Yellville Plans to Drop Turkeys Again This Year

In Yellville, Ark., local citizens are still throwing helpless, live turkeys from an airplane for their infamous "Turkey Drop," held every October. This past year, however, the Gulf States Regional Office stirred up some bad publicity for this event by collaborating with the National Enquirer on a story that criticized the town for its cruelty and lack of concern for animals. The article prompted an outcry from all parts of the nation and from overseas, as well.

The GSRO also contacted the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for a decision declaring these drops to be in violation of FAA rules. Sections of the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) prohibit dropping any object out of an airplane that may be a hazard to persons or property. However, the FAA decided that the matter was "outside the purview of the FAR."

When that avenue produced no viable solution, the GSRO contacted Arkansas' governor, William Clinton, to enlist his support in banning this intolerable event. Gov. Clinton "strongly urged the organizers [of the Yellville Turkey Trot Festival] to find a less offensive way to celebrate their city's festival." But even this admonishment from the governor did not continued on page 4

End Cruelty with Humane Education

If your humane society or local animal-protection group is on the HSUS mailing list, you should have received an Adopt-A-Teacher presentation folder. Take a good look at it. It describes an easily established, effective, humane education program.

While we know that most shelters are inundated with work involving thousands of animals, an examination of local case records usually reveals that more than 80 percent of the problems handled on a daily basis results from ignorance or exploitative attitudes. A further 15 percent, which often involves blatantly cruel, is the result of transference of anger. Only about 5 percent involves deliberately cruel acts, and only a minute percentage actually involves psychopathological acts. Dozens of humane shelter operations fall within these parameters when they break their work out into these categories.

It's clear that education is the answer to this problem. The Adopt-A-Teacher continued on page 2
Every day the telephone rings with yet another call about an animal that has suffered at the hands of an uncaring, insensitive human being. Sometimes we wonder if there really is hope for change, but closer examination of these calls often indicates that we’re not dealing with malice. We’re dealing with a special apathy that has its roots in ignorant, anthropocentric, or utilitarian attitudes that have prevailed since the beginning of human civilization.

Ignorance is simply the lack of understanding of the needs of animals and the responsibilities of pet ownership. It’s also the result of our society changing from largely rural to primarily urban. People no longer grow up accustomed to the symbiotic relationship between humans and animals. HSUS participation in environmental concerns seeks to renew awareness of the earth and its creatures. We need to do more to acquaint our general populace with the true order of nature and the realities of animal behavior—this is our best long-range hope of changing such uncaring attitudes.

Anthropcentric is the opposite of anthropomorphism. An anthropomorphic person insists upon giving an animal human characteristics instead of recognizing its animalistic needs. Anthropocentric, on the other hand, is the belief that all human ambition alone should be treated with consideration. Anthropocentric attitudes can result in apathy and indifference. That’s why people can be warm and cozy in their house and not feel concern for the cold and hungry animal outside. These are not necessarily bad people; they simply need an “attitude adjustment.”

An extension of an anthropocentric attitude toward animals is the utilitarian attitude. For example, animals may often be taken care of only because they are a valuable product, such as race horses, greyhounds, beef cattle, and poultry. That status, however, has increasingly created problems, such as drug use to enhance racing performance or the horrendous intensive farming situations. Some religious and cultural activities involving the sacrifice of animals can also be attributed to the utilitarian attitude.

Obviously, the only way to change these situations is through consistent, strong advocacy of current animal-protection issues. Our office has plenty of information at your disposal. Please call and request information that is of special interest to you. HSUS experts can help you to become informed.

Addressing these problems in a pro-active manner at the grassroots level is important. In fact, it’s this type of participation, combined with strong public relations and educational programs, that is our best long-range hope of changing such uncaring attitudes.
Staff Changes at the Gulf States Office

We are pleased to announce that James Noe has recently been named director of our Gulf States Regional Office. Noe has been serving as program coordinator in the GSRO since 1988, and he brings with him 15 years of experience in animal protection. Noe is a long-time resident of Texas and has served with the San Antonio Animal Defense League, the Austin Humane Society, the Dallas SPCA, and the Galveston Animal Shelter and Adoption Center.

Dorothy Weller has joined the GSRO as program coordinator. Weller is a professional writer and has an extensive background in humane work in Puerto Rico and in Florida. Recently, she has been working with the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education and the Gulf States Humane Educators Association, promoting the Adopt-A-Teacher Program.

As administrative assistant, Barbara Nespodzany has been with the GSRO since 1986 and has achieved an excellent working knowledge of animal-protection issues. With this professional staff, we are now well equipped to serve Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas.

One of our primary objectives is to assist local agencies with issues of major importance. The very strength of the animal-protection movement lies in our ability to network and coordinate our cumulative resources. The HSUS employs experts in many different fields, all willing to share their knowledge wherever needed. We invite our members to keep us apprised of local issues so that we may work together in finding solutions.

Join the GSHEA Today

Now is the perfect time to join the Gulf States Humane Educators Association (GSHEA), especially if you missed the GSHEA Third Annual Education Symposium, which was held in Dallas in July. This symposium was held in conjunction with the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education and the Gulf States Regional Office.

The GSHEA is moving forward under the leadership of President Merry Caplan. The association is a resource organization whose purpose is to promote humane attitudes and respect for life through education, sharing, and networking. Everyone from our region who has a special interest in humane education is invited to join. Membership is $5 per year. Please contact the GSRO for further information about GSHEA activities.

Reflect for a moment...

HOW CAN I HELP ANIMALS EVEN WHEN I NO LONGER SHARE THEIR WORLD?

By your request 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 Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

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