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Dogs Clubbed to Death at Missouri Animal Shelter

Recently, a horrifying program of animal destruction was discovered at the Macon, Missouri, city animal shelter. The sole animal-control officer admitted that within a year he had clubbed at least eighty dogs to death. He said that he considered the method the only "humane" way he could keep up with the increasing number of dogs that he had to destroy. The dogs had been buried in a grave behind the shelter.

The clubbing had gone undetected until two Macon residents discovered a dog still alive, although severely injured, in the grave.

They called the police. Capt. Norman Hewitt found the live dog and videotaped the scene for evidentiary purposes. He then shot the dog to end its suffering.

Reportedly, the animal-control officer had believed the dog to be dead when he buried it.

Mayor Dale Whitley called a special meeting of the Macon City Council at which officials ordered that the clubbings be halted. Agreement was also reached with a nearby city to house and euthanatize Macon's stray animals in the future. Mayor Whitley said that the ultimate responsibility for the animal-control officer's actions rested with the council because he had neither been trained nor given guidelines on how to dispose of unwanted animals.

MWRO Director Wendell E. Maddox had been alerted to the problems in Macon by an HSUS member. Maddox then interviewed the animal-control officer involved.

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An animal-control officer buried stray dogs in this shallow grave; he said he thought clubbing was the most humane way to deal with the town's stray-dog problem.

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INSIDE

- HSUS Announces New Campaign
- Director's Comment
- Legislative Lineup

HSUS Sponsors Symposium on Pound Seizure

A variety of speakers attacked pound seizure at a symposium sponsored by The HSUS in May. The program was designed to help Missouri citizens and animal-protection organizations prevent pound seizure from taking place in the state.

Current Missouri law neither requires shelters to surrender nor prohibits them from surrendering animals for research, a practice known as pound seizure. However, recent developments in the state legislature indicate there is growing support to enact a law that would mandate pound seizure in Missouri.

Wendell Maddox said The HSUS is opposed to pound seizure and to the use of "random-source" animals in research. He added, "Each year, thousands of shelter animals are subjected to painful or longterm experiments. Dogs and cats are commonly used for surgical practice by medical and veterinary students. Because the Animal Welfare Act doesn’t restrict what can be done to these animals, pets can be trauma-

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continued on page 2

continued on page 3
and later met with the Macon City Council in a session also attended by Norma McMullen, president of People for Animal Rights. Maddox reported to council members his earlier discussion with the officer. During the course of that conversation, the officer continued from page 1

Maddox said, the officer had been unable to produce a copy of the city animal-control ordinances or name his immediate supervisor. When he was asked the officer why he had clubbed the dogs to death, the officer had responded that he believed that the shelter dogs had parvovirus and through his method was more humane than allowing sick animals to die a slow death.

Based upon his meeting with the officer and an inspection of the shelter, Maddox made several recommendations to the council. First of these was that the city need to reevaluate their animal-control program and ensure that their animal-control officer was properly trained. The present officer wasn't capable of benefiting from such training then the city should hire and train someone else.

Maddox suggested to the council revisions to the city’s animal-control ordinance and specific improvements in the shelter. He advised officials that the Kansas City Animal Control Department would be willing to provide appropriate officer training. The MWRO will continue to work for permanent changes in Macon.

Director's Comment

By Wendell Maddox, Jr.

In this issue, you'll read about the actions of an animal-control officer whose definition of “humane euthanasia” was clubbing dogs and puppies to death.

The Macon case may not be an isolated one. If the case can serve as a point to a broader and more basic problem—a lack of commitment to animal protection in our society, on the part even of those who have been given the responsibility to serve as animals’ protectors.

The mayor of Macon acknowledged his and the city council’s responsibility for this particular tragedy. But mayors, city council members, and animal-control departments everywhere have to understand that animal control and the treatment of animals should have as high a priority as any other vital city service.

As news of the Macon dog clubbings reached other parts of the country, the MWRO received phone calls and letters from concerned people who wanted to know what they could do to help. We can suggest two things.

If you wish to express your concern about the Macon case and urge officials in that city to take action to prevent further incidents, write to Mayor Dale Whitley, City Hall, 121 West Bourke, Macon, MO 63552, or David Masters, Macon County Prosecutor, P.O. Box 338, Macon, MO 63552.

We urge you to take an active interest in animal welfare in your own community. Get a copy of your local ordinance, find out about the policies and procedures in effect at your animal-control facility, and assure yourself that animals are being humanely treated.

If you don’t like what you find out about your animal-control laws and operations, do something about it. Let local officials know that you’re satisfied with the treatment of the animals in your community are assured of protection and humane care.

HSUS Animal Care Expo ’92 Scheduled

Plan now to travel to Las Vegas, Nevada, February 2–5 to attend a one-of-a-kind expo for animal-sheltering, -care, and -control professionals. Sponsored by The HSUS, Animal Care Expo ’92 will feature seminars, demonstrations, and the latest in practical, contemporary, and humane equipment and services. Special emphasis will be given to environmentally friendly and energy-efficient products and services. Contact the MWRO for more details. 

HSUS Announces New Adoption Campaign at St. Louis Missouri Shelter

In May, HSUS President John A. Hoyt was a featured speaker at the annual meeting of The Missouri League for Humane Progress, cosponsored by the Animal Protective Association, the St. Louis Animal Rights Team, and The HSUS. Approximately 100 people attended the gathering in St. Louis.

Hoyt stated that the pet-overpopulation problem is “the number-one challenge facing the animal-protection movement today.” He described a new HSUS campaign designed to enlist the support of potential pet owners by encouraging them to adopt companion animals from shelters. The campaign’s message is simple: “Until there are none, adopt one.”

Hoyt noted that in the past few years consumers have become a powerful force for change, whether they are influencing tuna companies to switch to dolphin-safe products or refusing to purchase fur coats or products made from ivory. Now, Hoyt added, The HSUS is urging consumers to encourage them to adopt pets. The HSUS board of directors.

She received awards from both The Missouri League for Humane Progress, and the Missouri humane community.

Grace Korsan Honored

Grace Korsan, president of The Missouri League for Humane Progress, was honored at the organization’s annual meeting for her decades of commitment to the welfare of animals. Korsan is also the former secretary of The HSUS board of directors.

Wendell Maddox, Jr.

In May pound seizure is a betrayal of the public trust, because people believe that animals in shelters will be reunited with their owners, adopted into new homes, or humanely euthanatized.

Not only is there a significant demand for these animals by the research community, which views shelters as little more than warehouses for research candidates, but there are also great financial rewards for those who traffic in such random animals to research facilities for huge profits.

Only fourteen states now have laws prohibiting pound seizure. The practice has been banned by a number of individual communities as well.

Those contributing to the May pound-seizure symposium were: John A. Hoyt, HSUS President; Thomas Astorino, assistant deputy health commissioner; and Wendy Korn, HSUS vice president for animal rights.
LEGISLATIVE LINEUP

As the legislative sessions come to a close in our region, we can point to both successes and disappointments for the animal-protection community.

Kansas passed and signed into law S.B. 443, the primary objective of which is to increase the animal health department’s budget, through new and revised fees, in order to provide a more effective inspection and enforcement program for puppy mills and other animal-care facilities. Other provisions are intended to enhance the department’s ability to prosecute violators.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship revised the state’s code governing the care of animals in commercial establishments. The secretary of the department now has the discretion to seize and impound animals based on an assessment of their health status and the adequacy of their care. Any history of noncompliance with regulations and/or unwillingness to take corrective measures on the part of the operator may also be considered justification for closing a facility. Finally, facilities that breed or house dogs, cats, rabbits, rodents, nonhuman primates, fish, or birds now qualify as commercial breeding facilities.

In Nebraska, State Sen. Merton L.

Reflect for a moment ... HOW CAN I HELP ANIMALS EVEN WHEN I NO LONGER SHARE THEIR WORLD?

By your bequest for animal protection to The Humane Society of the United States, your will can provide for animals after you’re gone. Naming The HSUS demonstrates your lasting commitment to animal welfare and strengthens the society for this task. We will be happy to send information about our animal programs and material that will assist you in planning a will.

Please send will information to:

Name ____________________________
Address ___________________________
City _____________ State ___ Zip code _______

Mail in confidence to Murdaugh S. Madden, Vice President/Senior Counsel, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

The Regional Report is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, Midwest Regional Office, Argyle Building, 306 East 12th St., Suite 625, Kansas City, MO 64106; (816) 474-0888. Wendell Maddox, Director. All contributions made to the HSUS Regional Office are tax-deductible. © 1991 by The Humane Society of the United States. All rights reserved.