TYPICAL SIGNS ADVERTISING ROADSIDE ZOOS. THERE IS NO SHELTER FOR THE THREE BEARS IN THE CAGE, AND NO WATER IN THE ALLIGATOR'S TANK. NOTICE THE HOSE IS HANDY, BUT NO ONE HAS BOTHERED TO TURN IT ON.
Dear friends,

If your family takes a vacation this summer, perhaps you will visit a national park or some other wilderness area. If so, you will probably go in the family car. Some families get into the mood of the vacation spirit right from the start, by avoiding the busy turnpikes and freeways, and travelling on the secondary highways, through scenic rural countrysides. There is more to see on these routes, and such a trip is more relaxing and enjoyable. It is usually on these highways where you will most likely see signs advertising roadside zoos. They may announce an animal farm up ahead, or just a bear in a cage. Most of them display one animal or just a few animals as a trick to get tourists to stop at a gasoline station, or a restaurant. Once you’re stopped, you’ll probably think it wise to refuel the car, and perhaps have lunch, before you start again on your trip. That’s just what they want you to do.

Animals kept in roadside zoos are often given very poor care. Usually their cages are homemade, and many times they are not big enough to let the animal move about in them freely. The people who own them are not much interested in the animals, except to use them to attract tourists to spend money. They may not even know what the animals need to be healthy. Sometimes they leave their cages out in the hot sun with no shade or shelter. Sometimes they forget to give them fresh water, and often the only food they give these animals is garbage, or other cheap foods. They often let the cages stay dirty.

You can help The Humane Society continue its investigation of roadside zoos. Ask your family to stop to let you see the animals, but ask them, too, to agree not to buy anything from the owner of a roadside zoo. Take pictures if you can. They can be used in our photo contest. (See your May newsletter.) List the kinds of animals, what their cages look like, how large the cages are, whether or not there is shelter and fresh water. Send all this information to KIND, along with the name of the store or gas station, and the exact location on the map.

Of course you can talk to the owner if you wish, and tell him you agreed not to buy anything at his store, because he uses caged animals to attract customers. If it is a branch of a major chain, like a gas station of a major oil company, write a letter to the main company, too, telling them you will no longer buy their product, because of their branch store which uses caged animals to attract customers. If you can, mention the name of the owner, which is often on a sign above the door of gas stations and other places of business. Be sure to tell where the store is located.

If you think the conditions are especially bad, you can report the case directly to the local representative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is the agency that enforces the Animal Welfare Act, and there are certain regulations on how animals should be kept at roadside zoos. Be sure, if you do, to ask they let you know the results of their investigation. USDA representatives have already given notice to several roadside zoos that they must make improvements. Usually zoos will make the necessary improvements. If they don't, the case is turned over to the Justice Department. So far no roadside zoo has been prosecuted for failing to improve conditions. Be sure, if you contact the local USDA representative, that he is the United States agriculture representative, not the agriculture man for your state. You can obtain his name and address from your local county extension agent.

Whenever you travel with your family this summer, be on the lookout for roadside zoos. With your help, we can get better care for all caged animals kept on display to attract customers.

Your friend,
This is an unusual tale of one man's dedication to save wild burros. WILD BURRO RESCUE is one of the best books we have ever read. It details a school teacher's determination to help wild burros that have been shot at from planes, poisoned, or used for target practice, and left to die. Takiing a crash course from a veterinarian on treatment of sick or injured animals, Robert Franklin Leslie documents his experiences in practicing veterinary medicine, without a license, solely to help persecuted wild animals. His faithful companion and guide, Winkie, once a wild burro herself, demonstrates an uncanny understanding of his self-appointed task, and helps Leslie befriend wild burros that need help, and protects him against other members of the herd while he treats the sick and wounded. Throughout the book Leslie relates experiences with wild animals that prove his attunement with the true realities of nature, and sensitivity to natural instincts. The antics of the free animals of the desert at times appear almost supernatural, but offer an insight into animal behavior, communication, and intelligence that we often fail to realize. You'll want to read it again and again. Leslie is truly a St. Francis to the wild burros--animals, like the wild horses, who have been persecuted mercilessly, and need your help so they may be permitted to live in harmony with nature, protected from harm.

The Armadillo is the animal for May. It was named by the Spanish explorers, meaning little armored thing. It eats insects and it has small teeth so it can't bite in self-defense. Its shell is its best protection. The shell is made of many plates. Few animals can grip the shell with their claws or teeth. It hurries to its burrow at any sign of danger. When far away from its burrow it digs itself into the dirt. The armadillo is about 2 feet long and weighs about 15 pounds. The female gives birth to 4 babies, always of the same sex. Janet Shadder Mrs. Hudson's room Ooltewah, Tenn. 37363

Who Is This?

1. The Armadillo

ANSWERS TO MAY'S WHO IS THIS?

I think I can identify the animal in the "Who Is This?" quiz. It is the armadillo of Texas and Louisiana. The Encyclopaedia says "They usually eat insects, earthworms, spiders and land snails. Armadillos of various kinds are found from Argentina as far north as Texas and Louisiana from southwestern U.S.A. to the Atlantic coast. They have strong claws which they use to dig tunnels and burrows in the ground. They use their long, narrow tongues to lick up insects. Because they only have small teeth well back in their mouth, armadillos cannot bite in self-defense. Their shell is their best protection. Poisonous snakes' fangs can't penetrate through the shell."


Dear Janet and John:

You are both right, and you provided excellent information about this interesting animal. Here are some more facts:

1. Armadillos often share their burrows with poisonous rattlesnakes. Apparently they know the snakes can't hurt them, and rattlesnakes need someone else to dig burrows for them, which they cannot do. An armadillo's tail is constructed very much like that of a rattlesnake's rattlers on his tail. People who catch armadillos by grabbing a tail and pulling them out of their burrows could have quite a surprise, because there might be a rattlesnake on the other end of that tail. This fact gives the armadillo some protection. Armadillos make good pets and love to be petted. But since they are free animals, it's better to let them live free. The female always gives birth to four young. All are identical quadruplets, and all are always the same sex. This happens because only a single egg within her body is fertilized. It then divides itself to produce more than one offspring. The armadillo is the only animal that reproduces normally like this; whenever any other animal has quadruplets, they may not be identical or all of the same sex, and it is an unusual thing for them to be all the same sex and all identical. Even the hair on the undersides of armadillo babies are always identical. The armadillo is heavy and doesn't really swim, but if it needs to cross a river, it swallows a lot of air, which keeps it afloat until it reaches the opposite shore.

Your friend, ARAHKUN

Dasypus Novemcinctus Texanus

OOPS! --Your April newsletter had a photo of a raccoon in a steel jaw trap. We forgot to give credit to the Monterey County SPCA for supplying this photograph. We used the same photo on trapping posters and again forgot to give credit. We apologize, Monterey County SPCA--a special thanks to you for your help.
AMANDA BLAKE FEEDS A FOX AT KIND HEADQUARTERS. AMANDA, WHO PLAYS ‘KITTY’ ON THE POPULAR “GUNSMOKE” TELEVISION SERIES, IS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY. RECENTLY SHE ATTENDED A HEARING IN SUPPORT OF A BILL IN COLORADO TO OUTLAW CALF-ROPING AND STEER-BUSTING AT RODEOS IN THAT STATE. IN SPITE OF THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED OF INJURIES ANIMALS RECEIVE IN THESE EVENTS, THE BILL IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE PASSED.

photo by Don Rypka

Eddie Carl Davis tried to help a woodpecker that flew against a window at his home. The bird was unconscious, and, although he wrapped it up to keep it warm, it had suffered internal injuries, and died within a few minutes. Earlier, Eddie and his sister, Laura Lynn, found a pigeon with an injured wing. They kept it safe in a big cage, and fed and cared for it until the wing healed. Then they released it again. The pigeon still visits their bird feeder frequently, so they know it is still alive and well.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the information about ecology. We would like to give you a $38.45 donation. We hope you will use this money for wildlife. The way we made the money is by collecting aluminum cans.

Thank you, Lisa Emery, Miss Barbara Price’s 4th Grade Class, Safety Harbor School, Safety Harbor, Florida

Editor’s Note:

Thank you! What an unexpected surprise, coming from a class that is not even enrolled as KIND members! (we’ll see to it they are during their next school year.) KIND members, here’s another idea on how you can raise money to help animals.

The Kindness Club for the Church of Christianity, Denver, Colorado, has ordered 100 copies of the leaflet “Everyone Loves Puppies” to distribute to prevent homeless animals. Julie Griffith is Assistant Raccoon Captain.

Dear Mr. Hylton:

I just received my DEFENDERS kit and was trying to think of a way to get more members. If you had just a tiny spot in nationwide newspapers for an entry blank you’d get many more members. I’m sure many kids would like to join The Humane Society but just don’t have the chance.

Robin Ganes, Fargo, N.D.
age 13

Dear Robin:

You have an excellent suggestion. Trouble is, The Humane Society just doesn’t have any money we can spend on advertising space in newspapers across the country. There is one way KIND members can help tell others about KIND, though. Try writing a short letter to the editor of your local newspaper, telling what being a KIND member means to you. Suggest other readers might want to become KIND members, and give the KIND address. If every KIND member did that, we could blanket the nation with free public service advertising, and really add to our members. Our goal is to double our 20,000 membership again this year. Every KIND member can help make this hope a reality. I hope you will.

Your friend, Dale Hylton

NEW EASTER CHICK LAW IN NORTH CAROLINA

A party was held in Miss Couch’s fourth grade class the day after the Senate passed the Easter Chick law. It is now assured, since the Governor has already said he would sign it. Miss Couch greeted her students, who were the real force behind letters to legislators to get the law passed with a big sign. It said: “Thanks to 27 precious little people who value life, North Carolina has a chick law”.

North Carolina becomes the 18th state to have such a law. If your state isn’t listed below, perhaps next fall your class will want to help protect Easter chicks as Miss Couch’s class has done.

States that protect Easter chicks: Alabama, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia

FOURTH OF JULY COMES NEXT MONTH. It’s not too soon to start planning for your dog’s comfort and safety when the firecrackers explode. A dog’s ears are much more sensitive than your own, and those explosions must be mind-boggling to his keen ears. Many dogs become frightened by the strange noises. Plan now for a safe place for your dog to spend the Fourth of July, perhaps in the basement, where the noises will not bother him as much.
Participate in our summer contests. One is a photo contest, for which you can submit any photo, color or black and white, of any animal, or any project helping animals. The other is a contest of plans for a project to help animals. Judging will be on the basis of the plan itself, not on what you were actually able to accomplish. Entries for both contests must be postmarked no later than September 1.

ARE YOU RECEIVING THE RIGHT NEWSLETTER?

If you're not, it's because we don't have your birthdate. This is very important so our records can be handled automatically, and we can 'graduate' you into the next age level at the right time. See the schedule below. If you're not receiving the right newsletter, write and tell us your birthdate, especially the year of your birth.

The Kindness Club.......................................................................... ages 6-10
DEFENDERS........................................................................................ ages 11-14
EcoloKIND.......................................................................................... ages 15-18

Julie Hildebrand of Lexington, Va., suggests an inexpensive wading pool for large dogs in very hot weather. "The dogs soon learn what it is for, and have great fun splashing around in it". Thanks for the KIND tip, Julie.

Your Kindness Club Letter is published monthly for members ages 6-10 by KIND, youth membership division of The Humane Society of the U.S.
R. Dale Hylton, Editor

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