Zoos Sell Cubs to Illegal Buyer

"This incident gives all zoos a black eye," declared Sue Pressman, HSUS director of wildlife protection, after learning about a recent sale of several lion and cougar cubs by the Dallas and Atlanta zoos to a private buyer in Corpus Christi, Texas, who did not have a federal license to purchase them. "Dallas and Atlanta zoo officials should have checked this man out. Their failure to do so has resulted in the animals being resold in the public marketplace like some inanimate object by people whose only concern is making a fast buck on their flesh."

HSUS Gulf States Representative Bernard M. Weller rescued three of the animals from the backyards of private citizens in the Corpus Christi area last June. During his conversations with the cats' owners, he discovered that one cub had been sold to as many as four separate people in less than 6 months. Another had been given away as a wedding present.

One of the cougar cubs was being advertised in a local newspaper for sale at $500. Weller persuaded the owner to donate the cub to HSUS after pointing out it was illegal to buy or sell exotic animals without a license by the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA). He also gained custody of another animal in the same manner. However, he was forced to pay $100 to a lion cub owner who demanded a return on his investment.

Dallas and Atlanta zoo officials told Weller the original buyer of the cubs, George Dismukes, represented himself as (Continued on page 3.)

BULLETIN: HSUS Gulf States Field Representative Bernard M. Weller has just completed an investigation of a greyhound racing training track near Lubbock, Texas. Watch for his poignant on-the-scene story in the next issue of The Humane Society News.
Stable Owner Convicted of Cruelty

Roy Graham, a former Padre Island (Nueces County, Texas) stable owner, pleaded guilty to one count of cruelty to animals before a county court last May. He was fined $1,000 and placed on 12 months probation. A description of Graham’s stable operation, which included neglect of animals with dis-temper and open wounds, was given in the winter issue of The HSUS Gulf States Field Representative Bernard M. Weller signed a complaint against him. County temper and open wounds, was given in the winter issue of The Gulf States Field Representative Bernard M. Weller claimed he hadn’t noticed the animal was dead, even though he fed it daily.

County who are going to watch you very carefully,” the judge said.

Last year Weller protested the event to exposition officials after observing armadillos that had cut their noses and faces on a wire fence enclosure during the race. The armadillos were also forced to wear costumes taped to their skin. Several of the armadillos had been painted for the occasion, one with oil base paint. This year, burrowing armadillos were required to wear costumes painted to their skin.

Barbiturate Euthanasia

With more than 13 million cats and dogs being put to death in America’s animal shelters this year, HSUS is vitally concerned that this euthanasia be done in the most humane manner possible. HSUS recommends the injection of sodium pentobarbitol by a veterinarian or trained technician as the best and most humane of the various methods of animal euthanasia now being used.

Last April, the Dallas City Council followed HSUS’s advice and became the first community in the United States to pass an ordinance requiring surplus animals to be euthanized only by barbiturate. The council passed the ordinance after a lengthy civic campaign by a group of concerned citizens called the Decent Death Committee to stop the use of high altitude decompression chamber at the city’s shelter. Delegates from the committee, HSUS animal control expert Phyllis Wright, HSUS Director Dr. Amy Freeman Lee, and HSUS Gulf States Field Representative Bernard M. Weller testified before the council members in support of the measure. Miss Wright applauded the committee’s efforts, which included collecting over 25,000 signatures in support of the measure. She said the committee’s campaign is indicative of what concerned individuals in any community can accomplish in striving for more humane euthanasia methods.

HSUS members and friends who would like a transcript of the proceedings can contact the Center for Urban Programs, Zachry Engineering Center, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. 77843. This year’s animal control conference will be held at Texas A&M University on Nov. 16-17. Inquiries about the conference should be made to the Center for Urban Programs.

Animal Control Publication Available

A highly instructive publication for animal control officers has recently been completed by the Center for Urban Programs at Texas A&M University. Proceedings of a Short Course for Animal Control Officers contains 28 articles related to animal control activities that were presented at the first statewide animal control conference. Leading authorities in the field such as Dr. Keith Sikes, Richard Parker, and James Steele submitted articles to the publication. HSUS’s Douglas Scott, Bernard Weller, and Eileen Whittlock also contributed articles on the last animal control conference. The proceedings can be obtained from the Center for Urban Programs, Zachry Engineering Center, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, 77843. This year’s animal control conference will be held at Texas A&M University on Nov. 16-21. Inquiries about the conference should be made to the Center for Urban Programs.

Armadillo Race Discontinued

Thanks to HSUS Field Representative Bernard M. Weller and the Six Flags Humane Society in Victoria, Texas, officials at this year’s Victoria Armadillo Exposition decided not to hold their annual armadillo race. Last year Weller protested the event to exposition officials after observing armadillos that had cut their noses and faces on a wire fence enclosure during the race. The armadillos were also forced to wear costumes taped to their skin. Several of the armadillos had been painted for the occasion, one with oil base paint. This year, burrowing armadillos were required to wear costumes painted to their skin.

zoos Continued

an agent of the Corpus Christi Zoological Society when he purchased the animals. Dismukes said he wanted the animals for a zoo he was “planning” to establish in Corpus Christi.

Weller said that two officials could not have checked Dismukes’ credentials because no such society exists in Corpus Christi. “It’s hard for me to imagine how professional zoo people could release these animals to a man who freely admitted that he did not have proper quarters in which to house them,” Weller said. “Common sense dictates that the zoo must be built before the animals are purchased, not the other way round.”

After obtaining the cats, Weller housed them temporarily at HSUS Director Dodie Hawn’s residence in Corpus Christi until he made arrangements to fly them to an exotic animal refuge in California and Lion Country Safari in West Palm Beach, Fla. He reported that lion prides at those facilities accepted the cubs successfully. Weller and Douglas M. Scott, director of the HSUS Gulf States Regional Office, offered their thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Hawn and the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, Texas, for assisting the cubs during their transition.

Mrs. Pressman called the sale by the Dallas and Atlanta zoos embarrassing to everyone striving for professional conduct in the zoo field. She added that the possibility of such animal speculation occurring in the future may be lessened by new zoo legislation now pending in the U. S. Congress. The legislation requires all USDA-licensed animal dealers to be listed in a professional registry which will be available to all zoo directors.
MODEL HUMANE SOCIETY—These new cages are only part of the more than $280,000 worth of improvements undertaken recently by the Humane Society of Austin and Travis County (Texas). The remodeling job also included maximum security rabies runs for dogs and a new surgical room. Douglas Scott, HSUS Gulf States regional director, called the facility the most modern and humane animal shelter he had ever seen.