



# **UNITED SPAY ALLIANCE ONLINE CONFERENCE**

February 26–28, 2021

*All times listed are Eastern Time.*

Friday, February 26

7:00-8:30 p.m.

**Stacy LeBaron, Community Cats Podcast**

**Esther Mechler, United Spay Alliance & Feline Fix by Five**

**Emma Barker, Red Earth Design**

## **What Does It Mean to Be a Statewide Leader for the United Spay Alliance (USA)?**

Learn from USA Founder Esther Mechler why United Spay Alliance and Feline Fix By Five are two cool tools to reduce cat population across the nation and the world.

### **About Esther Mechler**

A graduate of Bates College and the University of Rochester, Esther majored in psychology and education, with a career in guidance and student personnel. In 1990, she left the traditional workplace to begin a program to end companion animal overpopulation. SPAY/USA was started with the goal of finding affordable, accessible spay/neuter services for anyone in need. The program grew from a single vet in Connecticut who gave a 50% discount for referrals to a national program with thousands of veterinarians, clinics, and programs. The program is now run by North Shore Animal League.

Esther recently worked with grassroots animal advocates to organize the United Spay Alliance, which is comprised of statewide networks of spay/neuter programs. USA is currently seeking leaders in several states. In conjunction with these efforts, a campaign to move the recommended age for feline spay/neuter back by four weeks, Feline Fix by Five (FFF), was started in the late 1990s. The FFF campaign has earned the endorsement of the AVMA, AAHA, AAFP, and ASV, plus a dozen individual state veterinary medical associations.

### **About Emma Barker**

Emma founded Red Earth Design, Inc. in 2001 and has transformed it from a solo organization to a full team of remote workers who provide support for clients and enjoy a caring and flexible work environment. Emma has extensive experience in WordPress, PHP, MySQL, HTML, jQuery, CSS and has a gift for translating “tech-talk” into understandable terms.

Saturday, February 27

10:00–10:15 a.m.

**Stacy LeBaron**

**Esther Mechler**

Welcome and opening remarks

10:15–11:30 a.m.

**B.J. Rogers, Emancipet**

**Heather Sartorelli, Sartorelli Consulting Services**

**Sarah Moore, Animal Protective League**

**Panel: Clinics and COVID-19**

During this session, the speakers will share insights and experiences learned while working with and in clinics during COVID-19.

**About B.J. Rogers**

B.J. believes that people are the solution and not the problem. From fundraising for multiple sclerosis research at a young age, to fighting for LGBTQ rights, to 15 years in animal welfare, B.J. is a lifelong learner and advocate. At Emancipet, B.J. oversees marketing, PR and fundraising strategies, the organization's client Resource Center, as well as all training and consulting services offered through the Emancipet New School. A two-time nonprofit CEO and longtime educator, B.J. is a Certified Animal Welfare Administrator, a Certified Dialogue Education Teacher, and holds an Executive Education Certificate in Public Leadership from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

**About Heather Sartorelli**

Heather is a Registered Veterinary Technician, Elite Fear Free Certified, a Certified Veterinary Business Leader, and the lead consultant with Sartorelli Consulting Services. She specializes in helping spay/neuter clinics move to high-quality/high-volume level by working closely with the surgical and management teams. She has 18 years of spay and neuter experience and 10 years of shelter experience. Throughout Heather's career in animal welfare, she has worked as manager of clinic mentorship programs for Humane Alliance/ASPCA Spay Neuter Alliance, and as the medical manager and lead surgery technician at SPCA Tampa Bay.

**About Sarah Moore**

Sarah Moore is the clinic manager at the Animal Protective League, a not-for-profit animal shelter and high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter clinic in Springfield, Illinois. The spay/neuter clinic performs 13,000 surgeries yearly for owned animals, feral cats, and more than a dozen central Illinois shelters and rescues, and sees an additional 100 clients monthly for low-cost wellness services. Since opening in 2006, the clinic has performed more than 160,000 surgeries and 8,000 wellness appointments.

Sarah is a life-long cat lover who joined APL's staff in 2006 after completing a college internship in the organization's shelter. She has managed the spay/neuter and vaccine clinics since 2014, and started the organization's barn cat adoption program in 2017. Sarah has a master's degree in political science and takes special interest in state and local animal welfare legislation, TNVR, and hard-to-place cats.

11:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

**Ruth Steinberger, Spay FIRST!**

**How to Recruit Veterinarians**

Whether you mentor spay/neuter start-ups for a statewide network, run a single clinic, or merely seek to provide intermittent services in a sparsely populated rural area, the veterinarian is the apex of your services and is the most important hire of your team. Join this presentation to understand ways to engage with the veterinary community in order to meet your program's needs now and as it grows.

**About Ruth Steinberger**

Ruth has coordinated rural pet sterilization programs since 1993, assisting at-risk animals through spay/neuter, education, and improved public statutes. Ruth moved to Oklahoma in 1999 to reside in an area with no existing low-income spay/neuter programs, and has worked closely with volunteer networks, veterinarians, humane organizations, tribes, and municipalities to develop services for animals in communities facing chronic poverty. She was a founding board member of Tulsa-based SPAY Oklahoma and in 2006, in recognition of her work on tribal lands, she received the prestigious ASPCA Henry Bergh Award for Animal Activism.

In 2010, recognizing the unique challenges facing chronically impoverished regions, Ruth founded Spay FIRST! Since its inception, the organization has become a leader in the research and development of non-surgical fertility control products for free roaming dogs and, as of 2020, cats as well.

Ruth was a presenter at the 2012 World Health Organization's First International Conference on Dog Population Management (DPM), the Spay USA Southern Regional Leadership Conferences (2004 through 2009), the 2007 Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) Expo, and the 2011 through 2013 Best Friends Animal Society's No More Homeless Pets Conferences.

As an activist/journalist, six of Ruth's blogs, all focused on companion animal overpopulation, were published on *Huffington Post*. In 2012, Ruth was awarded honorary lifetime membership in the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association. Ruth was also the sole non-veterinarian to contribute a chapter to *High Quality, High Volume Spay and Neuter and Other Shelter Surgeries*, edited by Dr. Sara White and published by Wiley Blackwell in 2020.

12–12:30 p.m.

**Lunch break**

12:30–2:00 p.m.

**Scarlett Cmiel, Pet Friendly Services of Indiana**

**Audrey Garrison, Operation Catnip**

**Karen Little, Alley Cat Advocates**

**Leah Kennon, Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon**

**Dorell Sackett, SNAP San Diego**

**Cheri Storms, Pet Friendly Services of Indiana**

## **How to Start a Spay/Neuter Program, Part 1**

Alley Cat Advocates opened their own spay/neuter clinic devoted exclusively to community cats in February 2020. Building on the lessons learned in running a M.A.S.H.-style clinic for 16 years, the clinic now alters 150 community cats per week. In this presentation, we will examine important lessons learned and challenges overcome.

You'll also learn how the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon started and grew their stationary spay/neuter clinic for cats, with an emphasis on free-roaming and feral cats. You will discover more about what it takes to start a high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter (HQHVSN) clinic, along with some of the pitfalls and ways to measure success. From the first steps to program development, this presentation will give you a place to start and resources to continue to build your dream clinic.

Pet Friendly Services of Indiana is a statewide financial assistance organization that provides free and low-cost surgery certificates to rescue groups, shelters and limited-income residents. By offering additional certificates to groups that trap-neuter-return community cats, Pet Friendly Services has expanded the state's community cat programs. Providing financial assistance to limited-income pet owners and community cat programs can quickly move shelters to zero-kill status while helping cats in the field.

### **About Scarlett Cmiel**

Scarlett Cmiel is the Operations Manager for Pet Friendly Services of Indiana. She has been with the organization since May of 2013 and is responsible for maintaining the organization's financial records, database and automated forms and is the liaison with the veterinary clinic partners providing the reduced-cost spay-neuter surgeries for the clients served. Scarlett has been actively involved in animal welfare since 2011 and served as president of the largest all-volunteer rescue group in central Indiana from 2013-2015 and founded People United 4 Pets, Inc. (4PUPS) in 2016, which is devoted to rescuing at-risk dogs due to medical or behavioral issues and rehabilitating them into adoptable pets. In addition to her work with Pet Friendly Services and 4PUPS, Scarlett and her husband, Joe, also own and operate a kennel-free dog boarding business, Just like Home, in Cloverdale, IN. Scarlett and Joe's four-legged family consists of three dogs, three cats, three goats and a mini-horse.

### **About Audrey Garrison**

Audrey joined Operation Catnip in September of 2014 and became the executive director in January 2015. This is Audrey's first paid job in animal welfare, although she began working for cats and community cats in 1991. Her areas of expertise include trapping, caregiver support, and turning nearly any space into an HQHVSN clinic for cats.

### **About Karen Little**

Along with her husband, Karen founded the nonprofit TNR group Alley Cat Advocates in 1999. Based in Louisville, Kentucky, the group has altered over 50,000 community cats. The organization altered 24,000 of those cats using a M.A.S.H.-style spay/neuter clinic, and in February 2020, they opened a Community Cat Complex, which includes an HQHVSN clinic for community cats only. The group has worked to transform the culture of care provided to community cats in the region, and was instrumental in the crafting of a 2012 ordinance change that moved Louisville's municipal shelter to immediately implement an extremely successful Return to Field (RTF) program. This RTF program quickly moved the city's live release rate for cats to over 95% in 2017, where it has remained to the present.

### **About Leah Kennon**

Leah has a long history in veterinary medicine and animal welfare. She graduated from Bel Rea Institute of Animal Technology in 1986 and started her veterinary technician career in Denver, Colorado. She later moved to Germany and worked for the Army, overseeing mobile wellness clinics on remote bases and running the central surgery clinic in Frankfurt, Germany.

Once back in the states, Leah worked in mixed animal practices until she joined the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon (FCCO) in 1998 to manage the new mobile spay/neuter hospital and all of its operations. She became operations director in 2002 and medical director in 2019. During her tenure, Leah has managed and grown the spay/neuter program from helping 1,800 cats per year to 7,500 per year, and she has overseen FCCO's transition from a mobile program to operating a free-standing clinic. She expanded the clinic capacity, leading FCCO to build a larger spay/neuter clinic and add services for pet cats, wellness, and more. As medical director, Leah manages FCCO's overall medical program, training, and future planning, and is actively engaged with other spay/neuter programs locally and across the county.

Leah's drive for a high standard of care and efficiency has been invaluable to the success and reputation that FCCO has in the community. Leah has always been a "big picture" person and is key to why FCCO continues to evolve to help more cats and caregivers.

### **About Dorell Sackett**

Dorell Sackett is the director of the Spay-Neuter Action Project (SNAP), a model organization for many spay and neuter mobile programs throughout the country. Under Dorell's guidance, SNAP's high-volume surgeons have altered over 68,000 dogs, cats, and rabbits in the San Diego region, sparing the lives of hundreds of thousands of unwanted litters.

Dorell grew up in Rhode Island, rooting for her father as he saved dogs from undesirable living conditions. She grew up questioning why anyone would abandon a living creature. While student teaching in Boston, Massachusetts, and volunteering at the Angell Memorial Animal Center, her concerns about the state of animal care became so overwhelming that she knew she had to do something. As a dual-certified K-12 teacher, humane education would become the answer.

As a young adult, Dorell traveled across the US by car before landing in northern California. She became the lead transporter for Humboldt Wildlife in 1992, where she facilitated hundreds of captures and releases of various northern coastal California species. While in the field, she took every opportunity to educate the public on human impact on animal well-being. Following in her father's footsteps, she found herself helping many dogs and cats, while educating the community on basic pet care, including spay and neuter. In 1996, Dorell joined the staff of the Anacapa Fund, where she participated in the innovative Best Friends Animal Sanctuary direct mail fundraising campaign.

After moving to San Diego County in 1999, Dorell found herself building a very successful humane education department and the first kids' community service program for the Rancho Coastal Humane Society in Encinitas. In 2002, it was no surprise when Dorell joined the SNAP team, where she implemented the first spay and neuter mobile unit and responsible pet care program in greater San Diego. In her role as director, she oversees the operation of the 40-foot Neuter Scooter surgical unit and pet education program in underserved communities. SNAP continues to provide affordable spay and neuter services, pet education in schools and other youth locations, and volunteer projects for children and adults.

Dorell's leadership abilities, vast networks and partnerships, attention to the latest trends in animal care, and a hands-on approach with clinics in all parts of San Diego have made SNAP a successful and efficient non-profit organization. To date, SNAP remains the only provider to visit communities generating high shelter intakes in San Diego County.

### **About Cheri Storms**

Cheri has served in the animal welfare field since 2005. During her tenure with Pet Friendly Services of Indiana, she has helped grow the organization from a regional service provider to a strong statewide leader, with the mission of preventing suffering by preventing unwanted litters and protecting outdoor dogs and cats.

Pet Friendly Services provides free spay/neuter surgeries to rescue groups and shelters and also provides low-cost surgeries to limited-income residents. Their partnership with 130 veterinarians makes this possible.

Cheri holds an undergraduate degree from Indiana University (IU) Bloomington, and a master's degree in public and environmental affairs from IU Indianapolis. She and her husband enjoy the companionship of six indoor cats and two outdoor cats.

2:00–2:15 p.m.

**Break, cat trivia**

2:15–3:30 p.m.

**How to Start a Spay/Neuter Program, Part 2**

3:30–4:00 p.m.

**Anne Poore, Shelter Director, Mercy Rescue and Adoption, Inc.**

### **Transport Models**

Access to low-cost spay/neuter is pivotal to ending shelter overpopulation and the euthanasia of healthy and treatable cats and dogs. Several low-cost clinics partner with rescue groups, who organize transport programs for shelter animals and pet owners, working in tandem with their nearest clinic.

### **About Anne Poore**

Anne Poore is a high school math and resource teacher by day and runs a rescue in Southern Indiana every other waking minute. She has been involved in rescue since the late 1990s and is the shelter director for Mercy Rescue and Adoption, Inc. Mercy is a small rescue that has a shelter and foster program. Anne has been involved in running a spay/neuter transport from her county since 2005 and over 5,800 animals have been spayed through their monthly transport. COVID-19 put a halt to the 6,000 mark, but transports from her community will start again March 1, 2021.

With the help of volunteers, Anne built a rescue on her property and oversees the care of dogs, cats, a pig, a persnickety goat, an adorable miniature donkey, and a miniature horse that thinks he

is a stallion. Anne loves senior dogs and focuses on those in need of medical care from her local animal control. Anne has a master's degree in education and has taught for 20 years. Anne and her husband love Indiana basketball, animals, and the great outdoors.

4:00–5:00 p.m.

**Dr. Frank Hamilton, Animal Coalition of Tampa (ACT)**

**Kerry Bartoletti, Protectors of Animals, Inc./Spay Connecticut**

### **Sustaining Your Efforts over Time**

You have either just started your program, or you have been in the business for a while. Either way, how do you sustain and grow your effort? This presentation will look at both public and private funding used to sustain and grow your outreach.

### **About Frank Hamilton**

Frank is an associate professor of management at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL. He is a retired Army officer, with 22 years of service. After retiring, Frank started and managed a professional employer organization. He is the co-founder and president of Animal Coalition of Tampa (ACT), a high-quality, high-volume, low-cost, nonprofit veterinary clinic that serves more than 25,000 clients a year. He also is the director of Spay Florida, a referral program for spay/neuter assistance in Florida. Frank has served on several boards, the Brandon Florida Chamber of Commerce, and the Hillsborough County (FL) Animal Advisory Board. His work has appeared in Human Relations, Business Ethics: A European Review, Academy of Management Review, Journal of Urban Affairs, Leadership: The Key Concepts, The Journal of Market-focused Management, The Journal of Ethics in Leadership, Anthrozoös, and Frontiers of Veterinary Science. His PhD is in business administration from the University of South Florida.

### **About Kerry Bartoletti**

Kerry is the program coordinator for Protectors of Animals, Inc. (POA) in East Hartford, CT. The duties for this position include grant writing, donor management, serving as advisor to the POA SPAY! spay/neuter clinic, and Spay CT program coordination. In addition, she is the co-founder of Friends of Feral Cheshire Cats, a TNR organization in central Connecticut. Kerry's previous animal welfare experience (spanning the last 30 years) includes spay/neuter clinic management at POA SPAY! and HOPE spay/neuter clinic, as well as serving on the board of directors of Mid-Hudson Animal Aid in Beacon, NY. Kerry was also one of the founding board members of CT Votes for Animals. Kerry left the corporate world in 2002 after 20 years as a technical writer with IBM, Pitney Bowes, and startup software companies.

5:00 p.m.

**Closing remarks**

Sunday, February 28

10:00–10:15 a.m.

**Stacy LeBaron**

**Esther Mechler**

Welcome and opening remarks

10:15–10:45 a.m.

**Dr. Philip Bushby, Feline Fix by Five**  
**Esther Mechler**

**Feline Fix by Five: How to End Kitten Season in Your Community**

For decades, veterinary schools have taught that the appropriate age for spay/neuter of cats is six months of age or older. Research, however, reveals that there are significant health benefits for spay/neuter prior to five months of age. The position paper produced in 2016 by the Veterinary Task Force on Feline Spay Neuter has been endorsed by the AVMA, AAHA, AAFP, ASV, Catalyst Council, Cat Fanciers Association, Winn Feline Foundation, International Cat Association, 10 state veterinary associations, and numerous humane organizations. Unfortunately, the recommendations of the task force and the endorsements appear to be a very well-kept secret. This presentation will discuss the efforts to get the word out and provide suggestions for convincing local veterinarians to spay/neuter cats prior to five months of age.

**About Dr. Philip Bushby, DVM, MS, DACVS**

Philip is a 1972 graduate of the University of Illinois CVM. A board-certified veterinary surgeon, he has served on the Mississippi State University CVM (MSU-CVM) faculty for 43 years. He established the MSU-CVM shelter program and is a frequent speaker on efficient spay/neuter. He was a member of the organizing committee for the shelter medicine specialty board, received the ASPCA's Henry Berg Award in 2008, the AVMA's Animal Welfare Award in 2012, and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians Meritorious Service Award in 2015. He holds the Marcia Lane Endowed Chair of Humane Ethics and Animal Welfare at Mississippi State University.

10:45–11:00 a.m.

**Break**

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

**Jamie Case, HASS Data Coordinator**  
**Sonia Hernandez, Fix.Adopt.Save.**

**How to Make Spay/Neuter a Priority in Your Community**

Spay and neuter programming is essential for every organization dedicated to reducing intake into shelters. This presentation will provide brief examples of how you can make spay/neuter appealing and a priority in your community. We will explore how to appeal to the general public, work with rescue groups who encounter unaltered pets that are staying with their families, and how spay/neuter can benefit veterinary clinics and appeal to funders—all components of keeping spay/neuter a priority in our communities.

**About Jamie Case**

Jamie is the former executive director of Gateway Pet Guardians (GPG). GPG's work is concentrated in the community of East St. Louis, Illinois, where almost half of the residents live below the poverty line. In 2012, GPG began transferring in animals from the county municipal shelter's euthanasia list. Since that time, Jamie has remained dedicated to reducing the number of animals killed each year in St. Clair County. She pushed for integration of Illinois organizations into the local St. Louis animal welfare coalition, bridging the gap between Illinois and Missouri welfare initiatives. She also led the charge to improve

conditions and procedures at St. Clair County Animal Services. In 2015, with the help of Jamie and her team, the St. Clair County Animal Abuse Task Force was created, and In 2018, the St. Clair County Animal Welfare Coalition—the first county-wide coalition in the state of Illinois—was formed. In 2020, GPG opened the St. Louis metro region's largest pet resource center, with the goal of providing lifesaving services and resources to the community.

### **About Sonia Hernandez**

Sonia has worked in Maricopa County, Arizona's animal welfare community with a primary focus on spay/neuter for the last 19 years. She currently serves as the project manager for the Fix.Adopt.Save. (FAS) initiative in Maricopa County, a position she has held since 2015. Through programs and services assisting the public, their pets, and shelter pets, FAS has decreased euthanasia rates 86% since its launch in 2013.

Skilled in community development, Sonia facilitates coalition building between municipalities, shelters, animal/human service nonprofits, and for-profit animal agencies. Sonia's career highlights include expanding and strengthening existing spay/neuter programs/services, advocating for those in need and establishing programs that assist underserved neighborhoods. In addition to her current role as FAS project manager, Sonia's animal welfare experience includes concurrent roles as a contractor with Maricopa County Animal Care & Control for 15 years, and 7 years as the Animal Defense League of Arizona State Spay/Neuter Coordinator. She has received a number of awards, including the American Veterinary Medical Association Humane Award in 2019, Humane Society of the United States-Arizona Chapter Humane Advocate of the Year in 2018, and the Arizona Small Dog Rescue Arizona Humane Impact Award in 2019.

12–12:30 p.m.

**Lunch break**

12:30–1:00 p.m.

**Dr. Karen Hill Sheppard**

### **How to Work with Animal Control and Your Board of Health**

Getting started with a return to field (RTF) program is not easy for most communities. A clear explanation of the goals, as well as the details of the strategy, are important for all sectors of a community, including the general public, local agencies, veterinarians, and public safety officials. Done right, an RTF can improve the situation in your community. In this presentation, Dr. Sheppard will speak of her experience in one northern Alabama county.

### **About Dr. Karen Hill Sheppard**

Karen pursued a career in veterinary medicine because of her passion for animals. She is a 1992 graduate of Auburn University's College of Veterinary Medicine. Until she accepted her current position as Director of the Huntsville Animal Services municipal shelter in the fall of 2002, Karen practiced small animal medicine and surgery.

By 2015, Huntsville Animal Services had succeeded in significantly reducing suffering in the community, largely through the creation and funding of a low-income pet sterilization program in 2008, which lowered annual shelter intake from 10,000 to 5,000 animals. By adding a community cat diversion program,

lowering adoption fees and being transparent, the shelter staff is now striving to be fully engaged with the community. The ongoing goal is to continue to improve in order to save every life possible and prevent needless suffering.

Karen completed a year-long Maddie's University of Wisconsin-Madison Shelter Medicine/UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Fellowship, which provides shelter veterinarian Fellows with additional training to help them deliver life-saving knowledge and services to our nation's homeless pets.

Currently, Karen's family consists of dogs, cats, horses, a pet llama, pet steer plus seven parakeets and her animal-loving, tolerant husband, Fred. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with horses, clicker training, hiking, and iPhone photography.

1:00–2:00 p.m.

**Dr. Bob Weedon, TLC PetSnip, Inc.**

***This session is sponsored by The Tompkins Foundation for FeLV Advocacy.***

### **Better Together: TNVR and Public Health**

TNR has long been shown to benefit the welfare of feral and free-roaming cats, and significantly reduce their population. An additional benefit of these programs is that they help protect the health of the public. Accordingly, Dr. Weedon advocates for the term TNVR (Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate, Return). By vaccinating for rabies, we create a barrier to the disease between wildlife and pets and people in the community. An additional concern is toxoplasmosis, as the cat is the definitive host. Since young kittens are most commonly exposed when they first start hunting, by preventing these kittens from ever being born, we can help prevent the spread of the disease. In addition, the public health benefit of TNVR reaches a whole new group of stakeholders—the public health arena—to advocate for its implementation in communities.

### **About Dr. Bob Weedon**

Bob is currently a feral cat surgeon working and volunteering with TLC PetSnip, Inc. in Lakeland, FL, having retired in 2018 as a clinical assistant professor and service head of shelter medicine at the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine, where he trained veterinary students in high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter (HQHVSN) techniques. Prior to going to Illinois, Bob was the senior partner of a nine-doctor, two-location small animal practice in Wilmington, NC.

As an advocate for solving the problem of animal overpopulation, particularly that of community cats, Bob volunteered with Friends of Felines, a group that surgically sterilized feral cats in the Wilmington community, and was a volunteer surgeon at the onsite spay/neuter facility at New Hanover County (NC) Animal Control Services, where animals were surgically sterilized prior to adoption.

Bob served as the veterinarian on the New Hanover County Board of Health for six years, and was a member of the Animal Control Services Advisory Committee. He served on the board of directors of the Public Health Foundation of New Hanover County, and the UNC Public Health Foundation board. Bob is the coauthor of the chapter on rabies in the textbook *Infectious Disease Management in Animal Shelters, 2nd Edition*, and coauthor of two chapters in the recently published textbook *High-Quality, High-Volume Spay and Neuter and Other Shelter Surgeries*.

Bob attended Purdue University, where he received his Bachelor of Science in animal science and his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degrees. He received his Master of Public Health from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

2:00–2:15 p.m.

**Break, cat trivia**

2:15–3:00 p.m.

**Lead Speaker: Helga Schimkat, Schimkat Law & Consulting, LLC**  
**Theresa Bruner, Federation of Humane Organizations of West Virginia**  
**Sheri Gustafson, Massachusetts Animal Fund**

**Panel: Statewide Publicly Funded Programs – Effective Legislation**

This is a quick overview of publicly funded programs, including a pet food tax and tax return check-off. This program will help you learn how to bring more spay/neuter funds into your state and reduce the need for obtaining grants and hosting things like “spaygetti” dinners to raise private funding..

**About Helga Schimkat**

Helga is a lawyer and writer with 26 years of experience in the public and private sectors. Her work has included lobbying at the New Mexico Legislature on behalf of nonprofit clients, serving as the House Majority Office Chief of Staff, and representing nonprofit clients as well as individuals. Helga has lived in Santa Fe for 24 years and was born and raised in New York. She has a BA from Yale and a JD from Columbia.

**About Theresa Bruner**

Theresa has been involved with the Federation of Humane Organizations of WV (FOHO WV) since 1995. She maintains two animal welfare websites and various social media pages. She edits the FOHO WV Animal Law book, which is in its 2020 edition and is used by law enforcement and animal control in West Virginia. A founding board member of the Taylor County Humane Society, she is a former teacher and educational technology sales consultant.

Theresa initiated FOHO WV’s highly successful state animal conferences. Along with FOHO WV, Theresa fights to maintain strong animal cruelty laws in the state and addresses other animal advocacy issues, with the spotlight in West Virginia presently on ending greyhound racing in the state. Theresa knows that we must control animal population in West Virginia through increased spay/neuter efforts. Theresa, better known as “Sis,” now lives in Elkins, West Virginia with her husband Dave and two rescue dogs.

Theresa feels that one of her greatest achievements is her efforts with FOHO WV in the passage of the West Virginia Spay Neuter Assistance Funding bill in 2017. Theresa sits on the West Virginia Department of Agriculture Animal Advisory Committee, which oversees the grant funding that allowed nearly 9,000 West Virginia dogs and cats to be altered in the program’s first year. Theresa believes that we can make a difference for animal welfare in West Virginia by being informed and proactive, locally, and at the state level. She knows that there are many animal people around the state and she hopes they will recognize how powerful their united effort can be in speaking for those who have no voice.

### **About Sheri Gustafson**

Sheri is the program coordinator for the Massachusetts Animal Fund, a program of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). Sheri started working for the fund in 2014 as the spay/neuter community liaison. Before joining the MDAR team, Sheri worked in animal welfare for 10 years as a veterinary technician, volunteer coordinator, and animal care, education, and adoption specialist. Sheri has also volunteered as a tech for local spay/neuter clinics, and has deployed to help animals in emergency situations.

3:00–3:45 p.m.

**Kerry Bartoletti, Protectors of Animals, Inc./Spay Connecticut**

**Sonia Hernandez, Fix.Adopt.Save.**

**Shelby Sifers, Mississippi Spay and Neuter**

**Jerod Vannatter, Help for Animals**

### **Panel: Statewide Privately Funded Programs**

Kerry will focus on how Connecticut has worked to obtain the funding to cover their spay subsidies. Obtaining funding to subsidize spay/neuter surgeries from the large funders has become more difficult, with more organizations competing for the same funding. Spay Connecticut has focused on local community foundations and donors who are passionate about their mission.

Shelby will review the history of Mississippi Spay and Neuter (MS SPAN), the first comprehensive state spay/neuter network, covering all 82 counties. Using a combination of mobile clinics, stationary clinics, and programs with discounts, MS SPAN has helped the people of Mississippi find affordable spay/neuter services for over 15 years now, while also holding regular statewide conferences. Shelby will also cover challenges and goals for the future.

Sonia Hernandez oversees the SPAY ARIZONA program. The leading organization for statewide information for the SPAY ARIZONA program is the Animal Defense League of Arizona (ADLA). For almost two decades ADLA has located and promoted affordable, accessible spay/neuter service providers across the state. Partnering with a number of organizations in Maricopa County, including ADLA, Sonia helps find the appropriate service providers, organizes clinics, manages s/n programs, and raises public awareness about the importance of preventing unwanted litters through her position as project manager for Fix.Adopt.Save.

Jerod will speak about Spay West Virginia, a division of Help For Animals Inc., a low-cost, high-volume spay/neuter clinic. SpayWV is the state's main resource for finding clinics, shelters, rescues, or transporters that provide low-cost spay and neuter services. Help For Animals established and continues to support SpayWV.org, a website that provides a database for all contact and location information about those clinics, shelters, rescues, and transporters. Providing a resource to the state's residents is not a cheap or easy process, and this presentation will explain the processes of funding and data collection that make this program successful.

### **About Shelby Sifers**

Shelby started with Mississippi Spay and Neuter (MS SPAN) as a volunteer in 2013, working to launch an annual fundraiser for the organization. She was hired in 2014 and has worn a variety of hats over the years. She lives in rural Mississippi with her boyfriend, eight dogs, two tame cats, and a barn full of ferals.

### **About Jerod Vannatter**

Jerod is the full-time clinic director and president of Help for Animals, Inc., located in Barboursville, West Virginia. He began working in the animal welfare field in 2002, working as a veterinary assistant at multiple clinics until joining the United States Air Force in 2006. While in the Air Force, he deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. While stationed stateside, he visited the veterinary clinic and stayed in touch with the doctors, who influenced him to continue to serve the community's pets.

While in the Air Force, Jerod started college, and shortly after completing his contract with the Air Force, he earned a degree in business administration from Marshall University. While attending school full time, he also worked part time at Help for Animals as the surgery manager. Jerod was eventually promoted to clinic manager, and shortly thereafter, the board of directors voted him president. Since then, he has made great strides in expanding the organization's operations throughout the state, and in fostering greater communication between the many shelters and rescue groups in West Virginia.

3:45–4:30 p.m.

**Melanie K. Anderson, Summerlee Foundation**

**Sarah Hess, Two Mauds**

**Dr. Sara Pizano, Team Shelter USA/Joanie Bernard Foundation**

### **Regional Grant Funding**

This panel will share their insights about how foundations can support spay/neuter programs and the challenges facing the industry today.

### **About Melanie K. Anderson**

Melanie has been with the Summerlee Foundation since its formation in early 1989, and assisted the donor, Annie Lee Roberts, with the creation of the animal program and its funding priorities. Melanie serves as a program director and board member and of the foundation. She graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a BA in journalism and worked for the Dallas Times Herald. Prior to joining the foundation, she also worked as a volunteer for a variety of animal protection organizations throughout the United States, as well as conducted feral cat rescue in Dallas, Texas.

Melanie has served on several nonprofit boards, including Animal Grantmakers and the Mountain Lion Foundation of California. Through the Summerlee Foundation, she has implemented and participated in several strategic initiatives, including creation of the animal grantmaking database Animal Funding Atlas, developing and funding sustainable model programs to humanely address the dog and cat overpopulation crisis in Mexico, and the Sunny Summit Initiative to address the trade of captive orcas and whales in the entertainment industry and the critical need for rehabilitation and sanctuary. Melanie resides in the "urban-wildlands interface" west of Denver, Colorado. Besides living with indoor domestic cats, she also manages to peacefully coexist with outdoor resident foxes, black bears, and an occasional mountain lion.

### **About Sarah Hess**

Sarah has more than 25 years working in the animal welfare arena. She started with the League for Animal Welfare (Batavia, OH) a limited-admission shelter, and then was a founding member of United Coalition for Animals (UCAN), which opened an affordable spay/neuter clinic in 2007. Sarah was the executive director of UCAN and got the clinic open and running successfully. After working with Humane

Alliance's new clinic mentoring program (NSNRT) with UCAN, Sarah then moved to Asheville to manage that program.

Sarah currently works part time as the grant manager for Two Mauds, an organization that partners with grassroots humane organizations to provide funding and resources for spay/neuter in the Appalachians. Sarah also takes on various consulting projects, including six months as the interim executive director of Asheville Humane Society. She lives in Asheville with her husband, daughter, and a menagerie of animals.

#### **About Dr. Sara Pizano**

Sara is the founder of Team Shelter USA, the funder advisor for The Joanie Bernard Foundation, and the author of *The Best Practice Playbook for Animal Shelters*. As a courtesy faculty member at the University of Florida, Sara is the lead on the shelter assessment and mentorship program and part of the Million Cat Challenge team. Sara has created a spay/neuter program for 20 counties in Kentucky that have dramatically reduced shelter intake and euthanasia of cats since 2015.

4:30–5:00 p.m.

#### **Mary Tan, Whisker Media**

##### **Spay/Neuter Buzz — Getting Your Programs the Attention They Deserve**

How do you get the word out about your low-cost spay and neuter clinic? How do you reach people, especially in underserved communities, who would benefit from your services? In this presentation, Mary Tan will share some communications tips and tricks on how to get your much-needed programs in front of your targeted pet owners.

#### **About Mary Tan**

Mary is the owner and chief storyteller of Whisker Media, a boutique strategic communications agency, where she focuses on marketing and public relations for pet-related businesses and animal welfare nonprofits. When not working on client accounts, she is busy promoting animal adoption and programs through her work as the public relations manager for Animal Humane Society in Golden Valley, Minn., one of the largest open admission animal shelters in the United States.

Before her time in animal marketing and PR, Mary worked in government communications, where she led the public relations efforts for the City of Brooklyn Park and the Brooklyn Park Police and Fire Departments in Minnesota.

The Wisconsin native is also a freelance writer for several pet publications including Catster Magazine, and a member of the Cat Writers' Association. Mary has a five-year-old kitty named Farley Waddlesworth, a former bottle baby kitten who now has behavior issues.

5:00 p.m.

#### **Closing remarks**