



Animal Protective Association of Socorro

# Barks and Mews

October 2018 Newsletter

## APAS 1968–2018: Protecting Animals for 50 Years

This is the year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of APAS (Animal Protective Association of Socorro) because in 1968 APAS filed its 501c3 nonprofit application. The origin of APAS actually goes farther back to the early 1960s with the work of a handful of volunteers passionate about relieving the suffering of the city's stray, abandoned, and homeless animals.

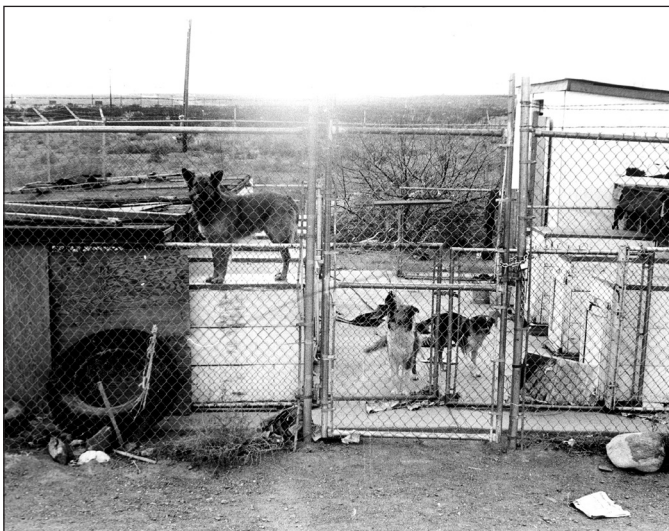
One of the names associated with the origin of APAS and almost synonymous with the Socorro shelter is Eiko Parson. When she moved to Socorro with her husband in 1960 the city had no shelter building. Eiko had grown up in Japan, an only child, but her parents always had 5 or 6 dogs, and they were her childhood companions. Eiko said that she always felt a kinship with the helpless creatures of the world. In Socorro she saw the great need for humane treatment of stray animals and began making daily visits to the open pen where the city's strays were kept. She constructed makeshift

cardboard and newspaper shelters to protect them from the sun and rain, and she became the primary caregiver for these unfortunate animals. For many years Eiko daily provided them with food and water and cleaned their kennels. Her devotion to Socorro's homeless animals galvanized other animal lovers, volunteers, and friends to help with their care, and to create APAS.

The 1970s became the decade of proposals for a permanent shelter building, for discussions on siting and funding, for the City Council to enact an animal control ordinance, and for the creation of the position of Animal Control Officer. In 1973, Dr. Teresa Dienlin (now Gonzales) opened the Socorro Veterinary Clinic and began taking care of our pets and contributing her expertise and resources to the broad needs of the shelter's animals. APAS began an ongoing fund-raising campaign to help with the completion and maintenance of the city's shelter facility and for subsidizing a low-fee spay and neuter program for the pets of low-income people. As the financial goals of the shelter were met, more and more, with city and state support, donations to APAS have been used almost exclusively for its spay/neuter program.

New Mexico Tech professor Christina Balk, whose professional passion for Cambrian geology and paleontology was matched by a love for cats, served for a time as APAS treasurer, and in 1974 she personally began collecting and recycling newspapers, aluminum cans, and glass by making weekly trips to Albuquerque in her white pickup truck. Christina's personal fundraising effort continued for more than a decade.

**1980s.** On October 25, 1980, the metal building that is still used today to house small dogs and mother



*Before 1980 Socorro's stray dogs were held in open-air pens with only makeshift shelters for protection.*



*Eiko Parson (left) and Christina Balk (right) were recognized in 1980 for their work culminating in the first city shelter building.*

dogs with puppies officially became the Socorro Animal Shelter, and Eiko Parson and Christina Balk were honored for their unwavering commitment to that end. The shelter would continue to be staffed with volunteers, many of them members of APAS, and intermittently through the years APAS would assume a more formal, temporary management role (1974, 1977, 2003, 2008).

**1990s.** In 1994, 13 new dog kennels were purchased and installed in the original metal building. By 1998, a campaign had begun for an additional larger building. A more spacious facility would include a quarantine area for new arrivals and would allow animals to be kept for longer periods of time. Instead of being limited to one week, animals could be kept for three or four weeks, space permitting. This would improve their chances for adoption. APAS members mailed more than 500 postcards signed by Socorro residents in support of Representative Michael Olguin's bill for community capital outlay

projects that included the shelter. In 2000 there was an opportunity to purchase a used mobile office building and move it onto the site.

The first APAS-sponsored Blessing of the Animals was held on the city plaza in October 1998 as part of the celebration of the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. To this very day, Socorro clergy have continued the event. APAS and the Socorro shelter began hosting 5–6 “adopt-a-thons” per year. Animals adopted on those days received free spays or neuters.

**2000s.** In 2002, now with help from Representative Don Tripp, the funding for a larger shelter building also became a reality. Incoming dogs and puppies (and cats) could get vaccinations, some basic training, and settle in for a longer stay. APAS helped with adopt-a-thons that placed more dogs in local homes, and the shelter began to reach out to breed-specific rescue groups and to organizations that facilitated the transport of mixed-breed dogs and puppies from overcrowded New Mexico shelters to animal welfare groups, humane societies, and no-kill shelters in neighboring states where the demand for adoptable animals exceeded the local supply. The first of these transports began in 2004. Puppies were transported to the San Luis Valley Animal Welfare Society in Alamosa, Colorado. With a growing network of APAS volunteers driving puppies and dogs to Albuquerque on the first leg of their journey, the transport program expanded. During one recent 12-month period more than 800 dogs made the trip to either Colorado or Utah.



*Interior of the original metal building and 13 kennels that were later relocated along the east side of the main building in 2003.*



*Socorro shelter as it looked in 2000 with the original metal building in the background, the mobile office building, and at the left the drop-off kennel where owners could relinquish their pets when the shelter was closed.*



*Socorro shelter as it is today looking through the front gate. Walkways lead to the office on the right and back to the original building (left) and the new larger building and outdoor kennels completed in 2003 in the background.*

In 2008, Socorro created the Department of Animal Control and hired a full-time manager.

For nearly its entire history APAS has subsidized low-fee pet spay/neuter procedures for low-income families with members' dues, generous donations, and fund-raising events, as well as support from Socorro city and county governments. APAS's major fund-raiser, the annual spring yard sale, was begun in 2004. Spring and fall low-fee spay/neuter specials were replaced in 2014 with the procedures being available all year. Also that year the subsidy was increased to 75% of the procedure's cost, and APAS

The Mission Statement of APAS shall be the prevention of cruelty to animals, the relief of suffering among animals, the extension of humane education, and the prevention of overpopulation of unwanted pets.

The mission shall be furthered through:

- the facilitation of adoption of homeless animals;
- promotion of public understanding, appreciation, and care of animals through educational programs;
- support of the City of Socorro in its efforts to provide humane care for homeless animals;
- provisions of financial aid for spay/neuter and emergency medical care to pets of low-income clients;
- participation in programs which encourage pet owners to comply with City of Socorro, County of Socorro and State of New Mexico laws/ordinances regarding immunization and licensing.

*The mission statement in APAS's current bylaws has changed little since 1968.*

began to sponsor six shelter adoptions, paying for 100% of neutering costs for each sponsored pet. Today APAS pays \$150.00 toward each spay and neuter. Over the last five decades thousands of animals have been neutered through this program, which has been so important in minimizing the number of homeless cats and dogs in our shelter.

Also available are limited funds for some emergency medical treatments.

When viewed over 50 years, APAS's legacy to the humane treatment of animals would not have been possible without generations of very determined, compassionate volunteers who refused to be discouraged and pushed forward toward each new goal. Resilient APAS members and friends in the hundreds deserve our gratitude.

—Jane Love



Animal Protective Association of Socorro

PO Box 451, Socorro, NM 87801

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## APAS 1968–2018: Protecting Animals for 50 Years

### Membership/Donation Form

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive my newsletter by email. Yes No

Individual Membership \$5.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Membership \$5.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Each membership type is entitled to one vote in APAS elections and motions and will receive one newsletter per address/email. Should you wish your donation to be anonymous, please mark so clearly on this form.

**Please mail this form and donation to: APAS, PO Box 451, Socorro, NM 87801.**

Donation:

\_\_\_\_ \$50 Silver    \_\_\_\_ \$100 Gold    \_\_\_\_ \$150 Platinum    \_\_\_\_ \$250 Business sponsor\*

\_\_\_\_ Other (Any amount is greatly appreciated!)

\* Business sponsors will have their logo included on our Business Sponsors page of our website.

**Membership and Donation Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership year is January 1 to December 31.**

Calling all bakers. APAS will be selling dog biscuits during Festival of the Cranes. This year the event gets under way late Tuesday afternoon, but full days of activities begin on Wednesday, November 14, and run through Saturday, November 17.

APAS will be selling dog biscuits (and accepting donations) on Friday and Saturday, November 16 and 17, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Sunday, 9:00–2:00, from a small space at the entrance to the Garcia Opera House, the venue for the Arts and Crafts Fair.

Many of you have a recipe for dog biscuits and have been baking them for years. For those of you who may want to try a new one, the following one has passed Gracie's taste test.

In the interest of full disclosure, this recipe comes from Kyle and Sam Winter of Javelina Range in Polvadera, New Mexico. Meet them at Socorro's Farmer's Market selling their cage-free eggs. Their hens, ducks, and turkeys are free of antibiotics and hormones. Learn more about Javelina Range at their website <http://javelinarange.wixsite.com/javelinarange>

### Dog biscuits

3 cups of all-purpose flour

1 cup of water

2 tablespoons of vegetable oil

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup of peanut butter; natural peanut butter is best as it contains no sugar!

(Your dogs may want you to increase this to 1 cup).

Combine all ingredients together by hand or in a mixer or food processor. Roll out, like pastry dough, to about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick. Additional peanut butter will make the dough sticky, so you may want to use a lightly floured pastry cloth. Cut into squares or any other desired shape. Place on baking sheets and bake at 350° for 20–24 minutes. For softer biscuits, bake for 20 minutes; for harder biscuits, bake for 24 minutes. These will keep on your countertop for a week; for longer storage, freeze.