

Clark Energy Lines

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Take me home, please . . .



Dave Stamper bonds with Bo Sefus at the Clark County Animal Shelter. Dave and wife Patty ended up adopting the two-year-old boxer, which was brought in as a stray. Shelter director Beth Bowman said everyone who wants a dog or cat should first consider the shelter, which has many excellent, well-trained animals available for adoption.

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Editor: Lois Hatton



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Animal shelter offers variety of fine pets

Story and photos by Shanda Crosby

The instant Bo Sefus was led from his cage in the Clark County Animal Shelter kennel, he seemed to know it was his lucky day. The spirited boxer immediately approached his potential owners and showed them the personality that made him stand out at the shelter.

It didn't take Dave and Patty Stamper long to fall for the playful pooch. "He's a sweetheart," said shelter director Beth Bowman, "a really good dog."

That description fits a large

number of the dogs available for adoption, contrary to common belief. "Many shelters, not just ours, have a lot of good, well-trained dogs and cats," Bowman said. "People have a perception that animals at the shelter are just throw-aways and not worth adoption. But we have so many well-tempered, well-behaved animals here."

Consider Bo Sefus, for example, who is now part of the Stamper family. The approximately two-year-old boxer was brought to the shelter as a stray a few weeks earlier. For \$70, including neutering, shots, and



Labor of love . . . Beth Bowman, shelter director for seven years, loves every animal as her own, and works hard to find a home for each.

initial vet checks, the Stampers have a healthy, pure-bred boxer. And even better, the couple saved a dog's life.



Bowman checks the kennel in the shelter's brand new building a few weeks before the animals moved to their new home.

While Bo Sefus's result is ideal, it isn't always the case. In 2011, the shelter's animal numbers were up, while adoptions were down. "We had the most animals brought in to us in 2011 than we have had since I have been here," Bowman said, "and we also had the fewest amount of adoptions."

Since she took over as shelter director seven years ago, Bowman has worked diligently to reduce the number of animals that must be euthanized by coordinating with area rescue agencies,



Work at the shelter is never done with animals constantly being dropped off by individuals or brought in by the dog warden.

be able to fairly assess them so I can properly match them with an owner. Our goal and hope is to find each of them a home as quickly as possible."

Though the shelter operates on a minimal budget and could use monetary and other donations such as food and blankets, Bowman said the greatest need is clear: "We need more adoptions," she said.

The shelter offers all sizes and breeds of dogs and cats, from full-bred to mixed, but regardless of their

bloodline, they all have received love and good care while they wait for a home. But don't ask Bowman how many animals the shelter has. She doesn't ever count them. "If I counted," she said, "I would get overwhelmed."

Managed by the Clark County Fiscal Court, the Animal Shelter depends on individual and business donations to survive. The shelter gladly accepts monetary gifts, food, cleaning supplies, toys, treats, and old blankets. As soon as Bowman was named director in 2005, she began fundraising for a new shelter building, which opened early this year.

Work at the shelter is never

done with animals constantly being dropped off by individuals or brought in by the dog warden, who works directly with Bowman. Often, visitors to the office will be greeted by at least one of the animals. "We bring the animals into the office one by one to get to know them," Bowman said. "We don't want a laid back person to adopt the most energetic dog, and we don't want someone who wants a playful dog to get one that prefers to lie around. We want to match the right dog with the right owner."

The average adoption time for an animal is a month to six weeks, but for Bo Sefus, the wait was a little more than two weeks.

"It is my hope that people who want a pet will consider adoption through a shelter," Bowman said. "Why pay \$500 for a dog when you can get one here for \$70, including shots and spay/neutering. And besides that, you are saving an animal's life."

The Clark County Animal Shelter is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is located off Route 15 at the Clark County Fairgrounds. For more information on the shelter or how to donate, email clarkanimal@bellsouth.net, or call the shelter at (859) 737-0053.

and establishing a vibrant web presence through www.petfinder.com.

Nearly 500 animals were saved in 2011 through the efforts of A Time to Live (see related story), a local rescue and transport organization. "Not every animal can be saved," Bowman said. "We can hold only so many, so we have to make decisions based on health, temperament, and age. I still don't sleep the night before and I still cry. I'm not ashamed to admit it."

Bowman's love for animals began when she was young and she carries her passion into her job every day. "It's important to develop a relationship with all the pets," she said. "I have to