



## FOUL PLAY

Missouri targets shelters and rescue groups

**If not for the rescuers**, the dogs might have been taken out back and shot. As it was, many of the 180 animals surrendered from a Missouri puppy mill last spring were barely alive. They had baseball-sized mammary tumors and hernias. Rotting teeth falling out of their mouths. Jaw bones so calcium-deficient from continuous breeding that they fractured during dental work. Organs so deteriorated that they fell apart in the hands of vets spaying the dogs.

The condition of the animals left rescue volunteer Karen Orender-Rudolph with a clear conviction about the need to crack down on cruelty and neglect in mass breeding facilities.

“It is imperative that a strong set of laws are developed and enforced,” the west Tennessee woman wrote to The HSUS. “... Please do whatever is possible to shut down these operations.”

A year after Missouri citizens passed Proposition B, a ballot initiative that would have required breeders to take better care of their dogs, animal advocates are having to make do with a much weaker law after the

legislature overturned many of the voter-approved provisions last spring.

The law does create stricter standards for commercial breeders than those that existed before Prop B, and it provides \$1.1 million for better enforcement. The state attorney general’s office now has a position dedicated to prosecuting law-breaking breeders, along with a website and hotline that accept complaints. During the first few months on the job, the assistant attorney general brought charges against a large-scale commercial breeder every four to five weeks.

But state officials also increased fees on shelters and rescues at the very time they are overwhelmed with puppy mill surrenders and strapped for cash because of the weak economy. In 2010, the Missouri legislature had approved charging shelters and rescues the same fee as commercial breeders: up to \$500 per year, including a \$100 annual license and \$1 per

animal adopted or sold. Then last spring, the state raised the annual maximum to \$2,500. (No other state levies such heavy fees on shelters; by contrast, a Pennsylvania proposal would give adopters a \$300 tax credit.)

In May, The HSUS, Stray Rescue of St. Louis, and Dogwood Animal Shelter in Osage Beach, Mo., sued to block the new fees for shelters and rescues, arguing that the 2010 law is unconstitutional. In September, The HSUS, the ASPCA, Best Friends Animal Society, and their supporters asked the state to exempt shelters and rescues from the adoption fee.

Lucretia Skaggs, treasurer of the Farmington Pet Adoption Center, says the \$450-plus fee the shelter would pay each year could force it to take in fewer animals. Randy Grim, Stray Rescue founder and president, says that at small, struggling shelters or rescues (his was once one), the fee could mean the difference between surviving and shutting down.

“If you want to tax anyone, tax the problem—which would be the puppy mills,” says Grim. “We rescue dogs from puppy mills. We take in animals off the street. We’re part of the solution.”

It wasn’t supposed to be this way.

That’s why volunteers from The HSUS and other animal groups are going door to door, collecting signatures for the Your Vote Counts ballot initiative. They’re joined by advocates of other causes subjected to legislative attempts to overturn the will

of the voters—including progressive issues such as renewable energy. If approved, the measure would prevent legislators from undoing ballot initiatives with a simple majority vote.

To place the constitutional amendment on the November ballot, supporters need to gather 157,000 valid signatures by May, says Dane Waters, HSUS director of ballot campaigns. “Our rallying cry is, ‘Do you want to take back control of your government?’” — *Karen E. Lange*

“We rescue dogs from puppy mills. ... We’re part of the solution.”

— RANDY GRIM

# Nightingales Take Flight

**In 1979**, animal advocate Cleveland Amory orchestrated a seemingly impossible feat: rescuing 577 burros marked for death because they'd altered the Grand Canyon's ecosystem. Over three years, the donkeys were lifted from the canyon by a sling attached to a helicopter, one of the first massive animal rescues in America. Thirty-two years later, history repeated itself: On Sept. 16, with help from donors and volunteers, The HSUS arranged for 119 wild donkeys to travel via a special cargo plane from Hawaii's Big Island to mainland sanctuaries.

Known as nightingales because their musical brays echo through the night, Hawaii's wild herd descends from working donkeys set loose years ago when coffee and sugar farms became mechanized. Their population grew to between 400 and 600 roaming on about 10,000 acres of private land near the village of Waikoloa.

The donkeys strayed onto busy roads and, during a long drought, nosed into livestock feed set out by cattle rancher Stan Boteilho. "Somebody told me I could shoot them since they were on my lease, but I didn't feel that was the right way to go," says Boteilho, who had pet donkeys as a kid. Instead, he contacted local veterinarian Brady Bergin, who with The HSUS's help spearheaded a yearlong effort to humanely trap, neuter, and rehome the animals. "I feel we kind of owed the donkeys for what they did for us as 'beasts of burden' for so many years," says Bergin. "A lot of people didn't believe we could make a difference. Things we didn't think were possible became possible once The HSUS got involved."

More than 200 have been rehomed on the Big Island to date. Of those airlifted, some went to Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue in Tehachapi, Calif., and some to Eagle Eye Sanctuary in Northern California; six are slated to go to The HSUS's Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch in Texas, the landing place for many of the Grand Canyon burros. About 200 remain wild in Hawaii; the hope is to find land to keep a controlled population in sanctuary. — *Julie Hauserman*



1979  
A burro  
is airlifted  
from the  
Grand Canyon,  
the first step  
to sanctuary

▶ **WATCH A VIDEO** about the airlift and find out how you can help at [humanesociety.org/allanimals](https://www.humanesociety.org/allanimals).





## Sweet as Honey

Neglected fight-bust dogs bloom under rescue group's care

**When The HSUS's** Animal Rescue Team and local law enforcement raided a Gary, Ind., dogfighting operation in July, they found dogs stashed everywhere on the rundown property.

Some were crated in the kitchen of a trashed house where the occupants had allegedly been cooking crack cocaine on the

stove. Others languished in urine- and feces-laden crates in the basement or were staked outside in the muddy yard. Still others were confined to rusted cages or filthy crates stacked on top of each other inside a decrepit shed, where boarded-up windows blocked out all light.

Outside the home's back door, the first

dog responders saw was Honey, an older pit bull missing a big chunk of her lip. "She was on a heavy logging chain, and she had no food, no water and was just sitting in basically feces and mud," recalls Chris Schindler, manager of The HSUS's animal fighting investigations.

The frightened dog would retreat to her delapidated doghouse, emerging only to bark at her rescuers. But that didn't last long—in 20 minutes, Schindler was able to gain Honey's trust, pet her, remove her chain, and carry her off the property.

Honey and 19 other dogs seized that day were taken to a boarding kennel where Laurie Adams and trained volunteers from Indianapolis-based Casa Del Toro Pit Bull Education and Rescue would help them transition to normal lives as companion animals.

Since the dogs would have to stay at the kennel until they could be adopted—a process that could take weeks or even months—they'd need outlets for their energy. "They're social creatures; they need things to do," says Anne Sterling, HSUS Indiana state director. "They get bored—*crazy* bored—and that's when they really give up and don't engage with the world anymore."

In 2010, Adams and her volunteers had pioneered a canine enrichment program at Indianapolis Animal Care & Control, offering toys and treats, obedience and agility training, and basic human kindness

### Hometown Hero: Casa Del Toro Pit Bull Education and Rescue

► **TESTIFY:** Founded by Laurie Adams in 1999, Casa Del Toro has a roster of about 40 volunteers who participate in fundraisers, adoption and education events, and the Indianapolis shelter program. Adams has also joined The HSUS's Anne Sterling in testifying for state legislation that would make attendance at animal fights a felony.

► **MEET THE ELITE:** Casa Del Toro is one of the few approved rescue groups The HSUS calls on to participate in dogfighting raids and work with seized animals. "When we had the Gary case come up, Laurie was the first person I called, and she sent out a whole team," says The HSUS's Chris Schindler.

► **START ME UP:** The HSUS has given Casa Del Toro a \$10,000 donation so the rescue can expand its Indianapolis shelter program to facilities statewide. Adams and volunteer Shawna Ping are putting together a starter kit including an operations manual, low-cost toys like PVC pipes drilled with holes and filled with treats or enticing scents, and copies of soothing music chosen specifically for dogs and cats.

► **SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL HOMETOWN HEROES:** Find resources for adopting from a shelter or rescue group at [shelterpetproject.org](http://shelterpetproject.org).





Casa del Toro volunteers used agility training, treats, and human kindness to provide emotional healing for dogs like Echo (top and middle), Duncan (bottom), and Honey (opposite).

to keep shelter dogs happy and occupied.

That's the kind of attention The HSUS sought for the Gary dogs, who were finally able to experience simple pleasures like running in the grass, soaking in the sun, eating good food, and playing with people.

Honey—who soon gave birth to three pups—blossomed in their care. “She’s just progressed in leaps and bounds,” Schindler says. “She just became one of the most lovable and friendly dogs.”

A veterinary technician who looked after Honey would certainly agree. She fell in love and hopes to bring her home. Honey has “changed a lot of minds [about pit bulls],” Adams says. — *Jim Baker*

▶ [WATCH A VIDEO](https://www.humanesociety.org/hero4) about Honey at [humanesociety.org/hero4](https://www.humanesociety.org/hero4).

# The Great Skunk Debunk

## The HSUS answers town’s call for help

**Police Lt. John Walcek** had a problem on his hands, and it was a real stinker.

Last spring, complaints that skunks were “overrunning” the town of Wareham, Mass., surged, with authorities receiving more than 50 calls, and it fell to Walcek to do something about it. Staff at The HSUS’s Cape Wildlife Center in Barnstable recommended HSUS wildlife experts Laura Simon and John Griffin, who headed to Wareham in July with an arsenal of nonlethal solutions.

The year before, the town had hired a pest control agency to trap and kill dozens of skunks. But complaints hadn’t diminished.

Accompanied by Walcek and an animal control officer, Griffin and Simon visited a dozen properties where residents had complained. As their tour progressed, more and more neighbors joined the entourage, wanting to share their skunk stories, too.

“We felt like the Pied Piper,” Simon says.

The pair offered simple solutions such as making garbage inaccessible, blocking potential den sites under elevated homes and porches, securing sheds with L-shaped barriers so skunks can’t dig underneath, and attaching mesh to backyard fences.

That evening, they gave a presentation showing that, rather than being quick to spray people, skunks are actually quite difficult to provoke. “One of the key things that I continually find is that people are afraid of skunks because they misunderstand them,” says Simon. “A lot of the concerns are fear-based—what a skunk *may* do. People are worried about things that aren’t going to happen.”

As it turns out, Griffin says the skunkapalooza was likely overhyped: The spike in complaints coincided with the time of year when juveniles leave their mothers in search of their own territory. And residents could also have been seeing the same skunks over and over, leading to the perception that the animals were taking over the town.

Since the visit, complaints have dropped to nearly zero. “They stemmed the tide of what ... these neighbors were calling a ‘skunk invasion,’” Walcek says.

“And folks that came in [to the presentation] that were originally ready to hang the skunks up by their tails ... left and said, ‘You know what? I guess I understand a little better.’” — *Jim Baker*





## The Fibs Behind the McRib

**The video opens** with praise for Smithfield Foods, supplier of the pork for McDonald's McRib sandwiches. A guitar plays and the camera shows supposedly contented pigs in warmly lit, manure-free facilities. If you believe the video and others posted on Smithfield's website last March, conditions are ideal and each animal's every need is met.

But that's just not true, and in November, The HSUS petitioned the Securities and Exchange Commission to stop Smithfield from misleading investors; the videos don't show the suffering inherent to confining pigs in gestation crates so small they can't turn around. Absent are images such as those a 2010 HSUS investigation found at a Smithfield-owned farm: sows suffering from bloody sores, and chewing and beating their heads against the metal bars.

"Smithfield is both abusing pigs and misleading the public about that abuse," says HSUS attorney Peter Brandt.

In 2009, Smithfield backed off an earlier pledge to phase out gestation crates in its company-owned factory farms by 2017. After the HSUS exposé, the company said that, by the end of 2011, one-third of its sows would be in group housing, where they can walk and socialize with other animals.

Even so, at least two-thirds of Smithfield's sows would remain tightly confined in cages barely larger than their bodies. McDonald's customers and the rest of the public should know, says Paul Shapiro, senior director of The HSUS's Farm Animal Protection Campaign: "While we can't compel Smithfield to actually provide ideal living conditions for pigs, we can compel the company to stop lying about it."

— *Karen E. Lange*

### SIGNS OF THE TIMES



West Hollywood, Calif.: It's a fashion destination and home to the Fur Information Council of America.

Now it's also the first U.S. municipality to take a stand against the cruelty of fur.

In September, the city council voted to ban the sale of animal fur clothing.

Residents applauded, as did Andrew Page, senior director of The HSUS's Fur-Free Campaign. "A city in the biggest economy in the world is saying, 'We're not going to be part of this cruelty.'"



The number of stores in Canada selling puppy mill dogs will drop precipitously. In early September,

Petland Canada announced it will no longer sell puppies or kittens in its 50+ stores.

Then later in the month, after The HSUS and Humane Society International rescued more than 500 neglected dogs from a Quebec puppy mill, Toronto council members banned the sale of commercially bred puppies and kittens in the city. One other city in Canada and 14 in the U.S. have passed similar bans.



In the push to make cockfighting a felony in South Carolina and 10 other states, The HSUS now has the public

support of two conservative Christian groups: the S.C.-based Palmetto Family Council and, represented by Dr. Richard Land, the Southern Baptist Convention. A video to be released by the council denounces cockfighting and features an interview with Land arranged and recorded by The HSUS. God made a covenant with animals, Land tells viewers, adding,

"I defy anyone ... to say that they would take Jesus to a cockfight."