

Disaster Planning Pays Off

On the evening of May 3, 1999, SWRO Director Lou Guyton began fielding frantic calls from HSUS constituents and friends in Oklahoma City. Tornadoes had devastated the city. SWRO mobilized and sent teams to assist with animal rescue, capture, and relocation over the next two weeks.

On the evening of May 8, 2003, a call came from animal control officials at the Oklahoma City Incident Command Center following a tornado that had ravaged the city. Guyton learned that the team was performing an assessment and that SWRO should stand by in case our help was needed. The next morning, the lead animal control agency and the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association determined that local and state agencies could handle the impact of this storm and its effect on animals. They had been here before. The lessons learned in 1999 and the planning for animals in disasters in the years since had paid off.

In the wake of the devastation of *continued on page 2*

Thanks to HSUS planning and training, local agencies are now better able to handle animal issues during disasters.



SWRO Fights Against Horse Slaughter in Texas

Equine advocates faced a stiff battle against proponents of horse slaughter who used every political tactic possible to decriminalize the activity. Thankfully, legislation in the Texas regular session that would have legalized the slaughter of horses for meat is officially dead.

S.B. 1413 had been amended by the House to completely repeal Chapter 149 of the Texas Agricultural Code, which outlaws the sale and human consumption of horsemeat. But a conference committee removed the amendment on May 30, bowing to pressure from Texans and citizens from all over the United States.

SWRO's Lou Guyton and Jay Sabatucci joined the Texas Humane Legislative Network and many citizens to visit the state capitol and lobby all 150 representatives and 31 senators. Others flooded capitol offices with thousands of calls, letters, and faxes. Some lawmakers reported receiving more calls on the horse slaughter issue than on all other legislative issues combined. Rallies in opposition to horse slaughter raised awareness in major cities throughout Texas. National and state horse organizations joined the effort, bringing the estimated number of people who contacted Texas legislators to more than one million.

Even though the Texas legislation is now dead, there is still work to be done on this issue. The victory in Texas sends a message to federal legislators, who are considering H.R. 857, the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act. Introduced by Reps. John Sweeney (R-NY) and John Spratt (D-SC), H.R. 857 prohibits the slaughter of horses for human consumption. Additionally, the bill bans the import and export of horseflesh or



LOU GUYTON/HSUS

A Texas bill to legalize the slaughter of horses for meat failed thanks to an exhaustive lobbying effort SWRO joined.

live horses intended for slaughter for human consumption. This legislation will keep horse slaughterhouses out of Texas and any other state. For the horses, we must accomplish at the federal level what we have achieved at the state level.

Only two horse slaughter plants remain in the United States, both operating in Texas, despite a state law banning the practice. In response to the Texas attorney general's ruling that the plants were in violation of the law, the companies have filed a federal lawsuit to forestall prosecution. Efforts are also underway in DeKalb, Illinois, to renovate a horse slaughter plant closed down after a fire.

Horses suffer during transport to slaughter and during the slaughtering process. Hauled in trailers designed for cattle, the horses are overcrowded and often injured. The animals are difficult to render unconscious with a captive bolt gun, leading slaughterhouses to slit many horses' throats while the animals are still conscious. Texas is the only state that slaughters horses for meat, despite the special place horses occupy in the history and culture of the state.

Animal Fighting Seminar

SWRO staff met with representatives from the Humane Society of Louisiana and the Louisiana SPCA in New Orleans for two days to devise a strategy for ending illegal animal fighting in the south. More than 80 law enforcement and animal control personnel attended.

Eric Sakach, director of HSUS's West Coast Regional Office, and Southeast Regional Office's Sandy Christiansen served as the class instructors, introducing the attending officers to the underground world of dogfighting and cockfighting. Many aspects of these cruel "sports" were discussed, and hard-hitting videos showed just how appalling the practice is. Many in attendance were moved by the stories of dogs left dead or with permanent injuries—all for peoples' amusement and wagering.

Even though it is still legal in Louisiana, cockfighting was part of the curriculum. Louisiana and New Mexico are the only remaining states in the country that allow this barbaric blood sport. Police and animal control officers witnessed how these birds are fought to the death and then thrown away like so much garbage. They were able to handle the vicious blades that are strapped to the roosters' legs for the purpose of inflicting dreadful wounds on opponents in the pit.

Thanks to this seminar, Louisiana officials and those of other southern states now have a strategy to combat animal fighting, prosecute the criminals involved, and make this region better for everyone.

Get RAVS E-news

No matter where the Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) team travels, you can follow along with the RAVS e-newsletter. Glimpse the activities of these hard-working volunteer veterinary students and the professional vets who oversee them.

Go to www.hsus.org/ravsnewsletter to sign up for this free newsletter.

Reservation Teens Host "Outdoor Classroom"



MELISSA DELOACH/HSUS

An outdoor classroom curriculum taught high school students on Utah's Northern Ute Reservation about animal issues ranging from environmental concerns to animal cruelty.

Together with the HSUS's Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS), SWRO provides animal care education programs to Native American children of all ages. This past April, teachers chose a special group of high school students on the Northern Ute Reservation in Utah to host a specially designed presentation about community animal issues developed by The HSUS. The twelve students, from ninth through twelfth grade, were members of a unique classroom. Even though part of their day focused on standard curriculum, a good portion of their time was spent in an "outdoor classroom," where hands-on activities out-of-doors encouraged participation and generated the students' interest.

HSUS staff created a challenging agenda for the students. Topics ranged from agriculture issues to environmental awareness to animal cruelty laws.

Many of the students found themselves intrigued by the wide range of animal problems in today's society. Several shared personal experiences related to animal cruelty. The two-hour presentation was followed by a visit to the RAVS clinic in progress at the reservation community center. For many of the students, it was the first time they had ever seen a veterinarian at work.

One of the long-term goals of the RAVS education program is to illuminate the scope of animal welfare concerns in any given community. While some native communities have unique issues, many share similar problems. Through this partnership with Native American community leaders and educators, The HSUS is able to introduce young people to more thoughtful approaches to solving animal problems.

continued from "Disaster Planning," page 1

Hurricane Andrew in 1992, Florida was the first to realize the importance of including assistance for animals in their state disaster response plan. Soon The HSUS created its disaster services department to address this task on a national scale. HSUS regional offices were charged with working with state and local officials in getting animal disaster response included at all levels of emergency management.

HSUS established relationships with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the American Red Cross to embrace this philosophy. SWRO has worked in all of our states to incorporate planning and response for animals in disasters. We have provided training and materials to emergency management officials, and we routinely speak at state emergency management conferences. Last summer, SWRO hosted the second National Animals in Disaster Conference in Fort Worth, which was attended by an equal representation of animal advocates and emergency managers. Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas have all embraced the philosophy.

This past July, Hurricane Claudette pounded the shores of the Texas Gulf Coast. In anticipation of the hurricane, the Texas Animals in Disasters System was activated and the regional coordinator in Nueces County took charge of assessment, mobilization, and response. At the same time, a wildfire was burning on the Fort Apache Reservation in Arizona. SWRO's calls to the lead state agency indicated that responders were mobilized, caring for animals in evacuated areas and removing and housing animals in need. At SWRO, we are poised to respond immediately to any disaster situation. Similarly, we are proud when we can say that the planning for animal disaster response has paid off.

Legislative Update

Arkansas

- H.B. 2188, a bill that would make extreme acts of cruelty to animals a class D felony rather than a misdemeanor failed again this session.

Louisiana

- H.B. 1005 passed. It allows for the addition of a checkbox on individual income tax returns that enables filers to donate to the Louisiana Animal Welfare Commission.

New Mexico

- S.B. 64, which would have made New

Mexico the forty-ninth state to ban cockfighting, failed.

Oklahoma

- *Attempts to undermine S.Q. 687.*

There were two attempts to weaken S.Q. 687, which banned cockfighting. Thankfully, both failed. S.B. 829 would have suspended enforcement of the cockfighting ban in counties that did not approve S.Q. 687 until an election could be held. The intent of the bill was to repeal the ban within county borders. H.B. 1784 would have reduced the penalties for cockfighting to misdemeanors subject to a maximum fine of \$500 and no jail time. Fines alone would not deter cockfighters, who may spend hundreds of dollars on a single bird, and bet tens of thousands of dollars at a cockfighting event. Current penalties for cockfighting are identical to those for dogfighting.

- *Penalties for cruelty to animals stiffened.*

H.B. 1690 increases the fine for cruelty to animals from \$500 to \$5,000. Those convicted of cruelty may be required to pay restitution to animal facilities for veterinary care and boarding costs of victimized animals. Any animal cruelty violation may result in forfeiture and



SWRO Director Lou Guyton (third from left) joins others who worked for passage of H.B. 572 at the law's signing.

seizure of animals and property.

Texas

- S.B. 572 and H.B.1115 passed. These laws provide for administration of humane methods of euthanasia in animal shelters and mandate training for animal shelter personnel.
- H.B. 1119 and S.B.1528 strengthen existing law allowing for the seizure of cruelly treated animals. Owner will be required to pay costs of seizure and post appeal bonds for animals seized.
- H.B. 433, the Animal Rights Terrorist Bill, failed to pass. This bill would have criminalized legitimate political and social protests by animal or environmental advocates and classified those convicted as "terrorists."

Animal Care Expo

When: March 10-13, 2004

Where: Hyatt Regency Reunion, Dallas, Texas

The HSUS has developed a dynamic education conference designed for anyone and everyone who works or volunteers to help animals. Animal Care Expo is a world-class educational conference combined with a full-scale international trade show, the goal of which is to help those in animal sheltering, care, control, and rescue do the best and most efficient jobs possible. Go to www.hsus2.org/sheltering/general/expo_information.html to learn more.

I want to learn how I can help our animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Please send me information about

- Making a memorial donation to honor the life of a pet, friend, or relative.
- Providing for my pets in my will and in case of emergency.
- Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS.

- Using charitable gift annuities and trusts to support The HSUS.
- Giving The HSUS a gift of stock.



Promoting the protection of all animals

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NAME _____
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DAYTIME PHONE _____
E-MAIL (OPTIONAL) _____

Director's Report



S. K. GRAM/BORT/HSUS

By Lou Guyton
*Director of the Southwest
Regional Office*

All for Molly

The e-mail read: "Female Lab. Six years. Owner says will give up AKC papers. Will make a good breeding dog." I sighed.

The mentions of "breeding" and "AKC papers" were the hitch. Who would adopt a dog with those qualities? Someone who wanted to breed her, of course. Possibly someone who would adopt her solely for that reason. I had to do something to keep her from being used to make money for a puppy mill or backyard breeder.

Because of the nature of my job, I often come into contact with animals who need to be rescued. And my family has always taken needy animals in on a limited basis. I immediately sent a response saying I would be willing to pick up the dog. A few days later, Molly the Lab joined us for a temporary stay, so we could evaluate her and find her a permanent home.

Molly was a very sweet dog. Her tail wagged at any sign of attention. She loved her ball. But she had a few other issues.

Molly had kennel cough and hadn't been

spayed. She was overweight, and I soon learned that she loves to eat trash and is a food thief. She had a habit of bulldozing her way into a room. When she didn't want to go somewhere, she would wrinkle up her neck, and off came the collar. Then off went Molly.

A trip to my veterinarian revealed that the medical issues would be easy and inexpensive to correct. And a few obedience lessons helped to improve Molly's manners.

As with most of the animals we foster, I immediately began searching for an adoptive family. On the day I brought Molly home, I ran into a family who had been thinking about getting a Lab puppy to grow up with their daughter, Lauren. At six, Molly was basically a well-behaved "puppy in a big dog body." She was already housetrained, liked kids, had better manners than a puppy, and was less likely to chew up their shoes—or their home.

I thought Molly would be a good fit for Lauren's family, and convinced them that a mature dog would be less trouble than a puppy. There were just a few things to work out. The family had to have their yard securely fenced, and Molly had to be spayed and in good health before they could bring her home.

Lauren, the family's precocious three-year-old, didn't take long to jump start the adoption process. She followed her dad around, pestering him to fix the fence, buy a bowl, a collar, and some dog food. She grilled him nightly at bedtime: "Daddy, is Miss Molly fixed yet? Did she get her shots today?"

Amused at her persistence, Lauren's grandparents pitched in on fence repairs. The entire family visited Molly several times during her stay with my family, and Lauren and Molly bonded quickly.

Our first report on Molly's progress in her new home detailed the theft of three boxes



Despite the challenges of fostering a homeless pet, SWRO Director Lou Guyton knows there's no feeling as good as making a great match for animal and adopter, as in the case of Molly and Lauren.

of cookies off the kitchen counter. She also expertly found the trash can and emptied its yummy contents on the floor. That first evening, she was a bit anxious and had trouble falling asleep.

But a few days later, afternoon naps with Lauren were becoming a regular occurrence. And the first shared bubble bath for Molly and Lauren will surely be part of family history, as well as family routine. A child has claimed her heart, and there isn't a happier dog in the world.

Helping Molly and other animals like her is what I live for.

There are many dogs as cheerful and gracious as Molly waiting for homes at animal shelters. For more information about selecting the right pet for you, check out www.petsforlife.org. To find animals in your community, visit www.pets911.com.

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Promoting the protection of all animals

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