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## **Humane Society of Berks County Auction Features Art by Grammy Winning Musician, Smithsonian Exhibitor and Area Artists**

The Humane Society of Berks County (HSBC), the leader in animal welfare, will be holding its **2009 Art for Arf's Sake Art Auction** on March 28, 2009 at Reading Country Club in Exeter.

The annual auction, which benefits the animals and services of the HSBC, has become one of the largest and most successful arts events in the region. In addition to a wide variety of high quality art available for live, silent and Chinese auction, the 2009 Arf's Art Auction will feature the **Awarding of the 2009 Golden Bone Award for Animal Welfare to State Senator Mike O'Pake**. "Berks County is very fortunate to have great advocates for animal welfare like Senator O'Pake, as well as all the artists and patrons supporting the Auction," said Karel Minor, executive director of the HSBC.

Entering its second decade, Arf's Art raised over \$70,000 for the animal welfare charity last year. The funds are vital to its mission of helping homeless, abused and injured animals since the HSBC is not subsidized by State or local government and relies entirely on individual donations, events and service fees. Score of area artists donate their talent and art to the auction each year and the variety and quality of the art has increased dramatically over the years. The Auction now showcases some of the best known artists in the region and some from around the nation.

Included in this year's offering is a hand painted ukulele donated by John Flansburgh of the multi-Grammy Award winning band **They Might Be Giants**. Flansburgh painted images of his adopted cat, "The Governor", on the body of the ukulele. Another well known artist, **Sue Coe**, donated a signed print of her piece, "Modern Man Followed by the Ghosts of His Meat". Coe is well known for her focus on social justice and animal welfare issues in her art. Her works have been displayed in the Smithsonian Institution, New York's Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and other major museum and galleries around the world. Minor says these donations in support of the auction show the national reach of the local organization.

“The work we have been doing here in Berks to change the way animal welfare is approached has been modeled around the country in other animal shelters. It has also helped us to gain some prominent fans around the country, like Flansburgh, Coe and other nationally known artists and musicians who have supported the auction in the past couple of years,” he said.

The Auction opens its doors at 6:00 PM on Saturday, March 28 with food, drink, a musical performance by local bluegrass band, The Manatawny Creek Ramblers, and a silent and Chinese auction. At 6:30, the Golden Bone Award will be presented to Senator O’Pake in recognition of the work he undertook to ensure passage in the Senate of last year’s “Puppy Mill Bill”. At 7:00 PM the live auction begins, under the expert and fast paced control of auctioneer Dick Henry.

Pieces available for bid range from paintings, drawing, signed prints and other two dimensional art to sculpture, mosaics, jewelry, entertainment packages and more. A complete listing with images is available on the Arf’s Art page of the Humane Society’s website, [www.berkshumane.org](http://www.berkshumane.org). Tickets for the event are \$35 and may be purchased at the HSBC’s two locations (Reading and Douglassville) or securely online. All proceeds from art purchases go directly to animal care programs at the HSBC. “The Humane Society is extremely proud of the support it receives from the artists and patrons of Arf’s Art,” said Minor. “The funds raised make a life and death difference to the thousands of animals we rescue each year.”

The Humane Society of Berks County serves all of Berks County and surrounding communities, providing care and housing for thousands of animals each year. In 2008, HSBC achieved the milestone of ensuring that every healthy animal entering its shelters was adopted, rescued or owner claimed. It is a private, non-profit organization funded through donations and service fees. In addition to enforcing Pennsylvania’s animal cruelty laws in Berks and Montgomery Counties, the Humane Society provides adoption services, spay and neuter services, humane education, pet behavioral counseling, veterinary services to the general public, and helps stray, injured and mistreated animals. The Humane Society is located at 1801 N. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Reading, and 1201 Ben Franklin Highway E., Douglassville.

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*Attached images for publication: “Hand Painted Ukulele” by John Flansburgh of They Might Be Giants, “Modern Man Followed by the Ghosts of His Meat” by Sue Coe, “Spike in Beret” by Adrienne Trafford. No attribution required.*