



Joe Bolmanskie, a sanitation worker for the Bryan animal pound, doesn't look very happy about his job. Bolmanskie is in charge of cleaning the Bryan pound. He also has the unpleasant task of picking up and disposing of dead animals found on city streets.

Animal population tragedy problem hurts people, too

By DAVID WHITE

The day begins at 6 a.m. at the Bryan city pound. Joe Bolmanskie, a sanitation worker, unlocks the public gates of the pound and enters making sure they are locked behind him. "Once I forgot to lock the gate and one of those big german police dogs opened the gate and four dogs got out," Bolmanskie says.

He hooks up a garden hose and starts washing away the excreta and is knocked over by the dogs during the night. The animals are frightened — their tails are between their legs as they unsuccessfully try to avoid the spray from the hose.

There are 17 dogs in the small pound. Three small labrador retriever puppies, probably from the same litter, huddle together in one corner to escape the water.

Once the mess on the floor is washed outside into a drainage system, Bolmanskie turns the water off and heads out the gates. He kicks a large rock on the floor of the pound and says, "Some day I'm going to be with the kids that throw rocks at the dogs."

For the next 15 minutes, Bolmanskie holds a drain open so the dirty water will drain away from the pound. Because of the inadequate drainage system, the animals get soaked every time it is cleaned. Two small drains, one which is clogged now, serve the entire pound.

Bolmanskie says he has asked Tony Dileo, a humane officer for the Bryan Police Department which maintains the pound to fix the drains and add new ones.

Bolmanskie says, "I tell Tony about it but it don't do no good." Bolmanskie has fixed the drains himself but they get clogged again. "I try to keep the pound clean for them but they don't appreciate it," he says.

Bolmanskie says he has asked the Bryan humane officers for disinfectant that won't burn the animals or remove the animals so he can clean the pound thoroughly.

"They ain't ever done nothing I asked them to do," he says. Bolmanskie finally had to get disinfectant from his supervisor, Darrell E. Colley, superintendent of sanitation.

Outside the gates of the pound are two dead dogs. Dead dogs are routinely left here for Bolmanskie. He picks the dogs up, one in each hand and puts them in the back of his truck.

Bolmanskie drives out to the city land fill off Farm Road 1687. As he drives up, four vultures picking through a garbage pile notice him and fly away. Bolmanskie pitches the two dead dogs into an empty hole, climbs back into the truck and drives to the sanitation department on Fountain Street.

Bolmanskie has been employed by the city of Bryan since June 1969 to clean the animal pound and remove dead animals from the city streets. Bolmanskie has lived in the Bryan area all his life. He has been a gas station attendant, an ice man and now he is a sanitation worker.

Bolmanskie's supervisor, Darrell Colley, puts high value on the job Bolmanskie does.

"Joe is of immeasurable value to us. Someone has to do the job and he doesn't seem to mind."

"Most people in sanitation would quit before they'd pick up a mashed dog. I'd a damn sight rather give up most of the other guys than Joe because Joe is the only one who will do this unpleasant task."

At the sanitation department Bolmanskie rolls a cigarette and waits for his foreman to tell him where the day's dead animals are so he can pick them up. Today there are only two dead animals, one on Stevens Street and one at Carver Street and Highway 21.

Bolmanskie drives down Steven Street at 10 miles per hour, looking into the ditch for the dead animal. He drives back down the other side



A forlorn beagle, resident of the Bryan dog pound, looks as though he would rather be somewhere else. He is just one of the victims of the city's pet overpopulation problem.

of the street until he spots the fly covered german shepherd, a victim of this country's animal overpopulation problem.

Bolmanskie gets out of his truck and looks down at the dead animal and shakes his head. "Isn't that a sight," he says, "I'd like that dog alive. I like those german police dogs." Bolmanskie bends down and picks the dog up by a hind leg.

A small puppy runs out into the street to investigate what is happening. "Here comes another one that's going to get it, too," Bolmanskie says and then yells at the dog, "Get out of here, pup."

The dog retreats down the street at the harsh sound of Bolmanskie's voice.

Bolmanskie drives to the corner of Carver Street and Highway 21 and looks in the high grass for the second animal. After a brief search he finds the badly decomposed remains of a large dog. Bolmanskie angrily says, "People wait till they're nothing but bones before they call me." He picks up the animal despite the overpowering stench of decaying flesh and puts it with the other one in the back of the truck. Bolmanskie drive back to the land fill to bury these two dead animals.

This time the vultures are not picking through the garbage piles but three thin dogs are, more victims of the animal overpopulation problem. Bolmanskie backs the truck up to a hole and almost runs over one of the stray dogs in his way. Into the hole go the two dead dogs and Bolmanskie heads back to the sanitation yard.

Bolmanskie keeps busy most days picking up dead animals but on days like today he does other odd jobs around the sanitation yard.

An hour before he gets off at 2 p.m. he goes back to the pound to

clean it again. As he drives up to the pound Tony Dileo, the humane officer, is there with his truck for transporting dogs. Another officer arrives and they begin loading animals into the cage on the back of the pickup truck. These animals are bound for the Texas A&M University Veterinary School, where they will be used in experiments and eventually killed.

Fourteen dogs are squeezed into the truck including the three labrador puppies. Only two beagles and a dog already rejected by the veterinary school as "too mean" are left in the pound.

In 1977 the Bryan police picked up 1,886 dogs and 724 other animals. Of these 1,733 dogs and 697 other animals were turned over to the veterinary school, according to Bryan police records.

In comparison, the Houston animal control center rounds up 150 to 200 dogs a day — all victims of the animal overpopulation problem. According to the Animal Protection Institute of America 30 million dogs and cats will be born in this country in 1978. At least 13.5 million will die on streets or highways. Others will live their lives scrounging through garbage for food.

Joe cleans the dog pen again and begins to walk to his car. He says, "Some day I'm going to get a dog out of there, either a hunting dog or a german police dog." Joe already owns two dogs.

Most days Joe talks and looks forward to six years from now when he will retire and be able to do what he likes best — fish in the Brazos River and hunt squirrels. In the meantime he cleans up the mess left by Bryan's animal overpopulation tragedy.

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