

# SPCA

## without *Animal Shelter* director

Agency mired  
in budget woes

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SANTA CRUZ — Apparently it is a dog-eat-dog world at the Santa Cruz SPCA, which has lost its third executive director in four years.

Henry Brzezinski, the group's executive director who started in August, lost his job Friday. Neither he nor the SPCA board would say whether he was fired or resigned.

Replacing Brzezinski quickly may prove to be difficult, as it took "several months" to find him, said Doreen Lozano, vice president of the volunteer board.

Brzezinski's departure comes at a tough time.

The nonprofit SPCA, which provides shelter and animal-control services for most of the county, faces a need for funding that even Lassie would have trouble bringing home.

The agency's annual budget is about \$2 million, with \$1.5 million coming from area governments and the balance from donations.

Lozano, who is serving as interim executive director, said the society might need 40 to 50 percent more from area governments this fiscal year. That comes as many local cities and the county struggle with their own budget shortfalls.

Lozano said the SPCA significantly underestimated the costs associated with a manda-  
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tory-sterilization law and others during negotiations for its last three-year contract, she said.

The 1998 law requires all animals be spayed or neutered before they can be adopted. Another law extended the mandatory hold period for animals, and required more veterinary care.

The contract expires June 30.

The county Board of Supervisors is set to discuss the issue April 16, said Dinah Phillips, county spokeswoman.

The SPCA failed to submit a contract-required budget request in January, and asked for more county money in February, Phillips said.

They didn't get it, and in general, cuts are more the order of the day, she said. "We are reducing budgets in all departments."

Lozano said the board and the executive director collaborate on budget proposals, but added that the agency has been late before.

The county manages the SPCA contract for the cities of Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley and Capitola, Phillips said, and pays for about 70 percent of it. The city of Santa Cruz pays 23.5 percent.

Without more money, "it would be difficult for us to continue operating, and one of the big things is more animals would be euthanized," Lozano said.

Another issue facing the next director is the need for higher salaries in a county with sky-high housing costs, Lozano said, adding that the society employs about

40 people and has six unfilled positions.

She realizes the contract money might be elusive.

"We know these are difficult times, but there are no more corners we can cut," she said. "It's not going to an easy negotiation."

Former SPCA board-director clashes include a 1995 coup by a former fired director, Jody Cramer, formerly Jody Paterniti, who regained her job after helping maneuver new members onto the board.

Cramer, an animal-rights advocate, successfully pushed for a 1994 county ordinance that requires dogs and cats more than 6 months old to be sterilized, with limited exceptions.

She was fired first in 1995, then rehired and fired again in 1998. She was replaced by husband-and-wife team Jo Storsberg and Brian Taylor. In 2000, Lozano said, the

board chose not to renew their contract.

Lozano said Brzezinski's departure was between "Henry and the board," the same board that hired him.

"It's a personnel action and there is not really anything we can say," she said.

She would not reveal his salary.

Brzezinski, reached Tuesday at his San Lorenzo Valley home, was equally tight-lipped.

"There is nothing I can say," he said. "I apologize."

In 1999, the SPCA got a \$1.2 million boost spanning three years after months of contract negotiations with area governments and after warning it might discontinue animal-control services.

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