood, and perjury can be more easily discov-

ered; greater control of governmental abuses; increased citizen participation in government; and better government responsiveness to the needs of the governed.”

The state of Kentucky’s “Open Meeting and Open Records Act” is a useful example of typical sunshine laws. According to the Office of the Kentucky Attorney General, “The Act requires that all meetings of a quorum of the members of a public agency where public business is discussed or action is taken must be public meetings. Public meetings must be open to the public at all times, unless the subject of the meeting falls within one or more of the thirteen exceptions found in the statute.” The Kentucky Attorney General states, “The courts have stated that the Open Meetings Act must be “interpreted most favorably to the public” since “failure to comply with the strict letter of the law in conducting meetings violates the public good.” Although public business is not defined by statute, it is defined by the courts as “the discussion of the various alternatives to a given issue about which the [agency] has the option to take action.” (Warren, 1974)

It is believed, and supported by public policy in the United States, that government is the public’s business and the basis and rationale for governmental decisions as well as the decisions themselves should be conducted in public and be easily accessible to the people. Schwing (1994) notes that states vary with regard to the emphasis they place on the importance of the principle of open meetings, with some, making general statements as to their importance and others declaring them vital to the function of government.

Thus the object of the Sunshine Law is simply to see that the public has a chance to view and participate in its own business. Open meeting laws typically apply to all elected officials and the subordinate groups created by them. It is possible for a private group to conduct the business of government in private if they are not appointed by elected officials, but work as a “coalition of interested parties” and co-opt staff, who brings the finished product of the private body forward for a vote.

Public trust in government is eroded when legislation to be proposed is drafted in private and votes are solicited in private without public knowledge or debate, and without those opposed being given sufficient warning to garner opposition or participate in the process. Such a situation operates within the guidelines of the letter of the sunshine principle, but not within the spirit of the sunshine principle, for the legislation is presented as a *fait accompli*; the product of a coalition where inclusion and unanimity is falsely maintained to be the case.

With regard to Tennessee’s Sunshine Law, Jack McElroy, editor of the Sentinel Post writes, “Tennessee’s Sunshine Law was unleashed in the Watergate era, intended as a watchdog on government. But the old pup is showing its age. Toothless, it mostly sleeps outside meetings nowadays, too feeble even to snarl at lawmakers who pat it, kick it or ignore it as they go about spending taxes and deciding public policy”.

So while sunshine laws state local legislative bodies must announce meetings in advance and deliberate decisions in public, the law carries no penalty for violations, and citizens bear the cost of challenging any secrecy in court. Not surprisingly, complaints about abuse of the Sunshine Law have mounted through the years, but the burden and cost of exposing them falls to the public that the laws were designed to serve (McElroy 2006).

### VALUE OF AN OPEN PROCESS

In spite of the value of open meetings and full participation in legislative decisions affecting the community, often the spirit, if not the letter of the open meeting process is violated. For purposes of illustration, the process of enacting mandatory spay neuter ordinances, laws which force owners of cats and dogs to surgically desex pets by a specified age or face fines and in some cases criminal prosecution, will be used as an example of how the law making process is hijacked.

An open process for the drafting of legislation would assure that from the onset all camps are heard from and all data considered. Documentation would exist that demonstrated the process and input would be possible from any interested party throughout the entire process. But instead of this happening, proponents of special-interest ordinances are being advised on websites and at legislative workshops to establish “coalitions” or “taskforces” which are independent of the legislative body of the municipality. Thus they are not subject to the open meeting laws and sunshine laws which exist.

There are compelling justifications for liberal application of the open meeting laws to local public entities. Local bodies have the most impact on the lives of their citizens, are most subject to the influence of public opinion and their decisions directly impact quality of life issues. Attendance at open meetings is a realistic possibility for the members of the community, making it more reasonable and possible that they will attend and participate. Not honoring the spirit as well as the letter of sunshine laws allows special interests to hijack local government.

The process of perusing the ordinance at a local level, rather than attacking the issue at a national, or even state level is used because it allows a very small interested group to manipulate the process without stirring mass opposition. It insulates the group from having to defend its statistics and information, or from having to fight off challenges from larger and more organized groups that may become mobilized in the process. Lawmakers and the media are given “prepackaged” information which has not been subject to scrutiny of any kind. This information is then taken as fact and the manipulation of information may never come to light. This tactic is further exemplified by the secret method in which the ordinance is pushed. Even at the local level the movement operates below the radar so as not to elicit a response from the local community. This has the effect of producing a localized and cleansed debate which never sees a wide range of discussion or openness in the political process.

Lawmakers and staff have a limited range of expertise on most subjects and so are forced to rely heavily on reports and information from special interest groups. These reports, however, often lack objectivity and careful analysis. They instead rely heavily on one-sided statistics, factually incorrect information, and glaring omissions which reduce the usefulness of the report. Lawmakers who lack expertise on the subject, and who are operating under strict time constraints often take the information as credible at face value without pursuing inconsistencies or contacting other groups.

Small interested groups using face to face meetings and special contacts with lawmakers has been used most notably by large corporations such as the tobacco lobby. (Citation needed). Tobacco companies funded research showing that there were little to no harmful effects to smoking, and downplayed the addictive nature of cigarettes. Lawmakers were provided with studies and reports funded by the tobacco industry which came to conclusions much different than that of independent research groups, or even government agencies. This had the effect of prolonging the smoking debate even after most doctors and health officials had come to the conclusion that smoking was harmful and addictive.

The more professionalized an interest group is able to appear, the easier this process operates. This is why many groups take the initiative of developing a name for their cause, then submitting reports and packages under the title of an organization. This lends pseudo-credibility to a group that otherwise has no expertise. The act of naming an interest group is also a tactic that is useful for ensuring positive media exposure. The group becomes an official source and not just an interested person or group of people. This also ensures that they will be the group contacted by the media whenever an article regarding the story is written.

### BEATING THE SYSTEM

In spite of the value of open meetings and full participation in legislative decisions affecting the community, often the spirit, if not the letter of the open meeting process is violated. For purposes of illustration, the process of enacting mandatory spay neuter ordinances, laws which force owners of cats and dogs to surgically desex pets by a specified age or face fines and in some cases criminal prosecution, will be used as an example of how the law making process is hijacked.

Special-interest groups advise activists to not reveal that an ordinance change legislating mandatory surgical alteration of owned pets is the desired end result. Instead they are advised to give a more global and vague label to their group, such as, “Taskforce on Pets in our Community” or “Coalition to Reduce Pet Euthanasia”. They are specifically advised to not be a body appointed by the legislative body, so as to not be subject to public meeting laws. A group is formed and under the guise of being a coalition which includes all “stakeholders” participants further their plan. Some participants are well-meaning, while some know precisely what the real agenda is. In any case, an ordinance is drafted with city or county staff co-opted as a participating member, but the process immune from open meeting laws. Senior staff, legal, and council or board members are now inundated with information in private one-on-one sessions. The perception of a crisis is cultivated and the only solution is to enact legislation.

Data is provided which is either false or misleading about the success of the desired legislation. In the case of animal activists enacting mandatory spay and neuter legislation, proponents of legislation may show a decline in euthanasia, but fail to note that greater declines were achieved in communities without such an ordinance. They may show an increase in licensing with coercive legislation, but fail to mention that enforcement costs exceeded revenue produced. On a national animal protection website, success was even claimed in a community that had no such legislation. (For a comprehensive article on MSN legislation’s results please see Laura Allen (2006) *Do mandatory spay/neuter laws reduce shelter intake and euthanasia?* Breeders are vilified as being responsible for the deaths in shelters under the simply appealing but logically false premise that the birth of a wanted pet directly causes the death of a shelter animal. Breeders are labeled pimps, heartlessly exploiting animals for money, causing the death of wonderful shelter animals and costing the municipality tremendously in animal control costs. A huge number is manufactured and becomes the lost revenue to the county because all breeders are tax evaders making tens of thousands of dollars and costing the community in animal control costs for the surplus animals they produce. There is a definite lack of critical thinking skills, as there can either be a crisis of surplus desirable animals OR breeders selling pets for thousands of dollars. You cannot have both.



There is rampant emotional manipulation. Pictures will be shown of darling puppies. Then the numbers of animals killed in the shelter will be given. This leads the targets of the message to believe that these darling puppies are killed. In fact, the number presented includes wildlife injured and brought in, small animals, reptiles, owner surrender for euthanasia because of age or illness, feral cats, unweaned kittens, and dangerous dogs. They present as if the community is killing huge numbers of adoptable animals, but if the data were correctly examined, the numbers of adoptable animals would be revealed to be very low. Many shelters cannot meet the demand for puppies and smaller dogs and only have large mixed breed, often pit type available in any numbers for adoption (Clifton, 2006). Anyone who gathers this data is dismissed, because now the numbers, which were once touted as so compelling, are “not important”.

In private one-on-one sessions, again to avoid the open meeting laws, the council members or supervisors are solicited and sold “the big lie.” The Big Lie is a propaganda technique. It was defined by Adolf Hitler in his 1925 autobiography *Mein Kampf*. It is a lie so “colossal” that no one would believe that someone “could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously”. In the case of pet overpopulation the Big Lie is promoted over and over to city officials and the public, to the point of where they no longer can process logical arguments against the lie and accept it as fact without question. They come to fully believe that there is a crisis of pet overpopulation, that the public has not responded to education and the problem is getting worse and worse and we must enact coercive and draconian legislation because all else has failed. Breeders are labeled as unethical and unregulated and need to be controlled. Intact animals bite and run at large while altered ones do not. Every intact animal is a ticking time bomb and a single female cat can produce 470 thousand cats in seven years and a single female dog 65 thousand dogs— everyone knows this to be true! “Facts” are repeated over and over until they are accepted as true without question or critical analysis and despite sound data to the contrary.

In fact, there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of pets euthanized. The most reliable data available indicates between 3 and 4 million animals were euthanized in shelters last year. This includes feral cats, ill and infirm animals, dangerous animals, and owner turn in for euthanasia. These numbers are a far cry from the 25 million estimated 30 years ago and these numbers have decreased in spite of an increase in the number of total pets and a doubling of the expected lifespan of dogs in homes (mostly due to leash laws). It is estimated that voluntary S/N rates for cats are around 90% and 75% for dogs (numbers from HSUS, American Pet Products Manufacturer’s Association and Animal People). Spay/neuter for pets is an easy sell and represents one of the most successful social change efforts of this generation.

Before the general public and dog and cat fanciers are aware that such legislation is even being considered, senior staff and legislators have been indoctrinated to believe that there is a crisis so great and so intractable that extreme coercive and punitive action must be taken, that breeders are the scum of the earth, that a single intact animal is a threat to the community and thus vets must report animals not neutered by 4 months to animal control, that the community supports this draconian legislation, and that it has been hugely successful every where enacted. Any evidence to the contrary is dismissed as false information from breeders who are trying to protect their “business”. The board or council is primed to believe that anyone who opposes the ordinance is a selfish and heartless “special interest” while the so-called coalition is presented as representing the interests of the larger community and the animals.

The legislation is then presented to the municipal legislative body by staff as the extensive work of a “taskforce”, all “stakeholders” have been involved, and it is specially designed to meet the needs of the community. In fact, the legislation is the “canned” product of an animal rights group and these taskforces are rigged, and anyone who does not agree with the agenda is not invited to the private meetings, or if initially involved but not with the program, “chilled” out of the proceedings by the dominant group.

The real kicker in all of this is that the agenda and legislative lobby work of a special interest group (possibly with a 501c3 status which means they should not be political) is presented to the council members or supervisors as a recommendation of staff. This makes passing it a knee jerk as councils or boards rubber stamp just about anything staff recommends in virtually every community. In some cases a mandatory spay neuter (MSN) ordinance is not even presented to the public and is attempted to be snuck through on a consent calendar as was the case in the City of Sacramento, California in August of 2006.

### WHY IT WORKS

There are some well-established processes in human decision making that explain why this technique of sneaking “the big lie” in the back door is so effective and so easy to accomplish. It is an age old technique. Here are some of the reasons why this tactic works. Most have to do with the faulty process of human decision making and the use of perceptual distortion and heuristics.

One important reason that this strategy works is that councils and boards have little familiarity with the topics that the special interest groups are promoting. Kruger and Dunning (1999) point out that “people tend to hold overly favorable views of their abilities in many social and intellectual domains.... This overestimation occurs, in part, because people who are unskilled in these domains suffer a dual burden: Not only do these people reach erroneous conclusions and make unfortunate choices, but their incompetence robs them of the metacognitive ability to realize it”. Supervisors and council members are officials in a representative government. Few would admit that they do not have the information and knowledge necessary to make a good decision. So they utilize various heuristics and shortcuts to decision making which may lead to the outcomes the special interest groups intended, but which are not sound. Some of the reasons this occurs are as follows:

### **The fallibility of human reason**

Thomas Gilovich (1993) points out the tendency to accept popular but mistaken assumptions and the propensity of people to accept faulty reasoning from incomplete or ambiguous data. He reveals that people are prone to seek out information which confirms the first hypothesis they are presented with and to identify and support self-serving beliefs, ignore negative data refuting an accepted position, and to assume and accept patterns where none exist. If decision makers are propagandized, and various techniques employed to control and direct their reasoning, and if special interests get the jump on their opposition and bias decision makers towards their point of view before the issue is open to public debate and scrutiny, they have a distinct advantage. The techniques through which this can be accomplished are discussed below.

### **Propaganda**

Propaganda is a planned onslaught of messages designed to influence the opinions or behavior of large numbers of people. Instead of impartially providing information and allowing others to form their own informed opinion, propaganda in its most basic sense presents information in a manner designed to assure the audience will form the desired opinion. The most effective propaganda may appear, or even be, truthful, but presents facts selectively to lead to a particular conclusion, or is geared to produce an emotional rather than rational response to the information presented. The desired result is a new position or belief of the target audience.

Nelson (1996) states that "propaganda is neutrally defined as a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels. A propaganda organization employs propagandists who engage in propagandism—the applied creation and distribution of such forms of persuasion."

Propaganda may employ public information campaigns via various media which are intended to influence the public. In the case of special interests groups, press releases and information on how to get your message out through the media are presented to proponents of their agenda. Thus issues which are subjective, biased, and often misleading, are often presented by journalists who have been contacted, as factual information from reliable and non-biased sources. If the reader believes that a special interest press release is in fact a news item, the message will be accepted as fact.

Propaganda, in a narrower use of the term, connotes deliberately false or misleading information that supports or furthers a political or other cause or the interests of those with power. The propagandist seeks to change the way people understand an issue or situation for the purpose of changing their actions and expectations in ways that are desirable to the interest group.

For this reason propaganda is often aimed at people who have some sympathies toward the propagandist's agenda to solidify their position and assure their support. Universally acceptable portions of the agenda are also pursued. An appeal to common values such as the saving of lives or money—an easily accepted argument—are touted without demonstrating a causal effect between the proposal and the desired end result (the saving of lives and money). Through repetition of universal values, the argument is accepted without further prodding. Half-truths and pseudo-science abound. Inflated numbers which have no basis in fact are presented. One being the totally debunked “statistic” that a single cat can produce 470,000 offspring in seven years and a single dog 67,000 (Bialik, 2006). Those who breed animals for sale are labeled taxevaders and illegal businesses with no data to support this assertion (the IRS does not consider the breeding, showing, and selling of animals on a small scale a business but rather a hobby and expenses in excess of income cannot be deducted (IRS, 2008)).

Mostly one sees oversimplification. The complex problems of unwanted pets are lumped into a single term, “overpopulation” and stopping the birthing is presented as the only solution. In fact, the problems are complex and multifaceted and birthing of owned pets (the only ones affected by the legislation) is not the cause, nor the solution to the problem. But favorable and simple generalities are used to provide proof that the simple solution to the problem is the legislation they propose. . Thus a “Hobson's Choice” is presented as if there is no other option to the legislation proposed.



Thus you have the Big Lie snuck in the back door. The repeated articulation of a problem, a chain of contingencies, a crisis out of control, and the ONLY viable solution, the legislation brought before you. Despite the violation of open process, despite the infringement on privacy and property rights, and despite the fact that it is unenforceable, adopting the law is presented as the only course of action available and anyone adopting such a law is humane and anyone opposed is inhumane and reprehensible. Said loud enough, and often enough, the big lie comes to be believed.

### **Selection Bias and Confirmation Bias**

Selection bias can occur by selecting or distorting data to support one's position it is possible to gain support and acceptance of the position. Some of the methods to accomplish this include: showing that post adoption of the desired ordinance there is a decrease in euthanasia, but failing to note that the decreasing trend was in place long before the initiation of the ordinance, and in fact the ordinance mitigated against the existing trend, showing a decrease in euthanasia after adoption of the desired ordinance in a community but failing to note that a greater decrease was obtained in like communities not adopting the ordinance, showing a decrease in intake but failing to note that some initially included communities established their own animal controls and the service population had decreased significantly, showing an increase in license revenue post-legislation but failing to note an offsetting increase in enforcement costs, and most noticeably, failure to mention municipalities that had reversed and abandoned the legislation after demonstrable failure and negative outcomes and consequence.

Confirmation bias is a tendency to search for or interpret new information in a way that confirms one's preconceptions and avoids information and interpretations which contradict prior beliefs. It is a type of error in decision making primed by selection bias and prior information which lends unwarranted support to the position under review and disconfirmation to any other alternative. By getting "first audience" with the legislative body through the hijacking of the legislative process, selectivity bias and confirmation bias are assured. As van Gelder notes, critical scrutiny is now applied only to the evidence challenging a preconceived idea but not to evidence supporting it. A pro-attitude makes us overweight supporting evidence and underweight conflicting evidence. Evans, Barston and Pollard, (1993) have shown that people are more likely to accept an inference as logically valid if they already believe the conclusion, and more likely to reject an inference as invalid if they already believe the conclusion to be false.

By keeping the legislative body and the public out of the decision process and providing a presentation of the desired ordinance as the only viable choice, the special interest has used decision foibles and heuristics to its advantage and has shut out all considerations to the contrary and hijacked the decision process.

### **Ingroup bias**

Ingroup bias is the preferential treatment given to people who are members of a perceived group. Higher payoffs, consideration, and weight for the arguments presented are given simply on the basis of perceived membership in a common set. (Brewer, 1979)

This has been extensively studied by Tajfel (1970) as a group/self-serving bias. This is perhaps one of the most compelling reasons why this hijacking of the local legislative process is so effective. Most boards and bodies fall under the influence of this bias and vote in agreement with the recommendations of staff. Since boards and councils hire staff, and will have an ongoing relationship with them, it would be very uncommon for them to vote against the recommendations of staff. Special interest groups are well aware of this and consequently urge those hoping to enact desired legislation to co-opt staff and have the desired ordinance brought forward as a recommendation of staff. If the agenda of the special interest group is promoted by staff, it is very hard to make the legislation anything but a rubber-stamped "done deal". This in effect means that low-level public officials can almost single-handedly dictate public policy when sunshine laws are circumvented and the process is hijacked.

## **CONCLUSION**

In order to avoid special interest and minority agendas dictating to all citizens, attention has to be paid not just to the letter of the open meeting process and sunshine laws, but also to the spirit of those laws. Municipal legislators, especially those in small municipalities where their position is volunteer and they cannot direct their full attention to legislative matters, need to be aware that the process outlined above is an enacted tactic of special interest groups and inoculate themselves against the tactic. The media also needs to be aware of the tactic and not take shortcuts which present the propaganda of special interests as if it were factual news. Only this can assure that the process of government is open, inclusive, and public as is intended.

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*Regarding the cases involving attacks on Utah mink farms in 2008, Jordan Halliday will be sentenced Nov. 2 and William James "BJ" Viehl will be sentenced Nov 12 in Salt Lake City. Alexander Hall's sentencing date is not yet set.*

*Letters urging the strongest sentences possible under the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA) should be sent to:*

*Re: Halliday: Judge Tena Campbell, 450 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111*

*Re: Viehl: Judge Dee Benson, 450 South State Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84114*

*Or to simply sign on to a letter Fur Commission USA  
([www.furcommission.com](http://www.furcommission.com)) will be sending to the Judges,  
contact Teresa Platt at [furfarmers@aol.com](mailto:furfarmers@aol.com)*

*Regarding the cases involving attacks on Utah mink farms in 2008, Jordan Halliday will be sentenced Nov. 2 and William James "BJ" Viehl will be sentenced Nov 12 in Salt Lake City. Alexander Hall's sentencing date is not yet set.*



Autumn Shelties and Papillons is very pleased and proud to announce our newest Champion, and first to finish all from the Bred-By class:

### **TITIAN'S AUTUMN NIGHTS "Abby"**

Finished September 13th 2009 in Farmington, Utah with back to back 5 and 4 point majors and a BEST BRED-BY IN SHOW! What a way to finish!

Abby is our third homebred Champion and the second one to finish this year. We are very proud of her.

Loved and cuddled by Cherie & Marissa Hyde





Is there anything more darkly beautiful than  
an exquisite bi-black? Need one? We have a  
lovely young girl available to a show home.



 **CLAN DUNCAN** 

[danaq@aol.com](mailto:danaq@aol.com)

# Year End Award Application Form

**Please use this form to apply for awards for any AKC or you earned in 2007. Use one form per dog for any and all titles that dog earned. And don't forget to apply for those CGC awards!! Please be sure to send this form to: Peggy Newman, P.O. Box 756, Kamas, Utah 84036 on or before November 7, 2009. For questions, email Peggy at [taflarpwc@yahoo.com](mailto:taflarpwc@yahoo.com)**

**PLEASE PRINT:**

Your Name:

Dog 's Registered Name:

Dog 's call Name:

Title Earned:

**Year End Party**

**Will be at the**

**Altaview Estates**

**9830 South 35 West**

**Sandy, Utah**



## **USSA Board Meeting Minutes**

**September 16, 2009**

In attendance: Cherie Hyde, Peggy & Jim Newman, Sarah Bagdoian, Julene & Kevin Mathews, Judy Williamson, Mike Cornella.

Meeting called to order at 6:00p.m.

President's Report: Jim confirmed that Dr. Kimberly Henneman is planning on coming for the education portion of the Club Meeting.

Vice President's Report: Nothing to report

Corresponding Secretary: Peggy received signed contracts back from Alice Peterson and Kelly Reimschnisel.

Recording Secretary: Sarah reported that Barbara Ray back in June stood in line on behalf of the club and tried to get the building for our December Christmas Party. Unfortunately she was unable to reserve the building for a Saturday in December, because it had been booked by the people in front of her. Julene then offered her father's neighborhood club house and will ask her dad to check the availability for Saturday, Dec 5<sup>th</sup> or Dec 12<sup>th</sup>. The club house is in Sandy at Alta View Estates and has a kitchen and will be big enough to hold our group.

We need to check with Barbara Edleberg regarding the guy who was offering to teach the dog training method of Amchien Bonding. We need to get prices from the dog trainer and see if the club would be interested in paying for this service for another educational opportunity.

Treasurers Report: Mike reported the finances from April to current. He still needs to collect some trophy money before he can finalize the Specialty finances. Annual dues payments are starting to come in. Kevin motioned and Peggy seconded the finance report, motion passed.

Old Business:

1. Christmas party location was discussed. Julene will check with her father regarding the use and availability of his neighborhood club house at Alta View Estates for either December 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>.
2. Inventorying the trailer was mentioned
3. Mike still needs outstanding trophy payments from people.

4. Missing Club videos and books was mentioned again. It was suggested we not buy anymore National videos or books for the club since past ones have been lost. It was suggested that members can buy their own DVDs or books if they want, but the Club should not provide that service.

Cherie will check back with Tom Lamm regarding another seminar in Vancouver, WA perhaps in mid-October. These seminars in Vancouver are \$120/day for 2 days. Cherie will also try to get Tom's schedule for the next several months to try and arrange a time when members can attend if the October seminar does not work.

New Business:

The building needs to be reserved for future meetings for the next 6 months. Payment and reservation form will be completed and returned to Sandy Parks & Rec. We have requested the building be reserved for the following dates for our monthly Wednesday meetings:

October 21<sup>st</sup>

November 18<sup>th</sup>

January 20<sup>th</sup>

February (see below)

March 17<sup>th</sup>

We cannot meet in the building in February due to remodeling construction to this building so we will need to find an alternative for that month.

Julene has been researching prizes for the specialty. She is having difficulty finding appropriate prizes and suggested we could have the USSA logo embroidered onto something (towels, aprons, etc.) as a prize. She will check with Tomi Hamblin regarding cost and suggestions. Jim is to e-mail Tomi the current version of the logo that he has. Tomi will check if the logo is clean enough for embroidery.

Motion made to adjourn meeting by Kevin and seconded by Sarah, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:35p.m.

## **USSA Club Meeting Minutes**

**September 16, 2009**

In attendance: Cherie Hyde, Peggy & Jim Newman, Sarah & Steve Bagdoian, Julene & Kevin Mathews, Judy Williamson, Mike Cornella, Ava Jane Pickering, Kristin Sittner, Kathy Cain, Shanna Wilkinson, Cindy Wilkinson, Cheryl & Charles Albrecht.

Guest: Marsha Monson.

Meeting called to order at 7:00p.m.

President's Report: Jim told the members that Dr. Kimberly Henneman should be here around 7:30p.m.

she was coming from Vernal, so she might be a little late.

Vice President's Report: Nothing to report

Corresponding Secretary: See Board Meeting notes. The same information from the Board Meeting was relayed back to the General Club meeting.

Recording Secretary: Nothing to report

Treasurers Report: See club notes. Mike did report that we have sold close to 30 calendars so far. He still needs payments for some outstanding trophies to finish the show tally and he hopes to have that done for the next meeting. Dues payments are coming in.

Old Business:

See Board meeting notes regarding the Christmas party.

Jim relayed that we need a place to hold the February meeting due to renovation of the building. Dr. Pickering said she would check the availability of her building for the February meeting.

New Business:

1. Julene mentioned prizes for next years show and asked for ideas. She suggested the USSA logo be embroidered on something, there seemed to be agreement on that idea.

Tricia resigned doing the Club newsletter. Jim asked for volunteers, no one volunteered.

Nominations for next board: A motion was made to nominate officers for the board.

President: Peggy motioned to open position – no nominations made, Mike motioned to close position.

Vice President: Ava motioned to open position – no nominations made, Mike motioned to close position.

Recording Secretary: Peggy motioned to open - no nominations made, Kevin motioned to close position.

Corresponding Secretary:

Ava made a motion to close all nominations. Motion was seconded. Motion carried. Nominations closed.

Brags:

1. Ava Jane Pickering's boy Parka will be featured in a British Journal on his work as a therapy dog. His picture will be on the front cover and Ava wrote an article about him which they will include in the journal. It should be out in a few weeks.

2. Cherie Hyde's Papillion won back to back 4-point majors to finish and also went Best Bred By Exhibitor In Show on Sat..

3. Kristin Sittner and Tikka recently won in every obedience class that he was entered. Tikka also won in the second round of a regional in Texas. She won Best All Around 16" dog in Colorado.

Cheryl Albrecht's dog Mathew received his Rally Novice title.

Motion made to adjourn meeting by Mike and seconded by Kevin motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:25p.m.