

Snappy Ways to Sell the Snip: Usually underresourced, often understaffed, and almost always overwhelmed, animal shelters and advocacy groups are nothing if not creative, as demonstrated by these fresh approaches to spay/neuter promotion through the years.

From the Sex-Ed Pamphlet ...

Even in the days of skimpy tube tops and the John Travolta strut, brochures like these were risqué enough to be considered “provocative” by *Shelter Sense* writers in February 1979. Reminiscent of junior high school filmstrips with titles like “Getting to Know Yourself and Your Mate,” this brainchild of the Missoula Humane Society in Montana alludes to the advent of The Pill on its cover and explains inside that dogs and cats won’t be missing anything without their reproductive parts. There’s still no canine equivalent of The Magic Pill, but the introduction of a sterilization-by-injection drug last year was a promising new development.



*You May
Enjoy the “New”
Sexual Freedom
in this Country
BUT ...*



To the Billboard ...

Nearly 20 years later, “sex sells” was still the undercurrent of the advertising world, and animal protection organizations were no exception. Instead of appealing to people’s fantasies of indulgence in a newly liberated society, however, this billboard reflected the widely touted prevention theme of the ‘90s: Wear a condom. But as popular as the message was in the fight against AIDS and teen pregnancy, it was still a risky one to take on during an increasingly conservative decade in which a U.S. surgeon general was dubbed the “Condom Queen” because of her sug-

gestion to distribute condoms in schools. As one of many animal advocacy groups undeterred by the anti-condom brigades, Happy Tails K-9 Rescue of Macomb County, Michigan, splashed this condom-related message on 11 donated billboards all over the Detroit area.

To the Mobile ...

In the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, it became clear to many organizations that if they couldn’t bring the people to the spay/neuter clinic, they could bring the clinic to the people. Following the lead of programs like SNAP (Spay Neuter Assistance Program), shelters began taking their show on the road—putting surgical units on wheels, giving them names like “Spay Shuttle” and “Neuter Scooter,” and rolling them all over town. Described as “now orbiting and docking weekly in needy neighborhoods,” the Spay Shuttle really took off once launched by Palm Beach County Animal Care and Control in Florida, becoming the site of almost 17,000 surgeries in its first seven years and thus preventing the birth of potentially millions of offspring.



To the Global ...

A search for “spay/neuter” on eBay gleans listings for everything from a spay/neuter postage stamp tote bag to a complete set of discounted spay/neuter surgery tools. In January, online shoppers could hit their target a little more directly, calling up an auction for the surgery itself from the Shelby County Humane Society in Kentucky. In a reversal of the “think globally, act locally” mantra that could have happened only in the age of the Web, the organization accepted bids starting at \$10 from animal-loving eBayers as far away as Missouri and Colorado, says Heidi Radloff-Licht, who raises funds for the shelter. But as gratifying as the nationwide attention is, Radloff-Licht wants to bring the auction back to the local level so pet owners in need of a good deal can benefit. In the past she’s promoted the

great eBay spay offer in local pet stores, but soon she’ll appeal more specifically to Web surfers by adding an eBay link to her organization’s Petfinder page—still a part of the bold new world of technology, but at least a geographically targeted one.

—Nancy Lawson