

No Pet Left Behind

BY JANET KINOSIAN

WHEN Nathan Winograd announced that he was leaving his posh job as a corporate lawyer in Marin County, California, to run an animal shelter in Tompkins County, New York, his father looked at him for a long minute. Then he said, “What the heck do dogs and cats need a lawyer for?”

He shouldn't have

been so surprised. Nathan Winograd has been rescuing injured and homeless animals since he was a boy. Walking home from school when he was 12, he found a stray cat. He named it Guido, and some 20 years later, when Winograd packed up his family to



**Nathan Winograd
with Mr. Picklechips
and Sir Topham Hat**

head east, the cat came along.

The move meant giving up eight weeks' vacation, an office with a view of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and a big house among

A brown tabby cat had been set on fire by her abusive owner.

the redwoods, and moving to a rural area known for its harsh winters. But Winograd's wife, Jennifer, also an animal lover, was all for it. So they packed everything they owned into a rented RV, and with two young children—daughter Riley was five, son Will was one—plus two dogs, Guido, and a bunch of other

cats Winograd had rescued, drove cross-country.

On Winograd's second day on the job, he was confronted with a dilemma: "The cages are full," an employee announced. "We just received another litter of puppies. Who do we kill to make room?"

"I asked them simply, 'What's plan B?'" says Winograd. "I said, 'I didn't drive 3,000 miles listening to 'Daddy, are we there yet?' every five minutes so I could start killing animals.'"

So staffers found an old horse trough, filled it with hay and nestled the pups inside. They placed it next to the front desk, and within a day or two, all six had homes, adopted

by people who walked into the shelter and couldn't resist.

"When you take killing animals off the table as an option," Winograd explains, "you'd be surprised at the creative solutions you come up with."

His methods "aren't exactly rocket science," he admits. But they work—mostly, he believes, because they center around one basic rule: Get the animals seen. Upbeat ads in local newspapers and on TV and the Internet feature photos of potential pets. Adoption centers are open seven days a week, including evenings, so people who work have time to get there. Inside, they employ what Winograd calls a supermarket strategy, placing the

kittens and puppies in the back and putting the older, less desirable animals up front.

"And guess what?" he says. "People often fall in love with the ones they see first and adopt them."

Blind dogs, strays with missing limbs—all find homes. "There is no dog or cat too old, too ugly or too undesirable not to be adopted by *someone*," says Winograd.

Today, Tompkins County, which comprises the city of Ithaca and surrounding communities, is considered the only no-kill county in the United States. Nine out of ten dogs and cats that come through the shelter doors are saved. Only animals with incurable injuries or illnesses, and the truly vicious,

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are put down. The national average is half of all dogs and 70 percent of cats, totaling more than four million animals last year alone.

And Winograd is taking his non-traditional methods to facilities around the country, representing his No Kill Advocacy Center (nokillsolutions.com), a nonprofit organization dedicated to achieving what he calls a no-kill nation. Cities that once had high euthanasia rates, like Philadelphia and Charlottesville, have seen pet adoptions jump 300 percent. Requests for assistance come from as far away as Ireland and Australia.

Even though he drives a 1998 Honda Civic that leaks when it rains, and his family lives on a tight budget while his classmates from Stanford Law earn six-figure salaries, Winograd says he's doing what he'd always wanted to do when he grew up: run an animal shelter

and save all the animals. "Just like a five-year-old," he acknowledges. "And like a five-year-old, I believe I can do it."

Even as a young district attorney, he kept his goal in mind, starting when he prosecuted his first animal cruelty case. "It was my baptism by fire, literally," he says. A man was accused of intentionally setting his brown tabby cat on fire. Winograd made his case, and the abusive owner was sentenced to prison.

It was the first of many such cases, and he prosecuted each with vigor. But the senseless violence, neglect and ignorance never failed to shock him. He decided simply, "I need to get to the other side and start saving these animals."

Now, Winograd is helping to save thousands, even millions. He's convinced that a no-kill nation is possible. "I'm just here trying to shorten the time until it arrives."

STOP THE PRESSES!

Mark Twain once wrote, "Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint." The same might be said about these headlines.

"Ozone Alert: Try to Avoid Breathing Today"

The (Wilmington, Delaware) News Journal, submitted by JOHN S. NATALIE

"Men Who Died Could Do Less Exercise"

The San Diego Union-Tribune, submitted by JEAN MCKAY

"Altercation Mars Trip to Anger-Management Class"

The Florida Times-Union, submitted by MARGARET STENNET

"Woman Fined for Not Giving 30-Day Notice Before Dying"

Fitchburg (Massachusetts) Sentinel & Enterprise,
from Idiots at Work by Leland Gregory (Andrews McMeel)