Changes Needed in Famous Pony Auction

For children familiar with Marguerite Henry’s story of a pony Misty of Chincoteague, the annual roundup of wild horses on Assateague Island (in Maryland and Virginia) and their swim to Chincoteague Island (in Virginia) is the stuff of which dreams are made. However, for the horses the event is more like a nightmare. Mares, stallions, and foals who live on Assateague are rounded up, forced to swim the channel between the two islands, and herded down the streets of Chincoteague village to its carnival grounds. Then the foals are auctioned off to raise funds for the local volunteer fire company.

SCRO Director Jim Tedford and other HSUS staff attended last summer’s roundup, where they witnessed serious problems.

Each year, the first foal to swim to shore is raffled off to a tourist, who may be completely ignorant of proper horse care, lack appropriate means of transporting the foal, and lack adequate housing facilities back home. Tedford and HSUS Investigator Stephen Dickstein watched as Chincoteague volunteer fire fighters dragged the first foal from the holding corral to the raffle bandstand. Clearly terri-

continued on page 3

Unwanted Millions Remembered

In recognition of all the homeless animals who were euthanatized last year in U.S. shelters, many local animal-protection organizations held candlelight vigils on August 22, 1992. This was a day to mourn the millions of companion animals who annually die because they have no home.

SCRO Director Jim Tedford attended a vigil sponsored by the Craven County Humane Society in New Bern, N.C. In a speech to the nearly 300 people gathered for the event, he said that more than 7 million homeless dogs and cats are killed in this country every year. “While statistics are crucial to understanding the magnitude of the problem, they are utterly insignificant if we never take the time to consider that each of those 7.5 million animals represents a pair of hopeful eyes,” Tedford said. “You see, the figure that counts more

continued on page 2
Tennessee Dog Breeder Told to Clean Things Up

In August 1992, acting on tips from several complainants, the sheriff’s department of Cocke County, Tenn., investigated alleged cruelty to animals by a dog breeder living near Newport. Sheriff Tunney Moore discovered two cats and 98 dogs at the rural residence. According to Moore’s affidavit of complaint, “The animals were found in inhumane condition by being locked up, unable to receive air to breathe, and appearing to not have been fed properly.” Some dogs were chained to trees; others were housed in sheds, makeshift pens, even old washing machines or air conditioners. Numerous dogs appeared to be ill, and many had no available food or water. In one pen approximately 10 miniature schnauzers were eating the carcass of an animal believed to be a dead dog. The dog breeder was arrested for cruelty to animals and released on a $3,000 bond.

At a hearing, Sessions Judge Marcus Mooneyham authorized representatives of The HSUS and the Newport Animal Control Board to visit the property, assess the animals’ condition, and remove any animals deemed to be in need of medical attention. SCRO Director Jim Tedford, Newport Animal Control Board Chairwoman Joan Lambert, Newport Animal Shelter Director Sherry Cobb, and Stephen Smith, D.V.M., of the Vet School were accompanied by the property by several volunteers. The team found dogs housed in extremely unsanitary conditions. Two decomposing animal carcasses were retrieved from trash cans. Smith examined all the animals present and elected to remove 34 dogs for immediate intensive care. Skin diseases, as well as infestations of fleas and internal parasites, were prevalent. Rather than pay for the recommended extensive medical treatments, the breeder elected to surrender ownership of all but three of the dogs removed.

Negotiations between Assistant District Attorney General Jimmy Dunn and the defendant’s attorney resulted in a one-year pre-trial agreement limiting the number of animals the defendant may maintain, requiring her to reimburse the City of Newport more than $1,300 for care provided to the animals taken from her property, specifying monthly unannounced inspections by a veterinarian and an animal-control board representative, and mandating the defendant’s compliance with all state and local animal-control laws. All animals must be vaccinated, treated to control fleas and other parasites, and kept clean and well-groomed. If all of these criteria are met, charges might be dropped at the end of the one-year period. The HSUS and local authorities plan to watch this situation closely.

Millions

continued from page 1

than any other is ‘1.’ As long as one animal has to die because there aren’t enough homes, that is a tragedy.” Tyker Gonzales, president of the Craven County Humane Society, added, “It’s time to take the blame off the shelter workers and put it on society.” The event culminated in the display of a symbolic chain of 4,702 “collars” representing all of the animals euthanized at the local animal shelter in the previous year.

Other North Carolina organizations participating in the Craven County vigil included humane societies from Beaufort, Nash/Edgecombe, and Wilson counties. Many organizations across the South Central region held similar events. Plans are underway for 1993 vigils.

Investigators Trained to Spot Cruelty to Horses

In Raleigh, N.C., animal-care and -control professionals received training in horse-abuse investigations during a March 3-4 course cosponsored by the Animal Protection Society of Orange County and the North Carolina State University (NCSU) Animal Science Department. The first day’s sessions featured SCRO Director Jim Tedford, who detailed the process of a cruelty investigation. Raleigh attorney Doug Riley discussed search-and-seizure laws and presenting cases to the courts. Bob Mowrey, Ph.D., of North Carolina State University explained basic horse nutrition. Durham County Assistant District Attorney Joan Cunningham and area veterinarians held a roundtable discussion.

The second day’s training was held at the NCSU Horse Teaching Facility. Christine Uhlinger, D.V.M., of the NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine outlined common horse ailments. Dale Barnett, coordinator of the Horse Teaching Facility, discussed and demonstrated basic horse-handling techniques.

For information on next year’s course, contact Amanda Graham, Liaison Officer, The HSUS, 1041 Freeport Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27514; (919) 967-7383.

Pony Auction

continued from page 1

fled, the foal collapsed to the ground several times during the ordeal. Each foal is separated from his/her mother by being lassoed, then converged upon—often tackled—by a team of participants. Desperate to escape, mares and stallions run frantically around the holding pen. After several days of severe stress, the exhausted mares are chased into a rodeo chute and used in “wild pony” rides. For many years, The HSUS has recommended changes to make the Chincoteague event more humane. These include weaning foals at a later age, eliminating the pony rides, and scheduling the swim for Labor Day rather than July so that the horses will be less likely to suffer from extreme heat. Recent veterinary care has improved—but only after ponies died from eating toxic vegetation while in the holding pen. Last year The HSUS saw stricter requirements regarding acceptable vehicles for transporting purchased foals. Currently the 1993 roundup and swim is scheduled for the last week of July. We will continue to press for improvements.

Almost 100 dogs were found at a breeder’s rural residence when the sheriff’s department of Cocke County investigated complaints of alleged cruelty to animals. Officials found dogs housed in sheds, makeshift pens, even old washing machines and air conditioners.

By Jim Tedford

Exciting news: effective January 1, 1993, I was promoted to SCRO director. Ever since joining The HSUS, I have been honored and humbled by the opportunity to work for the world’s finest animal-protection organization alongside an incredibly talented group of people. I value, too, the friends and colleagues with whom I have been privileged to work for the past two-and-a-half years. I want to say thanks, and I look forward to a long and productive association with all of you.

Sadly, in the same month as my promotion, I lost a close friend. Four years ago I adopted a 12-year-old whippet from the local animal shelter. Within about five minutes, “Scottie” had become a beloved family member. His original owners had surrendered him to the shelter because of what they called his “neurotic, destructive” behavior. “It’s the only family he’s ever known,” my Smythe. “In our household, Scottie generally slept 12 hours a day; the remaining two hours he spent eating and cuddling with the family!” On a cold January night, Scottie curled up in his bed and quietly went to sleep. During his sleep, he died. It was extremely peaceful.

I’ve often reflected on the brief time Scottie was part of our family. I’m grateful that he allowed us to become so close to him, especially given that other people had not earned his trust. Frequently I think about the shelter animals who are not as fortunate as Scottie—the ones who are too damaged physically or emotionally ever to adjust to a new home and the ones who might have adjusted readily but were never given the chance.

We at The HSUS are very excited to be taking part in “The Year of the Cat” celebration. On page 4 we’ve listed some of the ways you can celebrate the mystery and beauty of the cats who share our lives. Your local humane society can supply materials.

My challenge to everyone out there is to make every year “The Year of the Shelter Animal.” For the Tedfords, there are a houseful of adoptees who have given us far more than we can ever hope to give back to them.
AROUND
THE REGION

KENTUCKY—A Greenup County couple petitioned the county fiscal court for a permit to open a cockfighting pit in a vacant school building. Thanks to testimony from The HSUS, the Fund for Animals, and local animal-protection advocates, commissioners unanimously voted to deny the permit. The county attorney advised the fiscal court that a law prohibiting cockfighting in Kentucky remains on the state law books.

NORTH CAROLINA—For a number of years, Granville County animal-control officers used gunshot to destroy unwanted dogs and cats. Then, in response to pressure from the local humane society and several citizens, the county agreed to change its methods. A local veterinarian supplied sodium pentobarbital and supervised the county’s animal-control officers as they learned to perform euthanasia by injecting a lethal dose of the drug.

TENNESSEE—In Chattanooga, investigators with the Humane Educational Society responded to a complaint that several dogs were being neglected. At the home of William Holloway, Jr., the investigators found a listless female mixed-breed dog with no food or water; a mixed-breed puppy with no food, water, or shelter; and a boxer mix whose water dish was covered with green slime. The officers took photographs that provided sufficient evidence for the issuing of a search warrant. City Judge Walter Williams found Holloway guilty of cruelty to all three animals, failure to vaccinate two animals against rabies, and failure to register two animals. Williams sentenced Holloway to six months in prison (suspended), 20 eight-hour days of community service at the animal shelter, payment of nearly $300 in fines and court costs, and payment of $42 for veterinary expenses. The SCRO has contacted Williams to express appreciation for his serious attention to this case.

Seven Ways You Can Celebrate Cats

YEAR OF THE CAT

The Humane Society of the United States and the Bristol Humane Society had held a joint event in Abingdon, Va., featured the festival’s major sponsors withdrew its support. 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 for this task. We will be happy to send information about our animal programs and material that will assist in planning a will.

How Can I Help Animals Even When I No Longer Share Their World?

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 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, South Central Regional Office, 109 Northshore Dr., Ste. 400, Knoxville, TN 37919; (615) 588-1843. Jim Tedford, Director. The HSUS is a charitable, tax-exempt animal-protection organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C., regional offices, and an education center in Connecticut. © 1993 by The Humane Society of the United States. All rights reserved. Virginia residents may obtain a copy of The HSUS’s financial statement from the State Division of Consumer Affairs, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Richmond, VA 23209.