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MIDWEST REGION INVESTIGATES KANSAS CITY ZOO

HORSE NEGLECT
Seneca Kansas Public
Officials Unconcerned

In March, the Midwest Region received a request for help from Richard Masseon, an attorney in Seneca, Kansas. He represented a relative of the owner of some horses which, he stated, were not being fed and were in poor condition.

In response, Ann Gonnerman, Midwest Regional Director, and Joy Palmer, Animal-Kind, Inc., traveled to Seneca to investigate the allegations.

Gordon Olson, the county prosecutor, was hesitant to sign an affidavit for a search warrant without viewing the condition of the animals himself, even though he had a statement from Dr. Larry Snyder, the veterinarian in the case. The statement confirmed the serious condition of the horses.

Ann Gonnerman, along with the deputy sheriff, Dr. Snyder, Joy
continued on page 2

After receiving numerous complaints about unnecessary mortality and neglect of animals at the Kansas City Zoo, Ann Gonnerman, Midwest Regional Director, began an investigation of the facility.

According to testimony taken by the Midwest Region from zoo employees, complaints about cruelty and ignorance regarding animal care had been ignored by the zoo administration.

After reviewing four months of testimony compiled by the Midwest Region, Sue Pressman, HSUS Wildlife Director, traveled to Kansas City in early April. Gonnerman and Pressman spent two days going through the zoo.

"There are problems here that need immediate correction," Pressman stated before a meeting of the Board of Parks and Recreation. Her formal report, finished in late April, outlined the problem areas that she and Gonnerman found at the zoo.

The Plains Barn, housing the Cape Buffalos and other hoofed stock animals, was found to be completely unacceptable. "The animals were living inside stalls never having a chance to get out," Pressman stated, "Others that were able to get out had mud, wet and filth to slosh around in."

Sidney, a Sitatunga (type of antelope), was confined in a Plains Barn stall since the zoo acquired him. "Most of the animals that end up there seem to stay there until the end of their lives," a keeper testified.

"When we went through the Plains Barn, he was huddled pathetically in a corner, a remnant of the healthy, wild
continued on page 2

Bloated belly of the horse on the left is a sign of neglect and lack of food.
that this investigation of the regional staff for the animals in this facility will help to bring properly for all the animals. Kansas City Zoo will help to bring care properly for all the animals.

Animals' are housed for months in small cages below the Tropical Habitat. Gibbons normally lively, active animals, are housed for months in small cages below the Tropical Habitat. Animals have been bred for some time. Animals have been bred for some time.

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The Midwest Region is concerned that this investigation of the Kansas City Zoo will help to bring about changes to improve the quality of care and living conditions for the animals. The HSUS will help to bring about changes to improve the quality of care and living conditions for the animals. The HSUS will help to bring about changes to improve the quality of care and living conditions for the animals.

The Needs Of Animals Will Continue Long After You Are Gone

Unfortunately, man's cruelty and irresponsibility to animals will not end during your lifetime. But a bequest through your Will will be a lasting contribution to the fight against these abuses.

The HSUS will send you a booklet without obligation on how to make the best use of your animal welfare bequest. It contains information on selecting recipients and describes how to proceed when you decide to write or change your Will. Write in complete confidence to Murdaugh Stuart Madden, Vice President/General Counsel, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

MISSOURI & KANSAS FEDERATIONS “Meeting of the Minds”

For the first time in the region, statewide meetings were held in Jefferson City, Mo., on February 18 and in Topeka, Ks., on February 25. Both federal and state officials met with commercial and hobby breeders, veterinarians, humane societies, and animal control personnel. The discussion centered on existing animal welfare legislation and what new laws and regulations are needed.

Highlights of the Missouri meeting included comments by the Assistant Cole County Attorney, who spoke of the long process of filing for animal cruelty charges. “Prosecutors do not investigate (animal cruelty),” he said. “Go to the sheriff or police. If in their opinion there is a crime, then take it to the prosecutor.”

Bill Raithel, DVM, Division of Health, State of Missouri, stated that 94% of the animals bites that happen in the nation come from dogs and cats and 70% of these animals are owned. Most occur in close proximity to home. “Homes are important,” he said. “Take a stand; it is a luxury not to.”

At the Kansas Federation meeting, Oscar Clabaugh, DVM, United States Department of Agriculture, and Gerald Gurss, DVM, state livestock commissioner, presented the federal and state viewpoints on the enforcement of current regulations. When asked why the USDA has no follow-up system for animals left in poor conditions after a license has been revoked, Clabaugh said his responsibility is only to enforce the current regulations. He did offer to send a listing of revoked licenses to those who wanted to check out the kennels themselves.

Marvin Samuelson, DVM, Kansas State University, suggested that regulations be promulgated with full cooperation of the people being regulated. When questioned about Kansas veterinarians using Succinone for euthanasia, his answer was unexpected: “They need the proper humane education.”

Both meetings closed with agreements that committees be set up with representatives from each group. These committees will help to establish lines of communication among all groups within each state and will help to remove barriers to animal protection efforts.

Kind Clubs Help Animals

A fine example of caring through action is the work of The Kindness Kids’ Nature Club in Prairie Village, Kansas. With the help of their leader, Judy Trotter, the kids wrote an editorial, “Stop the Hunt”, which appeared in the Kansas City Times on March 9. They expressed their opposition to the annual killing of baby harp seals.

As another project, Holly Trotter, spokesperson for the group, recorded four radio spots that are to be heard on KMBC radio. They include: “Don’t Wear Furs”, “Neutering Your Pet” and "The Kind Club Pledge.”

Their efforts are helping to inform and educate the people in our region in the humane care and treatment of animals.

If your kids are interested in joining a Kind Club, write or call the Midwest Regional Office.

Horse Neglect...

Palmer, and the nephew of the man who owns the horses went out to the property to take photographs and observe the horses. “They had bloated bellies and were thin. The pasture was bare,” Gonnerman observed. “There was no evidence of entry to feed, nor was there any evidence they had been given hay for some time.”

An affidavit was filed with Judge Hoethaus and a search warrant was issued. The search warrant was never served!

“One county prosecutor really dropped the ball. The horses are still suffering,” Gonnerman stated. “This shows that even with a good anti-cruelty law, the local authorities must be concerned. We intend to follow through and see that the law is enforced.”

When the warrant is served, one of the horses will be taken to a veterinarian for tests to determine the seriousness of their condition. At that time a decision will be made as to whether the rest of the horses should be seized for care, and if the owner is to be charged with cruelty.

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NEW MIDWEST REGION
A Humane Community

The Midwest Region can be of great benefit to the four state area we are now serving. But, this office will only be as effective as we make it. Communication with all the humane societies in our area is the key. It is important for you to share with me your problems and any significant happenings that occur.

Any legislation introduced or considered should be carefully gone over with the Midwest Region so that duplication is avoided. It also will be important that we present a unified front to the legislators so that they will recognize how many people are concerned about animals in their states.

The Midwest Regional Office can be a cohesive force that will bring all of the humane community together to effect change. We are selling a product, the humane ethic, to everyone. Most people want to believe animals are treated well. We need to make them understand that they are not. Then, and then only, will action be taken and laws passed and enforced.

It is important we develop memberships in HSUS. This will also help you at the local society level. The funding of the regional office is an important regional responsibility. Our expenses, even though we do our best to keep them down, go on daily. We need your financial support so that our services can be expanded.

If you have questions at any time, feel free to call the Midwest Regional office and we will do our best to help you. We cannot always travel to your area immediately, but we can certainly help. We will do everything we can to respond to your written requests as well.

Let's make the establishment of the Midwest Regional office for The Humane Society of the United States the beginning of a new era for animals in the Midwest and the center of the humane movement in this area.

Ann Donnerman

midwest regional office

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