SOUTHEAST OFFICE IN THE FIELD

Bernie Weller, field representative for HSUS' regional office in the southeast, has kept a busy schedule responding to humane societies' and animal control facilities' requests for assistance. Phone calls and letters to this office have set a travel agenda for Bernie which has resulted in investigations and meetings with humane societies, animal control personnel, city and county officials, and attorneys to assist and give guidance.

A major activity of the southeast office in recent weeks has centered around investigations of animal welfare facilities. Most investigations have resulted from requests which were motivated by concerned boards and individuals who were looking for a resource to assist them. Approximately thirty cases, most still pending, are receiving the concern of this regional office.

A recent letter from one such place stated: "We wish to thank you for sending Mr. Bernie Weller, Field Representative, in answer to our request to follow up on the conditions at the animal shelter here. . . ."

Within the confines of time and money, the southeast regional office attempts to respond to all inquiries and complaints. Results are not always immediately apparent nor does every case reach a successful conclusion. Nevertheless, the fact there are humanitarians in our region who care and are concerned enough to seek assistance is a major step toward animal welfare benefits.

FIRST REGIONAL WORKSHOP SUCCESSFUL

With persons from six states - - Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Tennessee - - in attendance, the Southeast Regional Office's first workshop opened with Mayor Emery Folmer of Montgomery, Alabama welcoming the participants. Rodney Hale, president of the Alabama Federation, also gave opening remarks at the workshop.

John Hoyt, president of HSUS, effectively launched the workshop with his presentation, "Sorting Out the Issues." He reminded the group: "One of the most difficult tasks facing any animal welfare organization seeking to fulfill its responsibility toward animals is the task of identifying priorities." Mr. Hoyt continued"... faced with a multitude of problems and issues, it is rarely possible that any organization can respond effectively to all of them. Consequently, whether we represent a local animal welfare society, a state federation, or a national organization, each of us must of necessity set priorities."

Other national HSUS staff presented to the entire group and in small groups material which included: humane education, investigation, shelter management, understanding euthanasia, and public relations. Rodney Hale, Director of the Birmingham Humane Society, presented a slide program on wildlife rehabilitation.
LINDA PRICE IS NEW SECRETARY

Linda, after 17 years as secretary to the dean of Franklin College in Indiana, moved to Orlando. The timing was perfect for HSUS and Ms. Price is now employed in the regional office. To a question posed by the regional director, Linda replied: “I was taught care and concern for animals in early childhood by my parents and four brothers.” Though she has not previously been involved in animal welfare work, this early training in love for animals is a major prerequisite for association with HSUS. She is enjoying her work tremendously, except for being exposed to the many abuses and cruelties to animals. We welcome Linda as a very important part of our staff.

PUERTO RICO LIVES AND IS GRATEFUL

“The visit from Dorothy and Bernie Weller helped us accomplish in one work-packed week what we had not been able to do in months.” These were the words of Barbara McKenzie, president of the Ponce (Puerto Rico) Humane Society, in a November letter to the southeast regional office. Last June the Ponce call for help was answered by HSUS and once again The Humane Society of the United States became the embodiment of its stated philosophy and objectives - - the prevention of cruelty to all animals. Mrs. McKenzie’s letter concluded with: “Many thanks to you and The Humane Society of the U.S. for sending us help when we so desperately needed it.” The Ponce shelter is now in full operation, with the full cooperation of Ponce’s police.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Sodium pentobarbital bill for Florida? Jack Conlon of the South Brevard Humane Society and Dick Myers of the Orlando Humane Society are working for the introduction of a bill which will permit humane societies to be issued a permit to secure this drug directly to euthanize animals. If other states are interested, please contact Donald Coburn at the HSUS regional office.

What about we who embrace the humanitarian ethic in behalf of animals? Does the suffering and cruelty which comes to our animal friends - - most often by human action or inaction - - move us to the level of personal involvement? Are we willing to struggle in behalf of these God-created beings to secure the blessing of good in their behalf?

Albert Schweitzer’s prayer for animals includes the very clear implication of human friendship with animals and our advocacy for their rights and happiness:

“Hear our humble prayer, O, God, for our friends, the animals... Make us ourselves to be true friends to animals...”

The new year brings many hopes for the benefit of animals because of your concern and support for animal welfare programs, and also because of the programs of HSUS and others. But, sadly, the battle is constant and the war endless in the conflict to secure and assure the rights of animals.

Let your 1979 resolution unite with ours to move us each to continue and renew our dedicated efforts to prevent and eliminate cruelty and suffering.

DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS

Donald K. Coburn

That “hope springs eternal” is implicit in the celebration of the holiday, New Year’s Day. The psychological motivation and secret hope of every New Year’s celebrant is for the elimination of evil and the blessing of good.

Depending on how we define evil and good determines our own personal application of efforts to secure the good and avoid the evil. If what we love is threatened with evil, we become involved at a level which seeks to assure the good. If the evil does not personally touch us or what we love, are we less prone to risk the involvement?

VOTING MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE HSUS NEWS

HSUS thanks each of you for your support of our programs in animal welfare. Remember that the by-laws of HSUS require that all available funds be used for the immediate relief of suffering animals and the vigorous pursuit of humane education. All contributions are tax-deductible.

COFFEE AND DISCUSSION IN YOUR HOME

So that we may create an informal and meaningful way to discuss common concerns about animals, and the work of HSUS, we invite you to host a group.

As host you will be responsible for extending invitations to persons of your choosing. For most effective communication we suggest you keep the group relatively small. The director of the southeast region will be available to you and pleased to act as convener.

To arrange a house meeting, please write or telephone Donald K. Coburn, Director of the Southeast Region.

To date 23 animal welfare organizations from seven states in the southeast region have either inquired about or made application for HSUS accreditation.

If you would like to have an HSUS workshop in your area, send your requests to the Southeast Regional Office.

1979 HSUS Annual Conference will be held in Orlando, Florida November 8-10.

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This article recently appeared in the Orlando Sentinel Star:

A huge jetliner landed at Orlando International Airport, turned and began to taxi toward the National Airlines terminal. Then it stopped. The voice of Capt. Jackie D. Gordon, pilot of Monday Flight 111, came over the loudspeaker. “Sorry for this slight delay,” he said. “An armadillo has decided to cross the runway, and he isn’t in any hurry.”

The SuperBoeing 727 started again. At the terminal one of its 136 passengers presented his card to the captain. He was Donald Coburn, Southeast regional director of the Humane Society of the United States, returning to Orlando from Washington, D.C.

“This society appreciates such acts of spontaneous kindness,” he said. Other passengers smiled in agreement. No one complained of the few minutes delay in arrival.

Rod Howard, National Airlines district marketing manager, said no possible threat to the giant aircraft could have been involved in the pilot’s decision. “Running over an armadillo would have only left a little grease spot on the runway,” he said.

Perhaps the erasing of one small bit of life wouldn’t have mattered much in the great scheme of things. Armadillos are not very popular in Florida, anyway. But like Coburn, I’m glad that one made it across the runway. Human concern for other beings matters a great deal.

Kindness is the only service that will stand the storm of life and not wash out. It will wear well, look well and be remembered long after the prism of politeness or the complexion of courtesy has faded away.

--- Abraham Lincoln

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