LENIENCY FOR COCKFIGHTERS

In July, a successful cockfighting raid was launched on a Pottsville, Pennsylvania, location where Mid-Atlantic Field Investigator Henry Brzezinski, working undercover, had gained access to a tightly knit group of young and old-time "cocker" (see the Fall 1989 HSUS News).

The Schuylkill County District Attorney's office has since accepted in lieu of going to trial ineffective fines for those arrested in the case. Four of the defendants have been sent to the state's Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition Program. Five defendants have been assessed fines ranging from only $487 to $687; the records of four will be expunged after one year of unsupervised probation.

"This sets a bad precedent for the Pennsylvania law, which makes cockfighting promoters, participants, and spectators alike liable for a felony," said Mr. Brzezinski. The HSUS enlisted the aid of many Pennsylvania groups to persuade the assistant district attorney to prosecute the cases, but to no avail.

The Commonwealth is pursuing a case against the promoter, Ronald Sabitsky, Sr. The Mid-Atlantic office is urging the District Attorney to prosecute Mr. Sabitsky to the fullest extent of the law. For further information on this case, contact the HSUS Mid-Atlantic office at (201) 927-5611.

DOGS SEIZED IN NEW YORK

Henry Brzezinski and Frank Ribaudo, investigator for the New England Regional Office, assisted the New York State Police and the New York State Humane Association in the recent seizure of 118 severely dehydrated and malnourished Borzois and mixed Chihuahuas at Vanzar Kennels in East Greenbush, New York.

Owner Janet Vandenburgh, a senior state health officer, was temporarily suspended from her job pending a complete investigation. Mrs. Vandenburgh eventually pleaded guilty to ten counts of owning unlicensed dogs and paid a fine of $250. She gave up all rights to the dogs, enabling those animal shelters holding them to seek good adoptions for the abused pets.

The success of this investigation was due to the tremendous efforts of New York State Police Investigator Sue McDonough, New York State Humane Association Coordinator Samantha Mullen, and several other organizations that offered their time and expertise.

CARRIAGE HORSE BILL PASSED

In a landmark victory for the carriage horses of New York City, the City Council passed Bill Intro. No. 1262-A on November 21, 1989. This bill will restrict carriage operation to Central Park for most of the day, limit each horse to eight-hour instead of ten-hour work shifts, and require drivers to maintain liability insurance, among other restrictions. Carriage operators immediately sought a restraining order from a state judge.

Special congratulations go to Peggy Parker of the Carriage Horse Action Committee (CHAC), who has worked tirelessly over the past five years for carriage horses in the city.

SYMPOSIUM LOOKS AT 1990 GOALS

More than 150 animal-control officers, health officers, and others attended the Animal Protection and Education Symposium, sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, held in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in
September. HSUS Vice President Phyllis Wright received a standing ovation for her keynote address, "Reflecting on Changes in Animal Protection in the '80s and the Goals of the '90s." The gathering featured many leaders in public health, including New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association President-elect Art Baeder, Dr. Harold Russell of the Chester County Health Department, and New Jersey State Consumer Protection Director Jim Barry.

IN APPRECIATION FOR DR. WEIGER

More than one hundred animal-control officers and health officers attended a reception to thank Dr. Myra Weiger, director of the Department of Instruction, Curriculum, and Administration for Kean College in New Jersey. Phyllis Wright presented an HSUS certificate of appreciation on behalf of President John A. Hoyt.

Dr. Weiger helped develop the legislation and instructional course that certifies animal-control officers and instructed 400 such officers.

PIGEON-SHOOT BILL NIXED

The defeat of H.B. 696, which would have banned the use of live pigeons in pigeon-shoots, marked a sad day in Pennsylvania. Many people diligently worked to get this bill posted for a vote and passed. Special thanks go to the Pennsylvania Legislative Animal Network and to Judiciary Committee Chairman Thomas R. Caltagirone and Majority House Leader Robert W. O'Donnell for putting H.B. 696 up for a floor vote in the House, and Rep. George E. Saurman for introducing the bill.

WEST COAST

HSUS STAFF IN MOJAVE DESERT

West Coast Investigator Kurt Lapham, with Dr. John Grandy, HSUS vice president of wildlife and environment, and Guy Hodge, HSUS director of data and information, went to work with a group of volunteers in the Desert Tortoise Natural Area in the Mojave Desert last November to fulfill part of an out-of-court settlement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (see the Fall 1989 HSUS News). The HSUS agreed, among other provisions, to install bird barriers on typical raven-resting places to help drive away ravens that may be attacking the juvenile tortoises. For two days in November, workers installed thorny strips of metal on forty miles of fence posts and rails in areas accessible only by four-wheel drive vehicles or on foot. Materials were donated by Nixalite of America.

The California Mountain Lion needs the 1990 initiative to protect it from sport hunting.

PUBLIC SUPPORTS MOUNTAIN LION

The 1990 California Mountain Lion Initiative, supported by The HSUS, has met the signature quota set by the state in order to qualify for the June ballot. An amazing 670,000 signatures, gathered by volunteers, were turned in to the Secretary of State's office three weeks before the deadline. Organized opposition will come from such powerful groups as the National Rifle Association. To help in the passage of this initiative, please call the West Coast office (see number below) or the initiative committee at (916) 442-2666.

WEST COAST BILLS PASSED

Bills passed and signed into law last year include A.B. 1842, which bans the sale, transfer, and possession of common house pets for use as food; S.B. 896, which prohibits harsh disciplinary treatment of captive elephants; S.B. 428, which regulates the keeping of dangerous dogs while prohibiting cities from making breed-specific bans; and S.B. 756, which requires that all traps be checked daily and marked with identification.

NEW ADDRESS FOR WEST COAST

The West Coast Regional Office is now located at 5301 Madison Avenue in Sacramento, California; the new phone number is (916) 344-1710. Send all mail to: P.O. Box 417220, Sacramento, CA 95841-7220.
PROTECT THE MANATEES

Florida is taking positive steps to save the endangered manatee, and the Southeast office is joining the campaign. In 1988, twenty-nine manatees died from injuries inflicted by boats in state waters. By September of 1989, the year's death toll had already neared forty. There are only an estimated 1,200 of these gentle mammals still living in Florida's waterways.

Gov. Bob Martinez and the State Department of Natural Resources are proposing emergency regulations that include the adoption of three manatee-protection zones, restrictions on marina development, and maximum boating speeds in the thirteen counties with significant manatee populations. Over 300 new marine-patrol officers will be hired to enforce the regulations, which must ultimately be approved by the legislature.

KITTEN TORTURES SPARK OUTCRY

A De Kalb County law-school graduate's arrest for the torture and killing of seventy-seven kittens has sparked an outcry in Georgia for greater penalties within its animal-cruelty law.

Mitchell Munoz was charged with seventy-seven misdemeanor counts of cruelty to animals after a local photographic laboratory contacted police about pictures Mr. Munoz allegedly turned in to be developed. The grisly photographs depicted the stages of torment the young animals endured before their deaths.

These atrocious acts have prompted the Georgia Coalition for Animal Protection and the state chapter of the Fund for Animals to rally behind a model "felony animal-cruelty bill" written by the Southeast Regional Office. The bill will be introduced during the upcoming legislative session and, if passed, would make Georgia the fourth state in the country with felony provisions within its general animal-cruelty statute.

NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCES


On September 28, in Cromwell, Connecticut, the fourth annual New England Regional Office/Connecticut Canine Control Division (CCCD) Conference took place. Its theme, "Getting Back to Basics," was designed to help animal/canine-control officers improve their skills in their daily duties. A special farewell tribute was paid to departing Regional Director John Dommers by CCCD Chief Frank Intino.

"INSIDE REPORT" ON ANIMAL PULLS

A news team for "Inside Report," a television news show based in Miami, Florida, spent two days with Frank Ribaudo traveling throughout New England to look into alleged cruelties associated with animal-pulling contests. The program was distributed nationally to local television stations in September, but it was unfortunately not picked up in New England. For a copy of the program, please contact the New England Regional Office at the Norma Terris Center, P.O. Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423.

DEER HUNT AT QUABBIN?

The Metropolitan District Commission of Belchertown, Massachusetts, has been evaluating the impact of deer browsing in the Quabbin Reservation. The initial assessment to reduce the herd might involve hunting by marksmen. Dr. Tony Povilitis, senior scientist for the HSUS division of wildlife and environment, and Frank Ribaudo have contributed information and are monitoring these activities and decisions.

The Commission's decision to thin the herd may be premature. The coyote population has been rising in western Massachusetts, and an independent study shows that coyote predation has slightly reduced the deer population in the past two years.

''Inside Report'' featured pulling contests such as this one.
STRAYS SOLD TO RESEARCH

Investigations by Gulf States Regional Investigator James Noe found that the city of Enid, Oklahoma, has apparently been selling dogs to Oklahoma State University for research, in violation of state law requiring strays to be held for fifteen days prior to sale. The Gulf States office put the city on notice of the violation and asked for an immediate halt. Further investigations may show other cities in the state violating the same law.

1990 GSHEA CONFERENCE

The Gulf States Humane Educators Association Conference will take place May 26 and 27, 1990, at the Tulsa Marriott in Oklahoma. The conference will focus on environmental issues and domestic and agricultural animal issues. For registration and program information, contact the Gulf States Regional Office at 6262 Weber Road, Suite 305, Corpus Christi, TX 78413.

PROTEST AGAINST CAT EXPERIMENTS

On August 18, the Gulf States office participated in a statewide protest against federally funded cat sleep-deprivation studies done at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. For fifteen years, Dr. John Orem has subjected hundreds of cats to cruel sleep-deprivation experiments, which medical doctors have stated are of no value to humans. The Compassion for Animals group cosponsored protests calling for a halt to these needless and cruel experiments. The University has refused to consider the matter.

ACTION ALERT NETS RESULTS

A September HSUS Action Alert for Louisiana called for Sam B. Haynes, Jr., owner of the Fun Fair Park in Baton Rouge, either to relinquish the single chimpanzee kept there in cramped and solitary conditions for over twenty years to the Baton Rouge Zoo or to primate sanctuary or build a more suitable enclosure for it. As a result of letters written to him and to the city mayor, Mr. Haynes has agreed to build a new and much larger facility for the chimpanzee. The proposed new enclosure will exceed Animal Welfare Act specifications. While not our first choice of action, the new enclosure is a vast improvement for the chimpanzee.

GREAT LAKES LEGISLATION

Three important bills are pending in Michigan. H.B. 5209 would mandate spaying or neutering of all animals adopted from state pounds and shelters. H.B. 5030 requires the Michigan Department of Public Health to promote modern, humane, and non-animal tests for research and development of cosmetics and consumer products. H.B. 5285 prohibits ownership of exotic animals as pets.

Meanwhile, Ohio is mending its antiquated and ineffective anti-cruelty statute. The Ohio Legislation for Animal Welfare (LAW) Coalition successfully got H.B. 137 passed in the House and sent to the Senate. This bill would make illegal acts of cruelty such as a collar embedded in an animal’s neck and neglecting an animal in need of veterinary care. Both LAW and the Great Lakes office will push for legislation to regulate pet shops, boarding kennels, and breeding facilities in 1990. In addition, the Great Lakes office is pressing for support of H.B. 650, which would set up licensing procedures for cats identical for those of dogs. This bill needs much revision, but the concept is very important.

ACA WORKSHOPS IN MAY 1990

The HSUS Animal Control Academy (ACA) will hold workshops May 14-25, 1990, in Bowling Green, Ohio. For registration information, contact the Great Lakes Regional Office at 745 Haskins Street, Bowling Green, OH 43402-1696, or the HSUS Animal Control Academy at 5126-A McFarland Boulevard, E., Tuscaloosa, AL 35405.

1990 MISSION: THE ENVIRONMENT

The First United Presbyterian Church of Perrysburg, Ohio, has set itself a mission for 1990: to become educated and aware of the environmental and animal issues facing the planet. The Great Lakes office was invited to help plan activities for the coming months and to provide materials for the many topics to be covered, such as recycling, toxic waste, and rain forests. Members will learn not only about each problem but also about ways each person can help correct and reverse the damage caused by mankind. The Great Lakes office is pleased to be involved with this mission and welcomes this progressive, responsible church action.