HSUS Helps Crush National Pit-Bull Ring

About 150 dogs were rescued in an unprecedented raid on what federal and local investigators are calling the headquarters of a national underground dogfighting ring in southwest Ohio. More than forty law enforcement personnel took part in the predawn raids in Clinton and Clermont counties on June 16, 1988, culminating a six-month cooperative effort of the Great Lakes Regional Office of The HSUS, the FBI, and local law enforcers.

“This is the most significant effort of The Humane Society in investigating dogfighting to date, given it is the first time federal charges have been filed on dogfighting,” said Sandy Rowland, director of The HSUS’s Great Lakes Regional Office. Two couples were arrested and indicted in the raid. Gregory Lowe, 41, and Samantha Lowe of New Richmond, Ohio, as well as Kenneth W. Gaines, 48, and Cathy Bell Gaines, 36, of Blanchester, Ohio, were indicted on federal misdemeanor and state felony charges. Two more indictments were handed down after the raids. Each federal charge carries a maximum penalty upon conviction of up to one year or a $10,000 fine. In the state of Ohio, illegal activities relating to selling, purchasing, possessing, continued on page 2

A treadmill used to train fighting dogs was part of the evidence seized in a June 16 raid on a dogfighting operation in Ohio.

Control Pesky Critters Humanely

Nearly one hundred animal-control personnel, humane-society employees, and other interested parties got together at our regional seminar in Worthington, Ohio, on March 24, 1988, to discuss how to deal with nuisance-wildlife problems without poisoning, shooting, bludgeoning, and terrorizing the critters.

For years techniques such as those listed above have been used misguided and unsuccessfully as solutions to the problem. The Humane Society of the United States advocates putting out the “Unwelcome” sign to wildlife for a more successful long-term effect on the control of urban wildlife and the problems it can cause.

Some of the techniques offered at the seminar included the following:

- Use ammonia-soaked rags or mothball-filled stockings to send critters scurrying from chimneys and attics; fans, noises, floodlights, and dog whistles may work, too.
- Attach PVC plumbing to electrical wires to prevent gnawing.
- Plant veggies that rabbits don’t like (squash, corn, cucumbers) around your continued on page 4
Robin Weirauch combed the property, looking for more pit bulls. Members of the Clinton County Sheriff’s Department and the FBI and GLRO staffer champion fighters were among the animals. Pit bulls. Numerous champion and grand champion fights were among the animals. Dogfighting defines a champion as a dog that has won three fights, while a grand champion has won five. Such designations escalate the value of not only the champions but also their handlers.

In addition to the dogs, records of dog fighting and training contain evidence of a felony of the fourth degree, which carries a potential penalty of from six months to five years imprisonment and/or a fine of $2,500. All offenders are currently out on bond. Rowland explained what made this June 16 raid unique: “It involved the FBI for the first time,” she said, “because of the alleged transport of dogs at both raids. We also helped with the collection of other evidence,” Rowland added, some of which included equipment used to train the dogs, such as treadmills and catmills. Both contraptions are used to build up a dog’s stamina before a match, as fights may last two hours or more. Catmills, or jennies, are heavily weighted mills that a dog may be forced to pull in a circle for up to eight hours a day. Other species, tethered just beyond the dog’s reach, are often used on the equipment to entice the dog. Live or dead cats (hence the name “catmill”), roosters, or, in this case, a ferret, may be the unlucky bait. The ferret was rescued from an extremely filthy, maggot-infested, and cramped crate.

Other evidence seized included dogfighting paraphernalia, such as parting sticks and the blood-stained fighting pit itself; dogfighting publications and videotapes; drugs; and illegal weapons. A marijuana field was also discovered at one location.

David Lichtenfeld, another special agent with the FBI in Cincinnati, gave unstinted credit to The HSUS for its assistance in the case. “The Humane Society was able to assist a great deal in this investigation because of their experience in monitoring the activities of dogfighting, and they contributed some very valuable information,” Lichtenfeld told a reporter. In addition to services rendered before and during the raids, the GLRO also participated in several newspaper and television interviews and appeared on a television talk show in Cincinnati. Dr. Randy Lockwood, HSUS director of medicine, stated that they could not adequately be held at any animal shelter without causing a dangerous situation.

Rowland agreed with Lockwood’s assessment. “Humane euthanasia was the kindest thing we could do for them,” she said. “Most of the dogs were destined to die fighting, anyway.

And if the dogs don’t die in the ring, they stand an excellent chance of doing so afterwards. Losers are sometimes shot by their owners, perhaps to help erase the embarrassment of losing. Winners as well as losers may succumb to severe dehydration and a subsequent heart attack, as it is common practice for owners to dehydrate dogs before the fight, supposedly to cut down on the amount of blood lost.

The GLRO has in the past participated in dogfight raids in Columbus, Dayton, central Ohio, Toledo, Ann Arbor, and Bond County, Ill. With the support of its members, The HSUS will continue its efforts to end this barbaric “sport,” both regionally and nationally.

W. Virginia Humane Society Ends Cruelty by Closing Shelter

When the Harrison County (W. Va.) Humane Society (HCHS) was formed, back in 1959, its founders never dreamed that one day the society’s most serious cruelty complaint would involve its own animal shelter. It has become necessary, however, for the HCHS to close its shelter to save the animals from further suffering. The Great Lakes Regional Office began receiving letters of concern from citizens about the conditions of the animals in the Harrison County shelter in October 1997. However, this was not the first round of complaints received by The Humane Society of the United States. Phyllis Wright, vice president for companion animals, had been deeply involved in working toward correction of poor conditions for the animals in years past, helping the humane society get on the right track. Unfortunately, improvements in operational procedures were not permanent, and matters once again went out of control. Wright and Robin Weirauch of the GLRO traveled to Harrison County in response to the numerous and serious complaints received recently from Harrison County residents. On May 31 and June 1, Wright and Weirauch inspected the grounds and buildings of the shelter in Shinnston, W. Va., and found extremely unacceptable conditions. A meeting was arranged with the Harrison County Humane Society board members, and they resolved that the shelter would be closed within thirty days. Upon returning to Shinnston on June 30, Wright and Weirauch found the shelter property vacant except for two animals: one very old dog that had lived out its life at the shelter and was reportedly being taken home by the shelter director, and one neighborhood cat that always came by for a free meal.

The majority of the animals were euthanized due to poor health and disease. Some animals were placed in homes. Because there is a county-owned animal shelter that can humanely and effectively house Harrison County’s surplus animals, the GLRO recommended that the HCHS use its funds for projects such as humane education and spay/neuter programs. This would help toward the reduction of surplus animals that will need to be housed and/or euthanized in the county shelter. Local interest in the future of the Harrison County Humane Society has been rekindled, and many new faces are becoming involved in reorganizing the society’s goals. The county government has already agreed to hold and care for stray and unwanted cats, and emergency services for sick and injured animals are being initiated by the society with the assistance of local veterinarians.
Pesky Critters
continued from page 1

garden edge. However, with rabbits, a fence
is the best defense.
• Don't be afraid of bats. They're
harmless and make better bug-eaters than
those zappers that crackle with the sound
of electrocution all night long.
• A one-way door (wooden frame with
hardware cloth and hinge) allows an invader
to exit from the hole it has found in your
house, but keeps it from reentering. Once
it's gone, fix the hole.
   If you're not into home remedies and set-
ing live traps, look for a local pet control
service that will do the job for you—
humanely.
   The GLRO is most appreciative that Up-
per Arlington, Ohio, resident and HSUS
member Ritchie Laymon volunteered to do
the local legwork which made this seminar
a reality and huge success.
   Speakers for the workshop included Bill
Bridgeland, an urban wildlife biologist;
Donald Burton, D.V.M., director of the
Wildlife Rehabilitation and Research
Cooperative; and John Hadidian, Ph.D., an
urban-wildlife specialist with the National
Park Service. Representing The HSUS
were staff members Guy Hodge, director,
department of data and information ser-
dices; Dr. Randy Lockwood, director,
higher education programs; Sandy
Rowland, director of the Great Lakes
Regional Office; and Robin Weirauch, pro-
gram coordinator at the Great Lakes
Regional Office.

LEGISLATIVE
ISSUES

With legislative sessions down
throughout the region, it is time to wrap
up current legislative efforts and look to the
next session, which will begin January first
in all states within our region.

Michigan is still addressing the issues of
who has the authority to name hunted
species, dangerous and vicious dogs, and
exotic animals. You may refer to past HSUS
publications or contact this office for details
of these efforts.

Ohio plans to celebrate passage of a
license differential bill which we hope will
pass the floor of the senate and be signed
by the governor before the end of this
session.

It is important to contact the GLRO if
you are at all interested in working to help
secure passage of bills that protect animals,
or if you want to play a role in killing a
bill that would be detrimental to our cause.
We will keep you apprised by mail or
telephone as your help is needed.

To make it easier for you, I have included
the form below which you may complete
and return to this office.

I cannot emphasize enough the need for
your participation. The humane movement
was very embarrassed this past spring
when the governor of Ohio, who had made
public his interest in vetoing Sunday hunt-
legislation, received only 500 letters
from us opposing it and 14,000 letters from
the “shoot’em up” lobby in support of the
bill.

Your help can and will make a major dif-
ference and help ensure this never occurs
again.

Reflect
for a moment....

HOW CAN I HELP ANIMALS EVEN WHEN
I NO LONGER SHARE THEIR WORLD?

By your bequest for animal protection
to The Humane Society of the United
States, you will can provide for animals
after you’re gone. Naming The HSUS
demonstrates your lasting commitment
to animal welfare and strengthens the
Society for this task. We will be happy
to send information about our animal
programs and material that will assist
in planning a will.

Please send will information to:

Name ___________________________
Address ___________________________
City ___________________________ State ______ Zip __________

Mail in confidence to Murdaugh S. Madden, Vice
President/General Counsel, The Humane Society
of the United States, 2100 L Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20037.

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The Great Lakes Regional Office
735 Haskins Street
Bowling Green, OH 43402
(419) 352-5141
Sandy Rowland, Director

The office is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon-
day through Friday, and is closed on federal
holidays.

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