MWRO Spring 1990
Shame of Fur Campaign Hits Two Midwest Cities

In concert with the HSUS national campaign against the wearing of fur, the MWRO participated in two major events in Kansas City and St. Louis, Mo. In addition to these events, ten “Shame of Fur” billboards were cosponsored with People for Animal Rights (PAR) in Kansas City and the Missouri League for Humane Progress in St. Louis. These billboards appeared in the two cities for four months.

In St. Louis, over 150 animal protectionists participated in a motorcade through the city’s central district that ended at the Gateway Arch. The cars carried posters with slogans such as, “Fur Crying Out Loud,” “Cotton Doesn’t Bleed,” and “You Should Be Ashamed to Wear Fur.” A rally was held following the motorcade, with speeches from HSUS Fur Campaign Coordinator Pat Ragan and Midwest Regional Director Wendell Maddox.

“The fur industry is trying to save its own skin. They attempt to divert attention away from the real issue—needless killing of animals,” said Ragan. “They say the humane alternative is producing fur garments from ranched animals. There is only one humane alternative—stop the killing now! No more killing,” she concluded.

Maddox claimed that fur, “once the symbol of glamour and sophistication, is now the symbol of insensitivity. We must advocate fabrics produced by methods that are cruelty-free and environmentally sound. Fake furs aren’t the answer; attitudes are.”

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Protesters rallied against the wearing of fur on “Fur Free Friday,” November 24, outside a fur shop in an exclusive downtown Kansas City shopping area.

Law against Cockfighting Holds in Kans.

A district court judge of Wilson County has upheld the state’s law prohibiting cockfighting in Kansas.

The ruling is the result of a lawsuit filed in Wilson County in October 1989 by the Kansas Game Breeders Association and Leroy Widener, one of its members. The court was asked to interpret Kansas statutes regarding cruelty to animals and to declare that the state “has not made the fighting of cocks, game-birds, or chickens illegal....”

In May 1989, Attorney General Robert T. Stephan wrote letters to all the state’s sheriffs reminding them that cockfighting is illegal in Kansas even when gambling is not involved. Stephan said state law prohibits cruelty to animals, which is defined as “intentionally killing, injuring, maiming, torturing, or mutilating any animal.” Animal is defined in the same act as “every living vertebrate except a human being,” which Stephan said would include chickens.

The Kansas Game Breeders Association argued that the legislature never intended to

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**Humane Society Opens Its Own Veterinarian Clinic**

The Humane Society of Parsons, Kan., opened its doors last fall as a full service veterinary clinic. Although not yet official, the clinic now uses the name “The Pet Center.” The shelter continues to house stray animals and adopt them out.

The idea to start the clinic came from the Society’s executive director, Marlene Harris. Harris felt that the society needed to broaden its services for the animals in the community.

“Because we now have a veterinarian in-house, we can now save sick and diseased animals that in the past would have been put to sleep,” Harris explained. The service also allows for on-site care of the sheltered animals, ensuring healthy pets for adoption.

The new clinic also offers a low-cost spay/neuter program, enabling citizens on low or fixed incomes to have their pets surgically altered. The charges for spaying or neutering program include charges for any adoption fees for anyone adopting a dog or cat from the shelter.

Wendell Maddox provided his expertise in helping the Society set up the spay/neuter program and in securing the necessary financial backing to get all services started.

One of the most important aspects of starting such an expanded program was finding a veterinarian willing to come into the shelter on a full-time basis. Dr. Eva Duda, a graduate of the Kansas State Veterinary School, left a practice with a local clinic to assume the position. “I’ve never regretted for one moment coming to the shelter,” Duda said. “This has been the most rewarding experience in my life. I get to see more unusual cases I would never have seen in a regular vet clinic.”

Some of those unusual cases have been the breeding dogs from puppy mills that have been turned into the shelter. “I can’t believe that breeders are treating these wonderful animals so inhumanely,” exclaimed Duda. “The first thing we have to do is to test them for diseases such as the parvovirus and heart worms. It is incredible the number of animals we find with these diseases.” The animals are also X-rayed for genetic skeletal deformities.

The Society has adopted animals out not only in the Parsons, Kan., area but also throughout the country. “I am delighted to be able to find good homes for animals in other states,” said Harris. “We have advertised in national publications and these ads have allowed us to place over 25 pets that would have otherwise been put to sleep.”

The Society plans further expansion in the near future by hiring a full-time investigator. Currently, investigations are being handled on a very limited basis.

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Both events were covered by all major media in the St. Louis area.

In Kansas City, Mo., a rally was sponsored on “Fur Free Friday,” November 24, 1989, by the HSUS, PAR, and the Humane Society of Greater Kansas City. Representatives from Greenpeace and TrampSpecies were also present.

The Fur Free event took place at an exclusive shopping area in Kansas City, which boasts many fur shops. The reaction from shoppers was very positive, although there were some stares and glares from ladies wearing furs.

“I honestly think that this event has made a difference for the future,” claimed Nora McMillen, president of PAR. McMillen didn’t realize how prophetic her statement was and how soon those results would be realized.

Because of our campaigns across the country, the fur industry is suffering severe declines in sales. Recently, in the Daily Tribune of Columbia, Mo., reporter George Mazurak wrote, “Weak consumer demand combined with large stocks of warehoused pelts and overproduction of ranch-raised fur have eaten away at fur prices for the last two years. Trappers, however, are most aggrieved by the bite of animal-rights sympathizers who have campaigned against the use of fur and traps. They say their ‘hobby’ has been defamed by city dwellers and do-gooders.

In Missouri a decade ago, trappers sold $9 million in pelts. The market now threatens to fall below the $1 million mark for the first time in 19 years.

Another victory in Missouri was the halting of fur sales by Saks Fifth Avenue and Swanson’s Department Store. In addition, another fur store has gone out of business.

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prohibit cockfighting. However, in his order, Judge C. Fred Lorentz said the language of the statute is clear; the legislature intends all vertebrates to be subject to the provisions of the cruelty to animals prohibition and that no exception exists for gamecocks or cockfighting.

“I am pleased the court has upheld Kansas public policy regarding animal rights,” Stephan said. “To argue that cockfighting does not constitute cruelty to animals goes both this longstanding public policy of our state and common sense as well.”

Midwest Regional Director Wendell Maddox and HSUS Investigator Robert Baker worked closely with the attorney general last year to set up a $5,000 reward fund for information on Kansas cockfighting activities. Stephan felt the surest and quickest way to put an end to these activities would be to offer the reward. The attorney general announced the reward fund during a four-city press tour, on which he was accompanied by Maddox and Baker.

“I am delighted that Attorney General Stephan has taken an interest in our work to eliminate the needless suffering of the animals that are forced to participate in this barbaric activity,” Maddox said in praise. “He has proven to us that he will use his office to remain steadfast against animal cruelty.”

Grace Korzan of the Missouri League for Humane Progress (left), Wendell Maddox of MWRO, Pat Ragun, HSUS fur campaign coordinator, and Ken DeNeal of the St. Louis Animal Rights Team (right) spoke at the St. Louis antifur rally.
LEGISLATIVE LINEUP

IOWA—H.B. 567 will increase the penalty for certain violations of the state's anticruelty law from a misdemeanor to a felony.

S.F. 2240 will give greyhound-track operators authority to set up and operate adoption programs for retired racing greyhounds. The law comes on the heels of a bill passed in 1989 mandating an adoption program. No funding has been allocated for this purpose.

KANSAS—H.B. 470 would reduce the state-required license fee for nonprofit animal shelters from $150 to $75. This bill was amended to exempt all USDA-licensed puppy mills and animal-care facilities. Wendell Maddox testified against this legislation as well as other bills that would gut the “Puppy Mill Law” enacted in 1988. Those other bills are H.B. 2787, which required all livestock dealers to be bonded but was amended to exempt USDA class-B puppy mills that buy and sell animals, and S.B. 776, which imposed a felony conviction upon any individual or group breaking into a research facility or farm for the purpose of liberating animals and was then amended to eliminate state-required licensing for puppy mills. At the end of the regular legislative session, none of these bills had passed.

MISSOURI—Legislation to make cockfighting a felony was once again introduced. H.B. 947, sponsored by Rep. Patrick Dougherty, and S.B. 609, sponsored by Sen. Irene Treppler, are both awaiting priority positions on the legislative calendars. Maddox testified in support of these two bills. Maddox also testified and provided assistance to Rep. Dougherty in introducing H.B. 1401, aimed at the state licensing of puppy mills and animal-care facilities.

H.B. 116, which would allow owners of dogs to administer rabies vaccinations, is stalled in committee. S.B. 496, aimed at legalizing dog racing, was withdrawn. However, many gambling bills, too numerous to mention, were introduced in both houses and would legalize a variety of gambling activities, including dog racing. None of these bills seems likely to pass.

NEBRASKA—L.B. 150, sponsored by Sen. Merton Dierks of Ewing, Nebr., has cleared the Agriculture Committee and is awaiting Senate approval. This measure will upgrade the state statute creating a broader definition of cruelty to animals. It also gives specific guidelines to law enforcement.

L.R. 342 was introduced by Sens. Don Wesley and Ernie Chambers to study the state’s trapping laws and the use of steel-jawed traps and to examine changes to the state statutes to restrict the use of traps.

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Governor’s Proclamation

Nebraska Governor Kay Orr presented a proclamation to Robert Downey, executive director of The Capital Humane Society, proclaiming April as “Pet Overpopulation Awareness Month.” The proclamation was presented at the society’s Annual Animal Awareness Dinner.

In her proclamation, Gov. Orr cited that the pet-overpopulation problem has resulted in the needless destruction of approximately eight million dogs and cats each year. She urged citizens to practice responsible ownership by spaying and neutering pets.

Also in attendance at the dinner were Wendell Maddox and keynote speaker John Kullberg, president of the New York-based American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

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The Humane Society of the United States
Midwest Regional Office
Argyle Building
306 East 12th Street, Suite 625
Kansas City, MO 64106
(816) 474-0888
Wendell Maddox, Director

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