

el, The HSUS also sought to instill a broader vision of the importance of nationally organized initiatives and to lead local organizations in setting their sights on the achievement of larger strategic objectives.

Because one of the urgent points of tension in the AHA schism concerned the pre-slaughter handling and slaughter of animals used for food, the first national campaign that emerged in the post-1954 era focused on that question. Fred Myers, Edith Goode, and others affiliated with The HSUS were leading figures in the campaign for a national Humane Slaughter Act. During 1955 and 1956, The HSUS diverted every available dollar from its budget into the drive for slaughterhouse reform and generated intense publicity concerning the issue. Myers and Goode lined up significant sources of public support for the legislation, and Myers testified on behalf of the Humane Slaughter Act in 1958, the year it finally passed.¹⁶

Myers took great encouragement from the fact that, between 1954 and 1958, the movement had really united, for the first time ever, to achieve enactment of a federal humane slaughter law that would spare approximately 100 million animals a year from pain and suffering. The law's passage was also a vindication of the proposition that had driven the formation of The HSUS, the idea "that hundreds of local societies could lift their eyes from local problems to a great national cruelty."¹⁷

Even before the closing of the Humane Slaughter Act campaign, The HSUS had begun to turn its attention to the suffering of animals in research, testing, and education. This, too, had been an arena of conspicuous failure for the humane movement in the twentieth century. The HSUS set the acquisition of information about the problem as its first priority. By 1958, after identifying and training suitable investigative personnel, The HSUS had launched its first undercover investigations of laboratory use of animals. In 1961 The HSUS hired an investigator to focus special attention on the laboratory animal trade. Subsequently Myers commissioned a statistical study of biomedical experiments that attempted to identify the potential for rapid reduction of animals used. These actions prepared the way for national legislation on laboratory animal issues.

While its founders intentionally launched their efforts in the nation's capital, The HSUS did not focus exclusively on the Washington scene. Even as The HSUS zeroed in on national solutions to national cruelties, it strove to enhance and extend the work of local societies. All of The HSUS's founding figures were in sympathy with the problems and challenges that local SPCAs faced. They pursued local and hands-on work for animals as individuals or through other organizations. Andrews had been helping local societies address their needs as AHA's director of field services before the formation of The HSUS. Jones and Glaser were deeply involved with cat rescue work. Myers served as a humane agent for the Maryland Animal Welfare Association, a federation of humane societies, and carried a euthanasia kit in his car in case he encountered animals beyond the point of saving.¹⁸

Newcomers to The HSUS also got "hands-on" immersion. Patrick Parkes, who became assistant director of services in 1961, recalled that when he came to the office for his interview, Myers gave him "a stack of material on the decompression chamber" and asked him to write a report recommending for or against its use. As Parkes later learned, this happened at a time when The HSUS was still working out its position about the humanness of decompression as a euthanasia technology. After hiring Parkes Myers sent him out for training at a small shelter in Lucerne County, Pennsylvania, that The HSUS had helped to establish. There Parkes euthanized animals, cleaned kennels, and studied the typical methods in the field at that time.¹⁹

There was a strong programmatic rationale for such training and commitment. The original bylaws of The HSUS provided for its ownership and operation of shelter facilities through established branches conceived as integral units of the parent organization. Such ownership proved to be impractical on several grounds, but it did not prevent The HSUS from becoming deeply involved with local animal shelters and their problems. Ultimately,

it did so by establishing an affiliates program to forge closer ties to local societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals.²⁰

The regional offices that were such an integral part of The HSUS's work in 2004 had their origins in a branch and affiliate system envisioned by Myers and other founders. This system dated from 1957, when staff and board members resolved to organize a self-sustaining branch in every state. Myers and others considered the branches essential to membership recruitment for the national office. The first branch, incorporated in Illinois, emerged from the politics of pound seizure in Champaign County. Branches incorporated in New Jersey, Maryland, and California during 1958. In 1960 the organization's bylaws were amended to allow local societies to affiliate with The HSUS. Eventually this led to the incorporation of branches in five states (California, Connecticut, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Utah) and affiliated societies in eleven.²¹

The HSUS California branch of 1959. Clockwise beginning at front: Dale Deatherage, Mrs. Edward Newman, Amy Speno, Alfred B. Lussan, Carol Jenks, Norton Coatsen, Henry Burnmaster, Mary Dudge, Russell Frey, Lois Banfield, and Stewart Rogers, incorporators and directors.



According to Parkes, who oversaw the transition from branches and affiliates to the system of regional offices in place today, the branch and affiliate system was the cornerstone of The HSUS's early program for development.

"They wanted the new organization to be the chief instrument of unification in a movement which, at that time, was so badly fractured," Parkes recalled. The state seemed a natural geographical unit around which to base a program, since state legislatures were responsible for most of the antiquated laws in place. Other groups, like the American Red Cross and the American Legion, operated through a similar system.²²

The branches were not part of a scheme of "empire-building," Parkes emphasized, but rather a system of "strong, organically related, and unified" entities, self-supporting, each with an independent board of directors. Each branch "had to maintain minimum standards of program and policy, that, in turn, [it] would spread through the local societies nationwide." Local societies "were considered an essential adjunct to branches," and, hence, "provision was made for an affiliate connection."²³

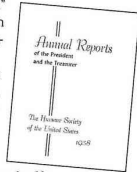
Through this structure, Parkes continued, early administrators believed they could "establish an interlocking structure between the national HSUS and its branches, and, through them, the local humane groups—all in a tighter unity than had ever existed before." A nationwide constituency and an unprecedented unity of purpose and approach could then be harnessed toward the relief of animal suffering, abuse, and exploitation, through the pursuit of legislation, regulation, and education at all levels.²⁴

The branches were expected to help to organize and strengthen local humane societies wherever and whenever feasible. If such societies desired affiliation with The HSUS, they were expected to "operate on sound business principles, have realistic goals with practical approaches, maintain high HSUS operational standards, and pass an on-site inspection by a HSUS field representative." They were also expected to support national work to the best of their ability.²⁵

From 1955 to 1961, The HSUS combined its annual corporate meeting with a two-day National Leadership Conference, ordinarily held in a large city. In 1962 the organization opted to stage the conferences in smaller hotels in attractive resort locations, to encourage greater personal contact with HSUS officials. Fred Myers wanted the event to be a place where new entrants into the field could meet and learn from experienced hands and where movement leaders could come together in a free exchange of ideas and approaches. "What I want



The HSUS hoped to forge closer ties with local humane societies through its affiliates program.



The diminutive (4" x 5 1/2") HSUS annual reports of 1958.