



Photo courtesy of the Humane Society of the United States

Pacelle testifies before the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security about the Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act in May 2006.



Photo courtesy of the Humane Society of the United States

Pacelle holds a puppy rescued after Hurricane Katrina.

Pacelle and George W. Foresman, Under Secretary for Preparedness of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, at the Humane Society National Conference on Animals in Disasters held in Crystal City, Virginia, in June 2006.



Photo by Bill Petros

cal science department at Georgia Southern University, in a family history he compiled. “Somewhere along the line, some bureaucrat in New Haven, who was obviously not of Italian descent, must have changed the ‘i’ to an ‘e,’ spelling it phonetically.”

Richard Pacelle Jr. and other relatives continue to actively research the family’s history, for which brother Wayne is grateful. “It’s been a big family theme for us to know where we came from,” he says. Pacelle and members of his family did not speak Italian despite New Haven’s strong Italian community, however as an adult the CEO has traveled extensively in the country from which his father’s family immigrated.

When converting to a vegetarian, and later vegan, lifestyle as a young adult, Pacelle found his family’s Italian cooking to be particularly helpful. Its olive oil, fresh vegetables and fruits have been

particularly easy to incorporate in his new diet. “Fortunately Italian cuisine is so versatile,” he explains. “Even now Italian restaurants are a favorite destination because fresh vegetables and pasta don’t involve animals in any way.”

Pacelle says his mixed Italian- and Greek-American upbringing later made him more aware of cultural differences and how they affect people’s relationships to animals and food. “Coming from this background, a focus on food as an organizing principle of family and an appreciation of food is something I may have taken for granted, but now I realize the central place food has in culture.”

The busy CEO also turns to his Italian heritage for role models. “A real hero to me is St. Francis of Assisi,” Pacelle says. “He spoke to the birds and he spoke to animals and he had a very kind sensibility...that’s the tradition that I want to follow in the footsteps of.” ▲