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Update

Vol. 1, No. 9
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WHERE DOES THE AHA STAND IN THE HUMANE MOVEMENT?

Recent statements by AHA staff members appear to be completely out of line with the thinking of humane and conservation groups in the United States.

One incident involves the fact that AHA approved of and recommended that the National Marine Fisheries Service grant an economic "hardship" exemption to the multi-million dollar Fouke Fur Company to import over 50,000 South African baby fur seal skin pelts. Another incident concerns an unjustified and biased attack on our "Special Report on Rodeos".

It is interesting to note that our report on rodeos has put the American Humane Association, at least through their field men, in the dubious position of defending rodeo.

In an attempt to clarify the AHA's policy position on these subjects, John Hoyt wrote the following letter to Rutherford T. Phillips, Executive Director of the AHA, on September 27, 1973. Any reply from Mr. Phillips will be printed in a future UPDATE. The letter reads:

Dear Rud:

Recently two items have come to my attention which I cannot let pass without reflecting upon with you. Since neither of these quotes you personally, I should like to believe that you do not personally concur with the sentiments and statements they contain. They do, however, quote two members of your staff and thereby, I presume, represent the attitude and position of the American Humane Association.

The first is a letter on AHA letterhead dated January 24, 1973 written by Mr. Richard Denney to Dr. Robert F. Hutton, Associate Director for Resource Management, National Marine Fisheries Service. Incredibly, Mr. Denney has put the AHA on record as "recommending an economic hardship exemption for the 1973 harvest" for the Fouke Company "and that a waiver of the moratorium be allowed for a ten-year period subject to annual review by the responsible authorities". This, as you know, is in reference to the importation of South African fur seal skins.

In the event you have not seen such, I am enclosing a recent Dunn and Bradstreet analysis of The Fouke Co. Certainly, it does not appear from this report that there is any basis for an economic hardship exemption.

More importantly, I feel that such a recommendation from the AHA is quite inconsistent with the principle being advanced by the humane and conservation community throughout our country pertaining to the protection of sea mammals, especially nursing pups which are specifically protected by the Marine Mammal Act. I sincerely trust, Rud, that this statement does not represent the official position of the AHA and that you will so indicate.

The second item concerns the enclosed AP wire news item in which Milt Searle is quoted as stating that an investigation of rodeos sponsored by The HSUS "was not valid. HSUS has very little knowledge of rodeos. Our statistics over the past 15 years disagree almost completely with everything The HSUS is saying". He further characterizes The HSUS as being "a much smaller organization than ours" and a "radical offshoot of our group". I believe the day is long past, Rud, when The HSUS can be characterized in either of those ways.

It is difficult for me to understand why the AHA permits itself to be cast as a protector and defender of the rodeo industry rather than boldly aligning itself with those who are attempting to oppose the continuation of certain rodeo events which are injurious and exploitive. You have personally said that the AHA "would be happy to see rodeos discontinued or outlawed". Yet this "AHA Blasts Report on Rodeos Cruelty" is far more volatile than any condemnation registered against the rodeo industry by the AHA. Again, Rud, I should like to believe that this statement by Mr. Searle does not represent an official opinion of the AHA and that you will so indicate to me.

I realize that there are some substantial points of difference between the AHA and The HSUS, both philosophically and strategically. However, I sincerely trust that these two recent statements are not truly reflective of the degree of our differing attitudes and positions.

Sincerely yours,

John A. Hoyt
President

THE NORMA TERRIS HUMANE EDUCATION AND NATURE CENTER BLASTS OFF!

On September 21, 1973 dedication ceremonies were held at the Norma Terris Humane Education and Nature Center.

The event was attended by over one hundred humanitarians, nature lovers, and prominent state personalities. Jim and Betty Shaw deserve accolades for their untiring efforts in making the Center possible.

A very successful Humane Education Workshop was held in conjunction with the opening of the Center. HSUS is hoping that this type of workshop will eventually be able to travel through the regional districts - more on this in later issues of UPDATE.

It would not be proper to comment on the opening of the Norma Terris Humane Education and Nature Center without an expression of sincere thanks and appreciation to the lady who made it possible - Norma Terris.

It might be wise if we all contemplate one portion of John's remarks given at the opening:

Therefore, we dedicate this Norma Terris Humane Education and Nature Center to the hopeful possibility that through the activities and programs of this Center we shall bring forth a new dimension of the importance of humaneness in the life of man. There are those who would ridicule and chide the humane movement for its emphasis on kindness to animals when there is about us so much human neglect and misery. For that emphasis, we do not apologize. Yet, it is a mistake to understand the humane movement in terms of a preoccupation with animal welfare. For it is not the goal of the humane movement to teach humaneness by insisting that man be kind to animals. Rather, it is to instill within man a quality of humaneness of which kindness to animals is but one by-product.

Good luck to the Norma Terris Humane Education and Nature Center.

IDAHO WILD HORSE CASE

As of this writing, the suit filed by the American Horse Protection Association and The HSUS against the United States Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, and several government officials is still very much in the bureaucratic stage.

Formal depositions have been taken from several high bureau officials by Robert McCandless, attorney for the AHPA, and Murdaugh S. Madden, General Counsel for The HSUS. These depositions have revealed little that we did not know or what we have already reported. The important thing is they were taken under oath and will be of help if we have to go to federal court to demand further information.

The Justice Department has, thus far, refused to release the results of their investigation of the case. They have, however, offered our attorneys the right to inspect the investigation report if we will drop financial claims against the defendants.

Robert Werdig, Justice Department attorney, stated at a recent meeting the Justice Department has not yet ruled out the possibility of "criminal proceedings" against those involved in the roundup.

WHEN IS A RABBIT NOT A RABBIT?

The greyhound training controversy in Florida is still in the courts. Well financed greyhound racing interests are challenging a decision made by Florida Attorney General Robert Shevin that a rabbit is an animal as defined by Florida state law. The owners and trainers claim that a rabbit is a rodent and therefore not an animal and not subject to the state anti-cruelty laws.

At the present time, the matter is still pending in the Florida courts and there is every indication that the issue will eventually end up in the State Supreme Court.

One interesting admission was made by an Oscar Duke of Miami who owns a large farm and breeds greyhounds. He stated, "It is impossible to produce efficient, capable greyhounds to race at Florida tracks if the right to permit greyhounds to pursue wild rabbits is denied".

Another note on greyhounds is that the Massachusetts SPCA recently filed cruelty charges against a greyhound owner and his family for using live rabbits to train their dogs before a race. The case has come to court but, under pressure from the racing industry, the trial has been postponed. Massachusetts SPCA intends to prosecute vigorously when the case is heard.

HUNTERS FIND THEMSELVES UNDER THE GUN

The August 18th edition of Science News contains an interesting article entitled "Regional Access to Private Land Decreases". The article states:

Private landowners are becoming less willing to share their land with hunters and other recreational users, according to a study by the New York Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit of Cornell University. The survey shows that 42 percent of private lands in New York are now posted - an increase of two-thirds in the last 10 years. Landowners surveyed cited increasing "bad experiences" with recreational users as their reason for prohibiting trespassing. Of these, 56 percent said the bad experience was with hunters, 26 percent with snowmobilers, 7 percent with fishermen and 11 percent with others. The owners also cited property damage and fear of personal danger, with hunters again most often blamed. The study concludes that recreationists should try to establish better relationships with owners by always contacting them before entering their property and by leaving the land undisturbed.

Another report comes from the New Haven Register in Connecticut. The report states that hunting as a sport is seriously threatened in Connecticut according to an outdoor recreation report prepared for the Department of Environmental Protection. Several reasons are stated for reaching this conclusion, including land development pressures, changes in habitat and agricultural practices, conservation of land, and others.

It is interesting to note, however, that like Science News the newspaper articles states that one of the reasons is "unfavorable attitudes toward sportsmen which have resulted from the irresponsible and destructive behavior of a few".

Although hunters are primarily blamed for "bad experiences", we should note that some percentage of damage is caused by persons using land for other recreational purposes. Let's urge everyone who likes photography, hiking, camping, or other outdoor activities to LEAVE THE LAND AS THEY FOUND IT.

ONE SMALL COUNTY BITES INTO THE PROBLEM

El Dorado County, California supervisors have passed a new dog and cat ordinance in the face of a sharp increase in the animal population in the county. The ordinance was passed with the approval of local humane societies and kennel clubs.

This ordinance requires mandatory spaying or neutering, licensing and rabies immunization for animals adopted from the county pounds. The fee for adoption is set at \$45 to cover the requirements.

Think that's high? Read the fines. Redemption costs for straying animals jumped by 100% from \$10 for the first offense to \$20; second offense from \$20 to \$45; third offense, from \$50 to \$60. An additional \$1 a day will be charged for care and feeding of an impounded animal.

Penalties set down under the new animal control ordinance include a fine for animal owners who deliberately break the law of not less than \$50 or more than \$500. A six-month county jail sentence is described as an alternative.

It would seem that it would be financially expedient for El Dorado County residents to keep their pets under control and at home. (Copies of the ordinance will be furnished upon request.)

KUDOS TO CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM WHITEHURST OF VIRGINIA

In a recent press release, Congressman Whitehurst announced that the Department of the Army will use only synthetic fur in all future procurements in which fur trim is required for garments.

The action was initiated after Congressman Whitehurst and several humane organizations, including The HSUS, objected to a Defense Department announcement calling for 277,502 parka hoods to be lined with wolf fur.

It is important to note for our purposes that extensive tests by the Department of Defense proved that synthetic fur is "an adequate alternate for natural fur".

As a taxpayer, you might also be interested to know the synthetic fur will reduce the cost of each hood by \$4.00, resulting in a savings of \$1,100,000.

Good news for the taxpayers.....better news for the wolves!

COME HOME - ALL IS FORGIVEN

UPDATE extends thanks to Connecticut and California for contributions to this issue. If we have done something to offend the rest of you, we apologize.

A "TAIL" - FROM JOHN DOMMERS

"To relieve overcrowded pet cemeteries, the government considered a law requiring dead horses to be cremated. But the government called it off when voters pointed out that the country already has an abundance of horses' ashes".

Is this a problem in your region?

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