

HUMANE REVIEW

nyshumane.org

The Newsletter of the New York State Humane Association



Does it Matter?

Being born a foal on a prosperous breeding farm is not a bad start to life. Surrounded by lush green fields dotted with clover, trees covered with verdant leaves gently moving in the breeze, and watched by your mom as you romp around a huge paddock – you are in a Thoroughbred kingdom. Life is good. For now.

Soon, too soon, you will be torn away from that idyllic existence.

Before your second year, sometimes well before it, you will be hauled away to a race track where your life will change radically. You will be confined to a stall for approximately 22 hours a day, except to train on the track or participate in a race. A jockey will be hoisted onto your back and force you to run at furious speeds, causing great stress to your still-developing bone structure. As you thunder around the track, you will be repeatedly whipped though you are running as fast as you can. And that whip will sting, as your flesh is sensitive enough to feel the bite of a horse fly on your rump. But no one cares. You are there to make money for your owner and for all those who bet on the race.

After the race, regardless of whether you have won or lost, all sweaty and exhausted, and possibly in pain, you will be led back to solitary confinement in your stall. This is your lot in life – you are a Thoroughbred.

When your racing days are over, and they are over as soon as you stop coming in at or near the top, the next stage of your life begins, assuming you have not died on the track, as so many do each year.

But you have survived; you have done your part, so some might think you will be returning to grassy fields to live out your days. But they would be wrong. If you are not placed in some post-racing-retirement program, or sent off for breeding purposes for a time, you will likely be sold on the cheap to someone who will take pride in buying a retired Thoroughbred as a riding horse. But you are high strung and trained to race; you don't know how to be a riding horse, and in many cases, a new owner won't know how to care for or retrain a Thoroughbred and will decide against spending money to learn how. Your next stop is likely the livestock auction.

The livestock auction regards you as a commodity and the quicker they hustle you



Philotimo, when he was rescued by Little Brook Farm and Heather, an avid equestrian. He is but one example of a severely neglected Thoroughbred, needing months of rehab. At two, he had been purchased for \$150,000; yet at six, he looked like this after passing through several owners.

through the better. If you are unlucky and fall into the hands of what are known as kill-buyers, you will find yourself crammed into a hauler truck along with many other unfortunates, traveling for numerous hours without food, water, or rest heading to a Canadian or Mexican slaughter house.

Alternatively, rather than sending you to auction, that new owner may simply leave you neglected in a field, failing to provide you with proper food and vet care to the point that concerned citizens call the police – you are removed and the owner is charged with cruelty.

In either case, if you are lucky, you will be one of the few taken in by a reputable equine rescue. Arriving there, as you come down the trailer ramp, you again will see grassy pastures and sunny skies. And for some, that adjustment is trouble-free; for others, it will take time to overcome the psychological scars in addition to the physical trauma endured over the years – you may be afraid when a caring person leads you into a large paddock. You may rear up or run in endless circles and just not know how to “settle.”

Continued on page 2



Philotimo, now beautiful and healthy, with Little Brook Farm's intern, Sarah.

It will take time, but hopefully caring hearts and hands will help you overcome the ordeal you have suffered. You are lucky. You made it here.

Sadly, an Albany *Times Union* investigation (see article on NYSHA's website) informs us that we, the citizens of NYS, are supporting this cruelty. How? We, as citizens, own the property and facilities where the three Thoroughbred tracks operated by the New York Racing Association (NYRA) are located. We pay the property taxes. And though NYRA has a lease agreement with the state, NYRA pays no rent. In addition, the state provides NYRA with a portion of the income from various video lottery terminals owned by the state – income that could instead be used to fund education and veterans' programs; income that could help reduce the amount of taxes we pay. Lastly, to encourage Thoroughbred owners to participate in the NYS racing industry, millions of dollars in racehorse sales, as well as transactions related to horse maintenance and equipment, are free of state sales taxes. Is this fair? Does it matter?

It matters to the exploited and damaged horses who are but pawns in this financial fiasco. And because of them, it should matter to us.



Philotimo, ten years later, still enjoying life at Little Brook Farm.

President's Message

We know the lives of racehorses are not glamorous; rather, these animals are exploited for profit. So what can we do to stop this cruel reality? Well, what if they held a horse race and no one came? We hope that will occur someday after people not only know, but also care about what happens to these magnificent animals who are used to maintain this “sport of kings.”

On the way to that goal, there are other actions we can take: call your legislators and ask them to support legislation that makes a dent in the racing industry's support system. (See the Our Voices in Albany column for details.)

Also, the Thoroughbred industry needs to create a fund to make emergency monies available to horse rescues that provide sanctuary to those wearied and neglected horses who are seized by police in cruelty cases. Though there may be funding available from some retirement programs to support retired Thoroughbreds, those options have complex procedures and requirements that preclude providing the emergency funds so needed when a Thoroughbred is seized as the result of police intervention. And though their original owners may have paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for a young racing horse, the vast majority of those owners will contribute nothing toward the cost of emergency care or ongoing needs.

Contrast that with the Standardbred industry, where the US Trotting Association has an emergency fund called *Support Our Standardbreds* (SOS) that horse rescues can call for help and receive the monies quickly – so they can assist when summoned by authorities to deal with neglected Standardbred horses in a police intervention. The money is used to help with emergency needs such as veterinary, farrier and other care costs.

What is wrong with the Thoroughbred industry that it doesn't have a comparable emergency fund? Thoroughbred owners who benefit from the profits generated by their horses on the track also need to support those horses if sometime later in their lives they are seized in a cruelty case. It is that simple.

You can help. Please support those reputable horse rescues that are saving the lives of these magnificent animals and urge the members of the Thoroughbred industry to establish an emergency fund to assist the rescues. Please write letters to the newspapers, as well as to the heads of NYRA and the NY Thoroughbred Breeders Association, requesting the establishment of an emergency fund.

Please be kind to animals,

Patricia Valusek

Book Review: 250 Vital Things Your Cat Wants You to Know

Have you ever wondered why your cat “kneads bread” on your blanket? Or what she's telling you when she squints her eyes? Did you know that cats can sometimes lie? And that they get embarrassed?

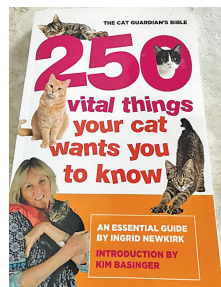
PETA President Ingrid E. Newkirk is helping cat guardians become better at translating “catese” with her recent book. Incorporating wisdom gathered from cat veterinarians and specialists, guardians from around the world, and Newkirk's own decades of experience as a cat rescuer and companion (or “auntie” as she likes to say), *250 Vital Things Your Cat Wants You to Know* is filled with fascinating tidbits and punctuated by funny stories and anecdotes.

It had this reviewer alternating between peals

of laughter and moments of “Wow, I never knew that!”

As the title suggests, it also provides crucial information on everything from finding a lost cat to protecting your sofa, and from creating a simple “catio” to knowing the home remedies that could save your animal's life. Also discussed are seldom mentioned ways to make our human-centric homes more enjoyable for their feline residents. After all, they spend much more time there than we do!

In addition, there is a wealth of fresh ideas for playtime and bonding activities. The book is a practical, amusing, and enriching guide that will improve your understanding of your cat, strengthen your relationship, and make her adore you. For anyone who has always lived with cats or just adopting one for the first time, it's an easy and enjoyable read – and a great gift! (This book can be ordered directly from PETA or online merchants, such as Amazon.)



Our Voices in Albany

You helped us achieve great legislative victories last year. The Governor signed the following bills into law:

- After years of effort, a law that **bans the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits in retail pet stores** and instead allows the stores to let humane organizations feature their animals-for-adoption takes effect in 2024;
- The NY **cruelty-free cosmetic act**, in effect now, bans the manufacture or sale of most cosmetic products or ingredients that have been tested on animals;
- Lastly, a law that specifies the **standards of care** for all animals held in animal shelters or being transported by humane organizations will go into effect in late 2025, giving organizations time to comply with regulations.

Bills we urge you to call your legislators to support now are: Legislation

(A1162 / S5438) to **end horse racing subsidies** in NYS and invest the revenue generated from video lottery gaming facilities at racetracks to essential public services, such as education. Also, urge them to support (A1438 / S481) that would **eliminate certain sales tax exemptions related to horse racing** and related maintenance costs.

Important bills on some other issues are: **expanding orders of protection for animals** (A39 / S5309); a bill to **end the brutal and cruel wildlife killing contests**, (A2917 / S4099); and a bill to **end the exploitation of animals used in circuses**, where animals live horrid lives (A4005 / S4363.)

Please take a minute to contact your legislators. Look at the Legislative Chart on NYSHA's website – nyshumane.org – and click on the bill that interests you. You will be taken directly to the bill itself on the Assembly or Senate websites. Please do it for the animals!

The World Around Us – Gardening, Critter Free and Cruelty Free

If you're a garden lover, you can't help but feel a sense of excitement once March arrives and the promise of digging, planting, and sprouting is on the horizon. No matter how difficult the toil, there is always a payoff, for us and sometimes for our backyard critters.

In an effort to help our wildlife neighbors understand their boundaries, here are some tips, old and new, to help make our gardens more rewarding for us and less so for them.

First, the obvious – a fence. Most of us will benefit from one that's a few feet tall. If you happen to have a large population of deer in your area, you may need to consider a fence up to 8 feet high. Always try to bury it 10 – 12" in the ground to prevent persistent burrowers, like groundhogs and rabbits. Bird netting can also be placed on top of small bushes and plants.

Our carefully tended gardens can often make it too easy for unwanted foragers to enter. Try letting the area surrounding the garden to get a little messy. Tall grasses and prickly weeds may make the garden less inviting and a bit

more cumbersome for smaller animals to reach. Some may even eat these greens and be satisfied without ever reaching your delights.

You may deter backyard critters with plants that don't appeal to their taste or smell, such as lavender, peonies, marigold, and mint. Some gardeners have even found strongly scented soap placed near their plants to be effective.

If your backyard neighbors are still determined to get into the garden, consider mixing 3 tablespoons of castor oil with a tablespoon of dish soap to a gallon of water and spraying on your plants as a repellent. Sprinkling plants with cayenne pepper will certainly ruin the taste for many unwanted guests.

Tried and true methods such as scarecrows and garden ornaments can be effective, if they are moved frequently. Even a radio, motion sensor light, sprinkler, or an ultrasonic pest repellent may be just the thing that works for you.

Whatever your approach to managing pesky critters, if it's humane and cruelty-free, your garden *will* be rewarding for everyone.



Credit Gary Bendig-Unsplash

The Vet Is In

Anyone who lives with a long-haired cat or dog knows how easily they can become matted! Without regular brushing, these hair clumps can actually become painful as they pull on the skin. Please, never try to trim out mats with scissors yourself; it is very easy to cut into skin, especially with cats. Check with your veterinarian or a professional animal groomer about removing them safely, and in the summertime consider a stylish new look for your kitty!



Stevie enjoying her summer "do".

Holly Cheever, DVM

You
Make It Possible

A huge *thank you* to all our supporters
You make it possible for NYSHA to continue
its work to help animals.

We - and they - appreciate it everyday!

Spotlight

Nancy Van Wie and Eddie Mrozik, Crane Mountain Valley Horse Rescue, Inc.

Crane Mountain Valley Horse Rescue, Inc. (CMVHR) is an award-winning, not-for-profit, humanitarian and education organization founded in 2003. Husband and wife team Eddie Mrozik and Nancy Van Wie established the rescue after perceiving the need for a local humane agency that would serve as a lifeline for horses. For two decades, they have stayed true to their mission and have amplified it to include helping people in need through the healing power of the horse.

Both horse lovers since a young age, they have always had horses in their lives. Nancy's pony attended the University of Vermont with her and was her "partner in love for nearly 25 years." Later while rescuing horses, she met Eddie through a rescue mare named Posey and their love story began and continued.

They've had the opportunity to see the impact of their work over time – on animals and on people. They've saved hundreds of horses over the years and love receiving updates from their adoptive families on how the horses have changed their lives for the better – in so many cases, the rescue was mutual.

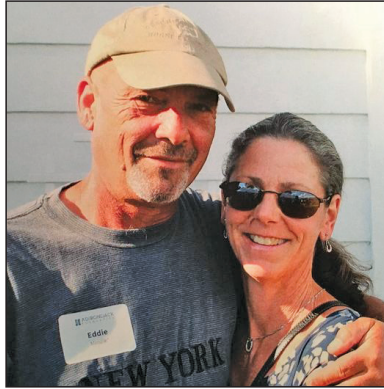


Nancy and Opal

Their education and outreach programs are as critical to their mission as saving horses. The community enrichment program has included veterinary and communications internships for course credits for college, job shadowing programs for high school, talks on the realities of establishing and running a horse rescue operation, doing school presentations, and much more. They have hosted an "Investigating Animal Cruelty Workshop" in partnership with NYSHA and local law enforcement.

CMVHR's volunteer program includes adults and youth. They have family volunteer workdays, individual programs for developmentally disabled adults, volunteer workdays for summer camps and school programs, and more. They also do individualized work with local agencies for at-risk youth.

Many of their early youth volunteers and program participants are now adults who stay in touch and visit with their spouses and kids! One, Dede, returned after college to become their full-time rehabilita-



Eddie Mrozik and Nancy Van Wie

tor and trainer. Their veterinary interns are now practicing veterinarians or vet techs, and tell them of the positive impact volunteering there has had on their lives.

The most frustrating part of their work is the dozens of calls per month from people who want them to take older horses that are "no longer useful to them," so they can get another horse, or taking injured horses they don't want to care for, or people who "save a horse" but aren't set up to care for it.

Long-term goals are to continue educating people on animal husbandry and to support strengthening laws related to equine cruelty.

Nancy summarized by saying, "To remain positive, when seeing such heartache and inhumanity, we choose to stay focused on the good side of humanity, like our volunteers, adoptive families, those who share our passion for spreading kindness and compassion, and of course, our donors, without whom our work would not be possible. We find hope every day in the kindness and compassion we see in people who share our vision and want to make a difference. When we see this in the eyes and hearts of our youth, it gives us the greatest hope, as they are our future."

Learn more about Crane at cmvhr.org. A not-for-profit, they receive no state or federal funding nor funding from the counties they serve in cruelty investigations. They rely on private philanthropy from individuals and foundations.



Grey, supervising Eddie's chores at CMVHR.

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