

HUMANE REVIEW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW YORK STATE HUMANE ASSOCIATION



NYSHA Contacts Utica Mayor and Brings Workshop to Town

It was a freezing January night in Utica when a dog named Apollo was left tied to a picnic bench in a small park. When discovered the next morning, Apollo was partially frozen to the ground. Though rescuers tried to carefully remove him, he sustained injuries to his paws and other areas of frozen skin. When the news broke, the public was outraged.

Utica police worked hard to solve the case, but they were unable to prove that the owner did this cruel deed, as there were no witnesses to the abandonment. Despite the outpouring of anger from area residents, all of whom wanted the owner punished, the police were only able to charge him with owning a non-licensed dog with out-of-date shots. Fortunately, the owner agreed to surrender the dog. The lack of cruelty charges set off another public furor. As a result of this frustrating case, Mayor David Roefaro wrote to the Governor asking him to strengthen the animal cruelty laws so that abusers could be dealt with more easily.

Aware of the Mayor's interest and concern with animal cru-



NYSHA's Lia Albo and Sue McDonough and Ulster Co. Deputy Andrea Stene with Utica Mayor David Roefaro.

elty, NYSHA contacted him to arrange an "Investigating Animal Cruelty" workshop with the Utica Police Department. The Mayor was delighted with NYSHA's offer and encouraged us to contact the Utica Police Chief who was also interested in having a workshop held there. The DA's Office threw in its support and agreed to send a speaker to the event. The date was set for April 9, the Mayor's Office sent out press releases, and we were up and running.

The workshop was held at the beautiful Hotel Utica, one of the few places in the city that could accommodate the large number of attendees -- 44 in all. There was a large showing from the Utica Police Department, as well as from the Oneida and Onondaga County Sheriff's Departments, State Police, and other police departments as far away as Auburn and Elmira. Other attendees included probation and parole officers, dog control officers, and representatives of area humane agencies.

Mayor Roefaro made a surprise appearance as the afternoon workshops started and told the audience how important he felt the workshop was to his goal in bringing animal abusers

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Instructor Dr. Beverly Blinn-Knapp with police officer attendees.

President's Message

On a recent afternoon, I watched a group of second graders draw my beautiful, longed-haired, tortoiseshell cat Bellina. This was part of "Model Animal," a project organized by Art for Animals.

It was a unique way to bring humane education into the classroom and the curriculum. I told the story about finding Bellina as a stray, and of course it led to talking about how animals have similar needs to ours, what to do if you find an animal, and stories about the children's pets -- and their own lives. I am following up by arranging spay and neuter services to those who were so excited about the new kittens in their families. In my own classroom, students wrote a biography of Bellina in Spanish.

Throughout the day, several rescued dogs were also brought in and sat as they were painted by students of various age levels, as Art Club is open to anyone who wanted to participate. Last spring we visited an equine sanctuary. Each year the end result has been telling, touching, and inspiring.

The empathy all the children had for these formerly neglected, abused, or homeless animals was palpable. The second graders, normally a very energetic group, remained calm to pacify Bellina. While leaving, they lined up quietly to gently kiss her goodbye, and when I see them in the halls now, they always ask about her. The dogs are still remembered fondly as well.

We all know animals have countless endearing qualities, not the least of which is the ability to draw diverse people together. Many of these students are not friendly with each other, but as they bonded with their models, they bonded with each other. The school atmosphere was different that day.

Watch a group stop on the road to rescue a turtle, help a cat in a tree, or enjoy the antics of dogs in a park. Look at stories in our e-mails, television, or newspapers -- all attract a wide variety of people united by a common interest. We are inundated by reports of animal cruelty, yet we are surrounded by people who care.

The challenge is to educate "animal lovers" about the big issues, unite them, and use this energy as a force to make a difference -- in our everyday lives and in our laws. This was one of the most uplifting parts of Animal Advocacy Day -- like Model Animal, all kinds of people were drawn together, and the power to make changes for all kinds of creatures was awesome.

As always, for the animals,

Laura-Ann Cammisa

NYSHA's Calendar

NYSHA's Fall 2011 Animal Cruelty Investigation Workshop – For location, date, and a registration form for the upcoming workshop in the fall, please check NYSHA's website – nyshumane.org – later in the summer.

NY Vegetarian Expo – October 1, 2011, Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany – The Expo brings together the global health benefits of green sustainable living, environmental awareness and compassion of animals and all beings. For more information, go to nyvegetarianexpo.org.

Matching Grants

Have you checked to see if your workplace matches employee's donations to qualified organizations? If not sure, please ask your employer. You may be able to double your donation to NYSHA.

Utica Mayor... Continued from page 1

to justice. He let the audience know that his office backed any efforts that were put forth to address animal cruelty in the area.

Representatives of the shelters introduced themselves to the various police agencies and offered their cooperation with upcoming animal cases. Good contacts were made all around, and the attendees know they can call NYSHA with questions about any difficult cases they encounter. It was a great workshop with great evaluations, and the door is open for us to return for future workshops.

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Animal Advocacy Day in Albany

NY's first Animal Advocacy Day was held June 1 at the Legislative Office Building in Albany. Hundreds attended the event, which was organized by Assemblyman James Tedisco and Senator Greg Ball to bring together animal advocates from throughout the state. Its purpose was to draw attention to legislation to strengthen New York State's cruelty states, to have constituents meet with their legislators, and to provide an opportunity for animal organizations to network.

In the presence of an appreciative audience, Steve Caporizzo, WTEN TV's chief meteorologist and renowned animal advocate, did his usual eloquent job as emcee.

Over two dozen organizations exhibited, including NYSHA, Animal Protective Foundation, Saratoga Co. Animal Shelter, Mohawk-Hudson River Humane Society, and Equine Advocates. NYSHA's Legislative Chair Samantha Mullen and Board members Sue McDonough and Jean Daniels fielded questions about various bills and NYSHA's many activities.

Over two dozen legislators were in attendance, including the chair of the all-important Assembly Agriculture Committee, William Magee. Several spoke briefly about their own dedication to animal-friendly legislation. Assemblyman Tedisco introduced former Rensselaer Co. ADA Joel Abelow — who, over a decade ago, prosecuted the man who tortured the cat for whom New York's felony cruelty statute, "Buster's Law", is named -- and who recently announced he's running for Rensselaer Co. DA. Saratoga County DA Jim Murphy spoke passionately about a cruelty case he's currently in the process of prosecuting. Among the other special guests was the National Geographic-sponsored, NYC-based *Rescue Ink*, a group of heavily tattooed



*NYSHA's Sue McDonough with Joel Abelow and the stars of National Geographic TV's *Rescue Ink Unleashed*.*

“tough guys,” who work to persuade animal abusers to change their ways. Several of its members spoke articulately about their commitment to root out cruelty to animals. (Unfortunately, since this day, the *Rescue Ink* organization has dissolved.)



NYSHA's information table at Animal Advocacy Day in Albany.

During their talks, Assemblyman Tedisco and a number of other speakers singled out NYSHA Board member Sue McDonough for special praise for the exceptional work she has done over the years to ensure that animal abusers are properly charged, as well as to promote humane legislation.

One of the highlights of the event was NYSHA Board president Laura-Ann Cammisa's presentation of certificates of appreciation to Assembly-

man Tedisco and Senator Ball in recognition of their sponsorship of Animal Advocacy Day, the first event of its kind organized by New York State legislators. We look forward to participating in next year's event, which promises to be another great day for animal advocates in NYS!

New York State Legislature Passes Key Animal Protection Bills

Before the end of this year's legislative session in late June, NYSHA participated in two well-attended events, whose goals were to strengthen animal protection laws: the first, organized by The Humane Society of the United States and co-sponsored by NYSHA, was Humane Lobby Day, held on March 30; the second was Animal Advocacy Day, organ-

ized by Assemblyman James Tedisco and Senator Greg Ball, held on June 1. (See article on page 3.) Each event focused on several specific bills, and both served to raise attendees' awareness of key animal issues and the importance of continued progress on behalf of animal protection.

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Great News on Paragallo Breeder Case Appeal!

Our Spring/Summer 2010 newsletter brought good news for horses. Because of the work of Colleen Sagarra, the NY State Police, the Columbia-Greene Humane Society, and Greene County DA Terry Wilhelm, horse breeder Ernie Paragallo was arrested and prosecuted on 35 counts of misdemeanor animal cruelty. Opting for a bench trial, Paragallo was found guilty of 33 counts by Greene County Judge George Pulver who sentenced him to 2 years in jail and a fine of \$33,000. Paragallo appealed his conviction to the Appellate Division

of the NYS Supreme Court, but the court affirmed the decision of Judge Pulver. Paragallo, out on bail pending the decision, was ordered to surrender to the authorities to begin serving his sentence in Greene County jail.

In addition, the NYS Racing and Wagering Board announced that Paragallo could never again hold an owner's or agent's license in NYS and was permanently banned from any NYS racing track. A great victory for the horses and for animals in general!



Emaciated Paragallo yearling being examined at Cornell.

New York State Legislature... *Continued from page 3*

The Legislature passed three of the animal-friendly bills on which NYSHA had worked. By the time you read this, we believe Governor Cuomo will have ensured their enactment. Two measures representing major victories for animals were acted on in the very last days of the session: S3237-A (Lavalle)/A4407-A (Lentol), a long overdue method of strengthening NY's animal fighting laws, and S3858-B (Grisanti)/A6291-A (Rosenthal), to restrict the possession, sale, or purchase of bear gallbladders. Earlier, a measure was passed that had been introduced by Senator Oppenheimer and AM Cahill: S3911-A/A6373-A. This brings two important provisions of law into consistency, clarifying that animal shelters may *voluntarily* transfer animals to other facilities, to facilitate responsible adoptions. (NYSHA opposes a very different proposal, S5363-A/A7312-A, which would make the transfer of animals scheduled for euthanasia *mandatory* in many cases.)

Unfortunately, at least one bill that animal advocates were unanimous in opposing was enacted: S177-A. This lowers

the age from 14 to 12 for a child to obtain a junior archery license, allowing him to kill large animals with a longbow when accompanied by an adult with 3 years' experience hunting bear or deer with a longbow.

In 2012, NYSHA will continue to push for stronger animal protection legislation such as bills A1836 (moves cruelty statutes to Penal Law); S5084/A1580 (bans ownership of companion animals by those convicted of "Buster's Law"); A3431-A (bans devocalization of dogs and cats); and A4475 (bans "canned hunts"). We will also fight for strong measures to decrease the breeding of companion animals.

Meanwhile, please visit our website, nyshumane.org, for updates to bills that may have made progress after the drafting of this newsletter but before its publication. Look for complete texts of bills that interest you by visiting assembly.state.ny.us or public.leginfo.state.ny.us.

Your Will Can Be Your Way...

Your will can be your way to continue helping animals after your lifetime. We are grateful that many of you have given NYSHA generous donations. If you also wish to remember NYSHA in your will, please ask your attorney to specify our official name and address as follows: New York State Humane Association, Inc., PO Box 3068, Kingston, NY 12402 • Federal ID Number 22-2238112