

Pilgrimage of northern dogs slowly getting attention

By the Humane Society takes in dogs threatened by cull" (Chronicle-Journal, April 15).

DEATH is merciful for the thousands and thousands of northern dogs born each year across Canada. Life is starvation, lonely and cruel with dog-on-dog aggression and on too many occasions, human abuse. Death is merciful for these dogs.

Dog shoots are said to be the only method currently available to many small towns and northern reserves.

Throughout history culling has been "acceptable" to control animal populations, has it not? Elephants, bears? I'm no expert, but doesn't the list go on? What about drowning — does this work for you? What about slowly starving to death? Then no one's hands get dirty.

Ignorance is bliss. Ask Grand Chief Stan Beardy, who says he is unaware of the problem. Ask governmental policy makers. Ask Lt. Governor James Bartleman, who refuses to respond to my requests to at least acknowledge and possibly endorse the

need to address this problem on a national level.

On the other hand, let's ask the front line teachers and nurses who work in many of these remote locations and are traumatized by witnessing the starvation and abuse. Let's ask the locals what they feel.

Heaven forbid, let's ask people like me who rescue these animals.

Let me take this opportunity to say thanks to The Chronicle-Journal for displaying that article on the front page. Too bad you forgot to print the rest of the story I know, I gave it to you. As it stood, it lacked depth. It just stirred the pot.

How about this? A Health Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health Division, memorandum dated Dec. 1, 2006, states that any nurse caught feeding or housing or rescuing dogs on northern Ontario reserves will be immediately dismissed.

In northern communities where there have been military evacuations because of flooding or mould, army planes go in empty, refusing to take dog food up, leaving the communities' animals to starve.

On the upside, the World Society for the Preven-

tion of Cruelty to Animals is organizing the first ever 2007 Northern Dog Conference in the fall, as a starting point for finding solutions.

Let's see if any of the various levels of government that are going to be invited attend. I will make sure Stan Beardy gets an invitation.

I have rescued/relocated over 400 dogs in the past four years. My goal has been to facilitate access to spay/neuter programs on northern Ontario reserves — a daunting task, let me tell you. I do it in my spare time. I have a real job.

The Canadian Animal Assistance Team (www.caat-canada.org) is a registered charity animal welfare organization in Vancouver, comprised of vet professionals across Canada dedicated to the care of needy animals world wide.

They heard about my rescue work and contacted me as they would like to start up an Ontario branch, and work together on offering their first remote spay/neuter/immunization program on a fly-in reserve. Nibhanmik (Summer Beaver) is thrilled to be the involved in this project.

On a final note, Thunder Bay does not even have

affordable spay and neutering programs. I would like to challenge local vets and organizations like the Keri Chase Foundation to look into cleaning up our own backyard.

Karen Best
Northern Dog La
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