THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

REGIONAL NEWS

FALL 2005

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL OFFICE

SERVING ARIZONA, ARKANSAS, LOUISIANA, NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA, AND TEXAS

Fighting Cruelty Here and Yon

Talent on Loan to California

There seems to be no "off season" during which animal issues subside. Therefore the skills of SWRO staff are constantly in demand, not only here in the southwest region, but across the country. Just as our office can rely on the abilities of other HSUS staff outside our region, so too are we called upon when our talents are needed. Such was the case as the summer of 2005 heated up with a variety of animal issues—here and yon.

It began in May, when Cynthia Armstrong, SWRO state coordinator in Oklahoma, received a call from Eric Sakach, director of The HSUS West Coast Regional Office in Sacramento, California. A large-scale raid on an illegal cockfighting operation in a rural Amador County, California, would soon be carried out, and he asked Armstrong to assist. The raid would be the culmination of a year-long investigation, and Sakach realized that not only could he use her expertise, but it would also be an excellent opportunity for Armstrong to experience first hand the horrors of the blood sport she

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SWRO's Cynthia Armstrong was happy to help shut down a large California cockfighting operation.

HSUS

HSUS's Massive Rescue Effort in Wake of Hurricane Katrina

As the National Guard entered New Orleans to quell civil disorder coming in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, members of the HSUS National Disaster Animal Response Team (DART) worked their way into the nearly obliterated regions of southern Mississippi and Louisiana. The situation could not have been more urgent in both areas, with reports of animals locked in homes, kennels, veterinary clinics, and other locations. It was a race against time for our first responders on the ground in the stricken areas.

KATHY MILAN/HSUS

An airboat moves down a flooded New Orleans street September 5 with animal rescue workers, a rifle-toting guard, and several rescued dogs. With thousands of stranded pets in the city, HSUS rescuers were frantically trying to reach as many animals as they could.

The presence of HSUS personnel was good news for nearly 130 dogs and cats in Gulfport, Mississippi. There, HSUS team members rescued these animals from the animal shelter of the Humane Society of South Mississippi, which was flooded by the combination of a storm surge with an overflow discharge of human waste from the sewage treatment plant next door. Some animals swam in their cages for hours, somehow managing to keep their heads above water. Others were not so lucky. Those rescued went to Jackson, Mississippi, where the HSUS logistical team worked to place them with humane societies around the country.

The rescue in Gulfport occurred as dozens of HSUS relief workers extended their reach into devastated areas of Louisiana and Mississippi, working to establish pet-friendly shelters, coordinating animal relief activities with local partners in both government and the nonprofit sector, and improvising solutions to a host of animal-related emergencies.

But the devastated city of New Orleans was still waiting.

Answering the Call

Phones began ringing at The HSUS almost as soon as Katrina struck. The HSUS moved quickly to set up a dedicated Disaster Call Center at its headquarters in the nation's capital, and dozens of staff members suspended their normal duties to handle external communications, logging thousands of telephone calls and e-mails from around the country—many from people seeking urgent assistance as they tried to locate, recover, or keep their animal companions in the midst of the disaster.

Many of the calls came from the afflicted city of New Orleans: A man who couldn't contact a friend with whom he had left his

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PAUL TURNER/HSUS

An HSUS team member bathes a dog rescued from flood waters.

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cats. A woman who had boarded animals in a kennel, whose operators she could no longer reach on the telephone. The owner of the golden retriever Blue, saying he would grant permission to anybody he had to to rescue his stranded dog "by any means necessary."

An Overwhelming Task

On their first foray into the embattled city of New Orleans on September 4, members of the HSUS DART, together with animal control staff from the Louisiana SPCA (LASPCA), targeted animals stranded at the Superdome as their priority. There, they rescued dozens of animals relinquished or abandoned by desperate evacuees who fled the city to escape Katrina's rage.

Once the base of operations was established in the city, animal rescue workers faced a grim and urgent challenge. Throughout the weekend, reports of animals in urgent need of rescue continued to pour into the HSUS call center and into other organizations mobilized in the region. "It's just overwhelming," Laura Maloney, executive director of the LASPCA, told a Knight-Ridder journalist. "There are countless thousands of abandoned pets in the city. And hundreds and hundreds are stuck inside their homes."

During the evacuation of New Orleans, rescue workers barred pets from buses, shelters, and other facilities. And the Red Cross does not permit animals in its shelters. The harsh and depressing fact remains: In most disaster scenarios, people and their pets are often forced to go their separate ways.

The HSUS is helping place evacuated animals into adoption programs in Texas and other states. Working with local humane groups, rescuers saved more than 6,000 animals on the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast.

The HSUS has been working with local shelters to adopt pets people may be forced to give up. "It's always hard," said Laura Bevan, director of HSUS's Southeast Regional Office and head of the Mississippi effort. "But sometimes it's necessary when large numbers of people have lost their homes."

But there is good news too. "I spoke with a gentleman today who evacuated with four cats and thought he was going to have to euthanize them, but we found them all a home in Galveston, Texas," said Lou Guyton, SWRO director and leader of the Louisiana rescue effort.

The Ongoing Mission

Estimates of the impact on wildlife, captive wildlife, and pets lost to the ravages of Katrina will take time to assess. "The total number of animals lost to the storm will be difficult to detect for months, as it was in the case of the Asian tsunami," Bevan said. Tens of thousands of people and animals are still waiting for rescue and assistance. "This is going to require a massive, long-term effort to help the animals and the people impacted by Hurricane Katrina," said Bevan.

HSUS President and CEO Wayne Pacelle emphasized that rescue and relief activities in distressed communities of Louisiana and Mississippi will remain The HSUS's first priority in the weeks ahead. "We're just beginning to get a sense of the work that lies ahead of us," he said. "But we're committed to doing all we can. We know that it's something that our members support, and we're confident that they'll demonstrate their faith by contributing in every possible way to the work that we're doing."

The costs associated with The HSUS rescue efforts are expected to vastly exceed the organization's previous major disaster responses.

To support The HSUS's animal protection efforts, go to **www.hsus.org/join**.

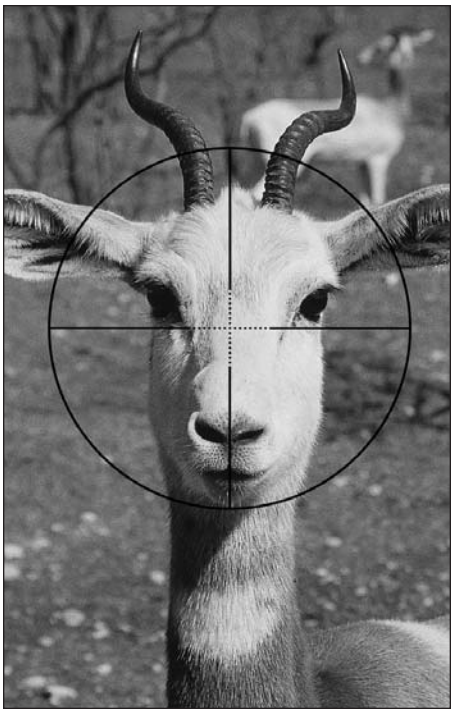
Internet Hunting Deleted

The introduction of Internet hunting has created some strange bedfellows. Both The HSUS and the National Rifle Association have blasted this new form of animal abuse.

Internet hunting is anything but virtual. It's a video "game" in which animals are actually killed by participants who pay outrageous sums of money to manipulate a servo-equipped rifle and zero in on a captive exotic animal over the Internet. People can hunt from their desks, anywhere in the world. All it takes is a computer, an Internet hookup, and a lot of cash.

Hunting groups have joined animal activists against this most unsportsmanlike practice in which animals are led in front of the mechanically remote-controlled rifles so they may be shot easily, and the shooter can get a trophy without even getting his hands dirty.

This dot-com carnage is now illegal in Texas. The bill prohibiting it was signed by the Governor on June 19, 2005, and became effective immediately. Thanks to the efforts of SWRO and the many fine people who called their congressional representatives, the only thing shot down was this form of "pay-per-view" slaughter.



Send a Message to Trader Joe's

Unlike its competitors in the natural foods market, such as Whole Foods and Wild Oats, Trader Joe's still sells eggs from hens confined in "battery" cages so small they can't even spread their wings. These animals are so intensively confined that they never engage in many important behaviors, including nesting, perching, and dust bathing. Their lives are filled with immense suffering. In the past, Trader Joe's has been responsive to customer concern for animal welfare, but the chain is refusing to stop selling eggs from caged hens.

These are the conditions laying hens are forced to endure in battery cages.

The HSUS needs you to ask Trader Joe's to can the cages and sell only cage-free eggs. Call Trader Joe's at 626-599-3817 and ask the company to adopt a policy to sell only cage-free eggs. During your next trip to Trader Joe's, talk with the store manager and request that the chain adopt a policy against selling battery cage eggs.

Please send us your Trader Joe's receipts. We'll collect them and send them to the company to show that their consumers care about the welfare of laying hens. Send receipts to: The Humane Society of the United States, Factory Farming Campaign, 2100 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

Loopholes in State Cruelty Laws Left Open

Efforts to tighten some of the loopholes in the Texas animal cruelty laws fell victim to legislator apathy during this session. S.B. 172 would have allowed people who abuse feral cats to be prosecuted under the penal code. It also would have changed some of the wording in the current law to require more humane treatment of some animals by their owners. Thousands of people called their senators in support of the bill, but to no avail. It died in committee.

The hunting and agriculture lobbies were vehemently opposed to S.B. 172, even though hunting and agricultural uses of animals were exempted. One representative jokingly remarked that he was unsure if the people reading the bill could actually read, since they were pointedly ignoring the wording that exempted their special interest groups.

The battle may be lost, but the war is not. SWRO is committed to changing these laws to protect animals. We will continue to lobby, working diligently to make better lives for animals, year after year, until it is done.

We need your help! It is very difficult to battle with large special interest groups that have seemingly bottomless coffers. Any help you can give, whether financially or as part of our Humane Action Network, will help save animals from abuse and torture at the hands of vicious individuals. The Humane Action Network is a national grassroots network of people who work to pass animal protection legislation, and it needs you to be a success. By working together, we can amplify our voice for animals and make a real difference. To sign up, visit the Web site at **www.hsus.org/join** and check the box to subscribe to HumaneLines, the weekly e-newsletter of the Humane Action Network. You can also contact Kelley Dupps, Grassroots Outreach Coordinator, The HSUS, 519 C Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002; 202-955-3678; **kdupps@hsus.org**.

OK Voters Clear on Cockfighting, Again

After Oklahoma voters overwhelmingly approved a cockfighting ban in November 2002, legislative sessions in the state have been anything but dull! The cockfighting industry, intent on dismantling the law, has backed no fewer than seven bills over the past three years designed to weaken or overturn the law. Among legislative strategies to thwart the will of Oklahoma voters were a variety of measures designed to allow cockfighting to continue unabated, including several bills seeking to dramatically weaken cockfighting penalties from felony to misdemeanor charges; bills designed to give constitutional protection to a variety of animal uses, including cockfighting; and even a measure to suspend the statewide cockfighting ban by allowing each county an opportunity to vote to repeal the statewide ban.

In the 2005 legislative session, the quest to re-legalize cockfighting in Oklahoma took a bizarre and highly publicized turn with the introduction of the parimutuel gamecock boxing bill, authored by Sen. Frank Shurden. This bill sought to legalize training fights between roosters fitted with muffs and vests and legalize the gambling associated with these fights. Constructed to give cover to the illegal cockfighting industry, the legalization of gamecock boxing would have made enforcement of existing state and federal laws nearly impossible. Cockfighters could simply claim that they were raising and transporting gamefowl for the purpose of boxing rather than cockfighting, thereby avoiding prosecution.

Thanks to a strong grassroots campaign and intensive lobbying efforts on the part of the Oklahoma Coalition Against Cockfighting and The HSUS, every bill introduced over the past three years was defeated! A sincere thank-you to everyone who called, e-mailed, or wrote to legislators.

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has spent years battling in the Oklahoma Legislature (see sidebar on page 3).

On May 15, Amador County sheriff's deputies arrested 28 people, some captured climbing down from trees where they had attempted to hide. Richard Warren Bohn, the owner of the 10-acre tract of land in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains known locally as the California Game Farm, was also arrested. Authorities seized and removed 58 roosters, while more than 350 additional gamecocks were tagged, photographed, and impounded on the property.

Armstrong and other investigators found hundreds of razor-sharp "slashers," the knife-like instruments attached to the legs of the birds in a fight. Further scrutiny revealed three blood-stained cockfighting arenas, along with firearms, drugs, and thousands of dollars in cash. Even though cockfighting is not yet a felony in California, several felony charges were filed against Bohn as a result of his alleged activities related to organizing a cockfight. Sakach believes that felony charges for animal fighting are an important tool that law enforcement officers in every state should have at their disposal. "California," he adds, "has become a bit of a refuge for cockfighters because it is only a misdemeanor here."

RAVS Clinic Reveals Rural Neglect

This past June, SWRO Program Coordinator Tammy Hawley was asked to assist in a case of animal neglect in Bledsoe County, one of the poorest regions in Tennessee. The case was discovered almost by accident during an HSUS Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) clinic, when a local woman brought in an emaciated dog for spaying. The animal was in such bad condition that the veterinarian recommended she be immediately euthanized, to which the owner agreed. While talking to the dog's owner, RAVS team leaders learned that the woman had more animals, and clinic coordinator Tammy Rouse was able to secure an invitation to visit her property. What she saw shocked her, and she immediately placed a call to Hawley, knowing she could help humanely remove the neglected animals and properly document the case for judicial action.

LAURA BEVAN/HSUS

A RAVS volunteer veterinary student examines a dog afflicted with severe mange in Bledsoe County, Tennessee.

What Hawley and Rouse encountered when they arrived was dismayingly familiar to Hawley, who spent years in north Texas successfully prosecuting hundreds of animal neglect and cruelty cases. Team members comprised of Hawley, Rouse, several other HSUS staff members, and RAVS veterinarians and student volunteers found a ramshackle mobile home that served as the residence. There was no running water, and animal feces covered the floor, which in places had caved in. The human residents were using bleach bottles as toilets.

Nearly all of the 30 dogs were suffering from serious hair loss and malnutrition. They, along with a rabbit, a duck, a pig, two horses, and three chickens, were removed from the property and taken to the Young-Williams Animal Center in Knoxville. Unfortunately, 11 dogs had to be humanely euthanized, as they were so ill that attempted treatment would only cause additional suffering. The remaining animals were all treated and transferred to other animal care organizations for adoption.

In addition to cruelty charges, the couple also faces charges because they failed to appear for their arraignment in July. Hawley says steps are being taken to involve adult protective services on behalf of the couple, who fit the profile of animal hoarders. She adds that it is important to understand that hoarding is a mental aberrance, the signs of which were all too evident in the sad little barnyard. "We should all be aware of the signs that hoarding or neglect are occurring," she advises, "and take action for those who cannot help themselves."

I want to learn how I can help our animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Please send me information about

___ Making a memorial donation to honor the life of a pet, friend, or relative.
___ Providing for my pets in my will and in case of emergency.
___ Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS.
___ Using charitable gift annuities and trusts to support The HSUS.
___ Giving The HSUS a gift of stock.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

DAYTIME PHONE

E-MAIL (OPTIONAL)

Promoting the protection of all animals

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL OFFICE
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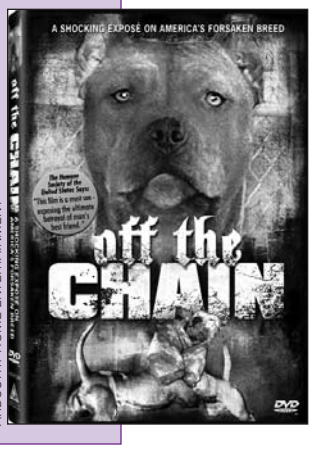
"Off the Chain" Reveals Betrayal of Man's Best Friend

President Theodore Roosevelt owned one. So did Helen Keller. This breed of dog was the trademark of Buster Brown shoes and RCA Victor. Petey was the canine star of television's "Our Gang." And Stubby was the most decorated dog in American history, having received numerous medals and the honorary rank of Sergeant for his services during World War I. What do these famous dogs have in common? They were all American pit bull terriers.

How did such a beloved breed come to be feared as a "public enemy" that is now banned in more than 200 counties and the entire province of Ontario, Canada? That's what director Bobby J. Brown seeks to show in his new film "Off the Chain," available on DVD from Ardustry Home Entertainment.

The film explores the evolution of the breed and gives viewers a disturbing look into the minds of the dog owners and trainers who participate in the gruesome world of dogfighting. Brown spent three years infiltrating the underground subculture of pit bull fighting, gaining the trust of well-established "dog men" who allowed him to film behind their veil of secrecy. But he also captured another side: the loving nature of the dogs and their brutal misuse by those who are supposed to be their caretakers. The HSUS's Eric Sakach is featured in the documentary.

Brown is donating to The HSUS one-third of the proceeds from sales of "Off the Chain" DVDs sold through The HSUS. To order, go to **www.offthechainproductions.com/store** and use the redemption code: HSUSOTC.



ARDUSTRY HOME ENTERTAINMENT

LA Dogfighting "Godfather" Goes Down

On March 9, 2005, Louisiana's dogfighting industry suffered a fatal wound with the early morning arrest of Floyd Boudreaux and his son Guy. A task force comprised of SWRO's Tammy Hawley; HSUS staff from Washington, Florida, and Montana; Louisiana SPCA (LASPCA)officials; and state and local law enforcement officers pooled resources and information to execute the successful warrant. In all, 59 pit bulls were removed from Boudreaux's premises, in Broussard, Louisiana, all bearing scars and injuries from the effects of this most horrendous blood sport.

While the task force collected the evidence for Boudreaux's prosecution, animal care professionals removed the dogs and documented their physical condition. Industrial bolt cutters were needed to cut the heavy logging chains shackled to each dog's neck. With tails wagging furiously, the animals may have been pleasantly surprised to meet people who showed them kindness. At the end of the day, all the dogs were loaded into waiting transport vehicles for the four-hour trip to the LASPCA. Upon arrival, each dog was again evaluated by a licensed veterinarian, then sent to a special "comfort station" where all were allowed to visit with compassionate LASPCA staff members. The dogs received petting and kind words, perhaps for the first time. Because the dogs were trained fighters and not safe around other animals or children, they had to be humanely euthanized not long after their rescue. Their days of suffering were over at last.

Boudreaux was the self-proclaimed "godfather" of Louisiana dogfighting. His arrest initiated a rush of citizen tips, which led to several additional raids and subsequent arrests of more notorious dogfighters. Father and son were both charged with 57 felony counts of dogfighting and two counts of animal cruelty. In addition to the state felony charges, the two could face federal charges for selling and transporting fighting dogs across state lines. All told, they might spend a total of 10 years in prison for each of the 57 charges. For 70-year-old Floyd Boudreaux, that might as well be a life sentence.

HSUS

One of nearly 60 dogs The HSUS helped rescue from the property of convicted dogfighter Floyd Boudreaux.

This successful rescue operation could not have occurred were it not for the combined talents of all agencies involved. The warrant against Boudreaux was issued based on months of investigative work done by local law enforcement, the LASPCA, and data collected and maintained by The HSUS. Evidence included graphic surveillance video and photographs that proved the illegal atrocities carried out. In talking to Hawley about the team effort, Louisiana State Crime Lab's Pat Lane said, "I can't even imagine attempting to undertake this kind of endeavor without all of you and the equipment and expertise you brought to the operation. It was, in my opinion, a model of how agencies can and must be able to work together to enforce the laws of our state and to protect our citizens and animals."

"The Boudreaux case is an excellent example of the dividends that pay off as a result of a united approach," said Hawley. "The success of this raid was clearly the final straw for many individuals who are now getting out of the business. With law enforcement support, as well as the professionalism exhibited by the Louisiana SPCA, it would appear that our message has been received loud and clear."

Director's Report

S. K. GRAMBORT/HSUS

By Lou Guyton

Director of the Southwest Regional Office

Relationships Forged in Love

If it's true that we resemble our pets, then Colby and Teri are identical twins. I have known Teri for many years; she has become one of my most dear friends. Her dog Colby, a tattered yet faithful old pit bull mix, was certainly one of the few friends Teri loved unconditionally. Her dog graciously returned the favor, even up to the moment of her passing while in Teri's arms, tail softly wagging, old blind eyes gently telling Teri it was okay to let go now.

When it was Colby's time, Teri called me, knowing that I would understand her pain and perhaps be able to help her manage her grief. We talked on the phone like reunited soldiers from some foreign war, sharing stories of our past, our dogs, and each other's lives. I love Teri as if she were my own family, but I wonder if our friendship would be as strong had we not had our dogs, their lives, their sparkle that makes them who they are, as the common bond between us all these years? I am forever amazed at the quiet, nearly invisible power our animals have on who we are.

I have often written in this column about the variety of creatures who live with me and my family. The daily routine of feeding and caring for our extensive menagerie of rescued critters (seven horses, a donkey, a cow, multiple chickens, five goats, six dogs, two parrots, two guinea pigs, and a houseful of cats) suddenly became more complicated as third grade came to a close. My daughter Mary Lou and her best friend, Devan, both at the ripe old age of nine years, began their summer learning what it takes to properly care for such a menagerie. It's only fitting, since the two girls are the reason we now have a cow.

Norma Jean Christmas Carol the Cow joined our family in late November as a tiny, orphaned calf. The girls begged, they pleaded, they pooled their savings, they even did the bargaining with the rancher to purchase her (complete with bottle and milk replacer) and bring her home. She is no longer a tiny calf and is loved by all. Perhaps it is the twice-daily visits the girls make to feed their little herd, painting a daily picture of two small blonds, walking through the pasture followed by a half-grown Hereford; the cow's best friend, Ariel the goat; and the goat's protector and friend, Jaynie the Pyrenees dog. Usually in the vicinity are Dutch, the jealous donkey; tailed by four more goats; a few friendly and curious chickens; and Justin, the Pyrenees "livestock guardian dog in training."

What the children have learned this summer is more than how to properly feed and care for their animals. They have learned something only Carol and her companions can teach them. It is the same thing Teri and I learned from her Colby and my Gilligan.

LOU GUYTON/HSUS

Mary Lou Guyton feeds Norma Jean Christmas Carol the Cow.

Without words, without effort, and without fail, our animals teach us that unconditional love brings loyalty, respect, and friendship like no other you will ever experience.

It is for this reason that I continue my work with animals and people despite the conflicts, conflicts that prevent many people from knowing the true joy of having an animal as a friend. It is my wish for each of you, as we continue to work hard on behalf of animals, that you too will feel the overwhelming joy of an animal's unconditional love, and carry it with you for the rest of your life, even after that cherished animal companion passes on. It is why we do what we do.

The *SWRO Regional News* is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, Southwest Regional Office, 3001 LBJ Freeway, Ste. 224, Dallas, TX 75234; 972-488-2964. Lou Guyton, director. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on federal holidays.

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