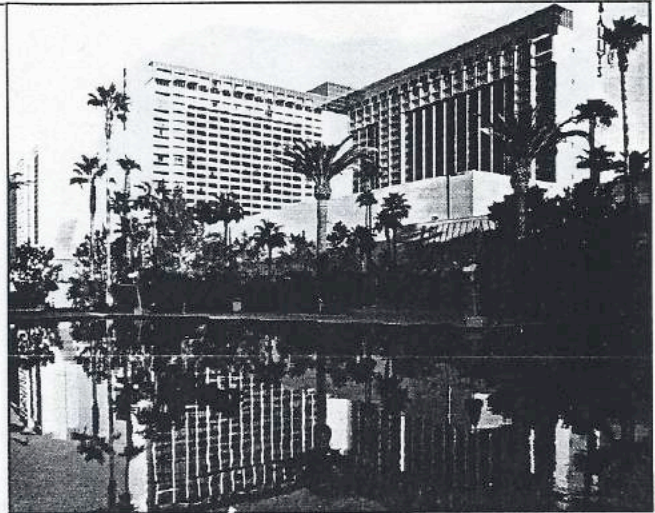


The Panhandle Animal Welfare Society shut down for some time after losing the case, but did eventually reopen.

typically offered at animal control and sheltering seminars will give participants the details and knowledge they need to bring plans for the 90s into sharper perspective. Special emphasis will be given to products and supplies that are environmentally friendly and safe. There will even be programs devoted to recycling in the shelter. John Dommers, who is coordinating the Expo for The HSUS, says there will be many hard-to-find and specialty items at this show. "It will be the largest 'idea store' for shelters that I know of," he says.

Here are just a few examples of the types of exhibits that will be represented: nutritional products, mobile communications, computer programs, books, videos, investigative equipment, educational materials, vehicles, animal handling equipment, ID systems, uniforms, disease and sanitation supplies, kennel and flooring components, fund-raising and promotional items, wildlife rehabilitation supplies, and professional and state association exhibits.

If you have not already received a mailing about Animal Care Expo '92, please request



The site of the first Animal Care Expo will be Bally's Grand Hotel in Las Vegas.

information from The HSUS at 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037. More details will follow in subsequent mailings and in upcoming bulletins in *Shelter Sense*. Plan now to attend the trade show designed and offered just for you. ■

Shelter Agrees to \$425,000 Settlement in Fatal Attack by Wolf-dog Hybrid

By Dr. Randall Lockwood, Ph.D., HSUS Vice President for Field Services

In the largest settlement ever made by a humane society for damages for an attack by a dog adopted from a shelter, the Panhandle Animal Welfare Society (PAWS, 742 Lovejoy Rd., Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548) agreed last October to pay \$425,000 to the family of a four-year-old boy fatally mauled by a wolf-dog hybrid. The animal had been adopted from the society just two hours before the attack. The case has caused many agencies to reevaluate their adoption policies and their treatment of wolf hybrids and other potentially dangerous animals.

The animal involved in the incident was a five-year-old, 75-pound, neutered male wolf-husky mix named Chief. PAWS had received Chief on September 12, 1988. According to investigators'

reports from the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, Chief had been owned for about three months by a family with two small children. Prior to that he had been owned by an unidentified person living at Eglin Air Force Base, where he was "left on a chain outside for long periods of time, in all types of weather." He was reportedly surrendered to PAWS because his owners were planning to move and no longer had enough room for him. In addition, there had been complaints from neighbors about howling.

According to Don Anchors, the attorney for PAWS, at least four staff members at the animal shelter had an opportunity to observe and interact with the animal. None noticed any characteristics that suggested to them that the animal was

Since Nathan Carpenter's death, at least four other children have been killed by wolf hybrids.

dangerous.

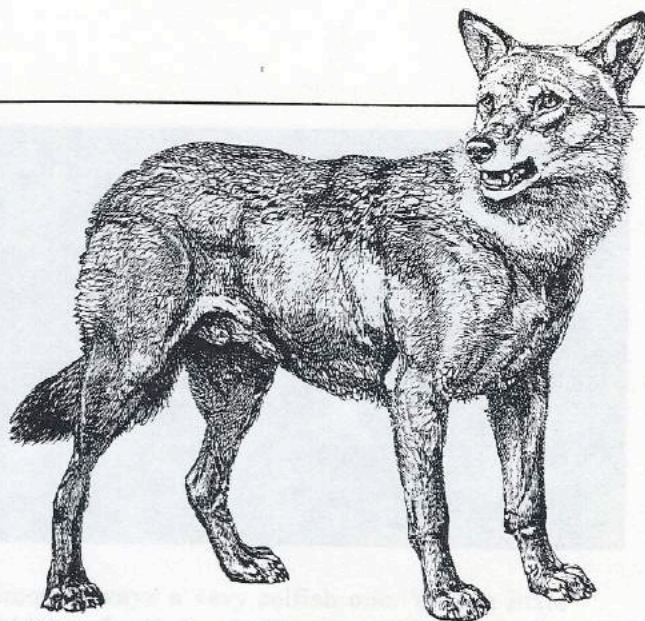
Chief was advertised in the local newspaper as "Pet of the Week—Gentle Giant—Well-behaved" in an announcement that identified him as a wolf hybrid. He was adopted on September 19th, but was returned the next day because he had chewed all the furniture in his new owner's apartment.

He was adopted again on September 22nd by a couple with no children. According to Sheriffs' reports, the animal was brought home at 1:30 p.m. and placed in a fenced yard while the new owner went to get groceries, including dog food. Shortly after that, Chief apparently jumped the four-foot fence. At 3:00 p.m., he was seen on the street a few blocks away by Sharon Carpenter. She noticed his collar and tags (from a previous owner) and was able to get a name and telephone number from the tags. As she opened the gate to go back inside to call, Chief ran through the gate into her back yard where her four-year-old son Nathan was playing. Since she assumed he was someone's pet, she was not concerned.

While on the phone, Mrs. Carpenter heard sounds of an attack and ran to her son's aid. The boy had already received serious damage to his throat. Emergency teams arrived quickly and began administering CPR. Chief was still in the yard. When he approached an emergency worker in a threatening manner, he was struck by a flashlight and ran off through the open gate. The animal was later shot by a Sheriff's deputy while approaching a crowd of children and adults that had gathered at the scene. Nathan Carpenter was rushed to Humana Hospital in nearby Ft. Walton Beach, where he underwent emergency surgery. He died at 5:15 p.m. that day.

The HSUS was contacted by attorneys for PAWS, its insurance carrier, and the Carpenter family, and cooperated with all parties by supplying background information on wolf hybrids and dog-related fatalities. The HSUS was not, however, involved in any of the legal discussions that followed this tragedy.

Richard Powell, attorney for the Carpenter family, filed a lawsuit against PAWS. In the course of pursuing that suit, it was discovered that, under the conditions of the PAWS adoption contract, PAWS retained ownership of the animal until he had been examined by a veterinarian. When presented with a certificate of examination,



PAWS would sign a form transferring ownership to the adopting party. The trial judge, in response to a motion for summary judgement, ruled that PAWS was the legal owner of Chief at the time of the attack. Under Florida's dangerous dog statute, the owner of a dog causing injury has strict liability for damages (with two exceptions that did not apply in this case). In other words, it is not necessary to prove that the owner was negligent in allowing the attack to occur.

The Carpenter family wished to avoid the trauma of a trial and the case was taken to mediation. Following mediation, PAWS agreed to a \$425,000 settlement, while denying any liability for the attack.

The incident, and the subsequent settlement, have added to the controversy surrounding wolf hybrids as pets. Since Nathan Carpenter's death, at least four other children have been killed by wolf hybrids. The HSUS strongly recommends against breeding or keeping such animals as pets, and the HSUS guidelines for shelter adoptions specifically advise *against* offering any wolf-dog hybrid for adoption.

While the beauty and intelligence of wolf hybrids make them attractive to many people, their size, strength, curiosity, timidity, and instability make them inappropriate household pets. Most hybrids retain the instincts that have made the wolf one of the most successful predators on the planet. Yet without careful socialization, they may not learn to distinguish between people, especially infants and toddlers, and prey. Most fatal dog or wolf-hybrid attacks involve very

young children who, like prey, are killed while running from the animal.

Many wolf hybrids live out their lives locked indoors or chained up outside. Most of these animals escape at some point, and The HSUS has received many reports of hybrids hit by cars or killed while harassing or killing livestock or pets.

Unfortunately, there are between 100,000 and 300,000 hybrids in this country, many of whom will end up in shelters. There are only a handful of sanctuaries or rescue leagues that are equipped to meet the needs of these animals, and there are few, if any, openings. As a result, the only option open to most shelters seeking to protect the interests of these animals, the public, and their organization, is euthanasia.

The best way to prevent future tragedies, for both people and the hybrids themselves, is to strongly discourage the breeding and ownership of hybrids. The desire to own something "exotic" is

The HSUS Adoption Policy Regarding Hybrid Animals

The HSUS believes that wolf hybrids and other hybrids of wild and domestic canids should not be placed for adoption by shelters due to their special physical, emotional, and veterinary requirements and their frequently unpredictable and unstable nature. We recommend that such animals be euthanized or placed with appropriate wildlife sanctuaries. ■

almost always a very selfish one. With a little guidance from an adoption counselor, those seeking a wolf hybrid should see that the qualities of beauty, intelligence, and affection that make a hybrid appealing are also evident in many "ordinary" dogs at the shelter. ■

Reward Works in Livestock Shooting

By Rhonda Lucas Donald

When Kathy Morrissette and her husband went to feed and tend their farm animals last Thanksgiving, they found their cow down with a gunshot wound and their horse and pony also shot. The cow's wounds were so severe that she and her unborn calf had to be euthanized. Another nursing calf also had to be euthanized because she was too young to survive without her mother. The horse had been shot in the neck, the bullet lodged so that any attempt to remove it would endanger his life. The pony suffered shots in the neck and jaw. One shot had left shrapnel in the jaw that couldn't be removed without pulling the pony's teeth, without which he couldn't survive.

Police knew the shootings were not accidental. Both equines were wearing red plaid blankets, and a fence surrounded the pasture that the Morrissettes leased on Larrabee Farm in Auburn, Maine. Empty beer cans were found in the area.

No witnesses came forth. But Morrissette was not content to let the criminals get away with hurting her animals. She and her husband de-

ecided to put up a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest and successful prosecution of those who shot the animals.

When Morrissette approached the local newspapers to publish her reward announcement, the papers were eager to cover the story. In all, five articles appeared, all running the reward information. Morrissette also posted reward signs in stores and gun shops in the area. In the meantime, contributors added to the reward fund, eventually bringing it to over \$2,000. The idea paid off two-and-a-half weeks later when someone came forward.

Authorities learned that three juveniles and one 18-year-old were involved in the shooting. One of the juveniles, who had tried to stop the others, was not prosecuted. A friend he told the story to was the one who came forward with the information. The informant spoke out in order to obtain the reward money.

Trial proceedings revealed that the eldest boy drove the car but did not shoot at the animals. He received six months in jail (30 days suspended)