



Change Is in the Air

We have been hearing a lot lately about changes everywhere. Even though we frequently think of January as a new start, for many people it is September when summer is unofficially over and we turn our attention to indoor projects and activities.

NYSHA has been through some changes, too, and everyone is anxious to start his/her different assignments. Please be sure to read about our two new Board members on page 3, a welcome addition with so much to contribute. We have also added some new features to our newsletter, and are sure you will find them informative and interesting.

Thankfully, anyone who works for animal welfare and rights has seen many changes over our lifetime. What is so encouraging is that there's a better awareness about the plight of animals in our world, both locally and globally, and a much needed sensitivity toward their situations.

There was worldwide outrage over the killing of Cecil, the lion, so popular in Africa that he had a name. Statistics show that 95% of the population of Spain is now against bullfighting. Around the world, there are more and more animal protection organizations forming and seeing positive results.

On a national level, big news -- long overdue -- is the elimination of elephant acts in the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus. Even though there's a long way to go to alleviate the cruelty inherent in the horse racing industry, there is more knowledge about the dark side of racing. Equine slaughter houses are no longer permitted in the

U. S., but the horses are still being transported to Canada and Mexico for slaughter. SeaWorld has seen a drop in attendance and its stock value. The National Institutes of Health have stopped baby monkey experiments and released most of the primates to sanctuaries. Strong legislation banning certain types of animal testing has passed Congress.

In New York, among other victories, a bill passed to require publicly-funded higher education facilities to make retired research animals available for adoption, and a bill was defeated that would have legalized the cruel snare traps for coyotes and other animals. One of the most influential cities in the world, New York, banned the sale of puppy mill dogs in its five boroughs, setting a great educational and humane example.

Locally, many communities have seen judges become increasingly aware of the connection between animal cruelty and domestic violence and who are now willing to mete out harsher sentences. We see more and more on the news about animal cruelty because people are truly enraged about it. In our schools, some humane education programs have been incorporated, and again, NYSHA will be focusing on this crucial need in the coming year.

With all this progress, we still have a very long way to go, and we cannot bask in our successes when there is so much left to be done. The good news is that it can be accomplished when we all share the goal and the task to make sweeping changes for all the animals we share the planet with. After all, it is their world, too!

Conversations with Mocha

Early this year, NYSHA's longtime volunteer and computer guru, Linda Rydant, wanted to create a NYSHA YouTube channel entitled *Conversations with Mocha*. Linda's plan was to have a series of videos featuring guests in various fields whose work is directly or indirectly related to animal welfare. NYSHA agreed to give it a try, and Linda asked Pat Valusek, now Board President, to interview the guests.

The inspiration for the name came from Linda's beloved goat, Mocha, who had died, and whose name has been passed on to her sweet cat who appears in the videos -- and actually chats with the guests, but only behind the scenes.

Her first guest was Board member Harry Hovel, Ph. D. who, on behalf of NYSHA, had recently published a booklet, *The Connection Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence*, a topic he speaks on at various venues.

We thank the guests who have generously given of their time for the series so far. They are: Kathy Stevens, founder /director of Catskill Animal Sanctuary, Roberta Schiff, coordinator of Hudson Valley Vegans, and Iris Marie Bloom, Director of Protecting Our Water (Ulster Co., NY.) We look forward to more interviews with people who are helping animals in various ways. Our thanks to Linda for the effort she has put into this project.



To view Mocha, Pat, and guests, you can go to NYSHA's website, nys humane.org, and click on **Conversations with Mocha** on the homepage.

President's Message

This year we are fortunate to have gained two new members to our Board, who are introduced in this newsletter, and we also have a new officer line-up. Harry Hovel is now the Board Chairperson, Dr. Holly Cheever has retained her position as Vice-President, Laura-Ann Cammisa is Secretary, Jean Daniels is Treasurer, and I have become President. I want to thank all of the Board members for their years of service in their former roles and to welcome them in their new positions to continue their work for the animals.

Looking around the country and the world, many of us find what we see as troubling. And we wonder what we can do to make things better.

My suggestion is that we employ the "broken windows" concept in an alternative way. The "broken windows" approach to crime prevention means that police address minor infractions in hopes of preventing more serious ones. But what if by contrast, we looked for minor acts of kindness and humaneness and actively noticed them and praised them. Could not that positive attention lead to the increase in such acts? I think many parents and teachers do this now, but what if all of us, as individuals, took this to heart and each time we witnessed a kind and humane act, especially toward an animal, rather than just think to ourselves, "wasn't that nice of him or her, wasn't that kind," we took a minute to comment on it to the person and compliment the behavior.

If nothing else, it would make for a more pleasant world, at least in our corner of it. It may sound simplistic, but many things that have made a difference in the world have started out as small gestures, such as people who started bringing their dogs to brighten the days of patients in a nursing home, an action which has grown into well-respected pet therapy programs across the country.

I am not suggesting that noticing and complimenting kind and humane actions will lead to some sort of organized movement. I am simply saying, that it is one small way that we can make the world a kinder and less fearful place.

Always be kind to animals,
Patricia Valusek



NYSHA workshop coordinator Pat Valusek, with Mike Orticelle, Division of Criminal Justice Services, and Madison Co. Sheriff Allen Riley

Investigating Animal Cruelty

Morrisville State College hosted NYSHA's "Investigating Animal Cruelty" workshop that was held on June 21. In addition to Sue McDonough, Harry Hovel, and Investigator George Bird, Dr. Beverly Blinn-Knapp, DVM, and Senior ADA Robert Mascari filled out our roster of speakers. State Troopers, Madison County Deputies, and law enforcement representatives from as far away as Rockland County were in attendance and provided excellent evaluations. NYSHA is currently planning the fall workshops, so please keep an eye on the NYSHA website – nyshumane.org.

The Vet Is In

Cats are their own worst enemies when it comes to letting their human guardians know when they are ill and need veterinary intervention. Their instinctive behaviors extend far into the past -- much further than the ten thousand years in which we have domesticated each other, back to the time when they depended on their ability to hide illness and disability successfully in order to survive. Therefore, if your cat shows a difference in behavior for more than 2 days, whether it is a change of appetite, eliminations, or where he/she chooses to rest, you should consider having your veterinarian examine your friend to be sure there is nothing serious causing this change in habits.



One of our board members recently experienced the sad loss of her cat Sandy, a 15-year-old senior whose only health risk during his adult years had been his excess weight. One week he refused his meals shortly after exhibiting a hind-limb lameness, which his veterinarian had diagnosed as a traumatic injury causing a strained ligament. He would

come to sniff the offering and would back off, a very atypical behavior for his usually food-loving self. His guardian took him back to his veterinarian, assuming that pain was the cause of his appetite decline. On this recheck exam, the doctor noted that both eyes showed discharge and elevated intraocular pressures due to glaucoma, and referred him to a veterinary ophthalmologist, who discovered that the cause of this condition was systemic lymphoma (cancer.) Sandy had experienced a spread of lymphoma to the back of his eye sockets and since his cancer was spreading (causing his anorexia) and his quality of life was spiraling downward, he was euthanized to release him from his pain.

In Sandy's case, there would have been no way to save him, even with early detection. Lymphoma may respond briefly to chemotherapy, but we guardians should always ask ourselves if our kitties would elect to have more doctor visits, more needles, more medications stuffed down their throats, or whether we should let them pass away with humane euthanasia, rather than trap them in their failing bodies.

NYSHA's VP, Dr. Holly Cheever, is a partner in The Village Animal Clinic in Voorheesville, NY. She sits on several boards for animal issues, is a speaker and consultant across the nation, and has testified before Congress about animal abuse in circuses, as well as in New York City regarding the carriage horse trade.

Getting to Know Us

Besides the love and respect for animals we all share, most of us come to work for their protection in different ways. We thought it would be interesting to share the stories of our two newest board members.

Diane Fingar

As long as I can remember, I've had a special love for all animals. Being shy as a child, animals gave me a sense of security and comfort. When I was eight, I witnessed a woman torturing a cat with a dog. I think that was the turning point for me, the time when I decided that I would help animals.

In the past I've had three dogs, four cats, and a chinchilla, but now have one dog and two cats; and I am feeling the pains of an empty-nester!

All the animals that have shared life with me are unique and special to me in their own ways. When I was very young, we had a collie named Lassie, who was protective and wise; there was Dusty, our whippet mix, who was extremely intelligent and could have a conversation with anyone; Star, our black lab, who taught me loyalty, perseverance, and how to live in the moment; and Puff, our cat, who appeared out of nowhere, to teach me love and devotion. As I see it, all animals are gifts.

While my career is not based in animal welfare, I have been able to achieve my goal of helping animals through volunteering for animal welfare organizations and through my own endeavors. In addition to running an after school animal club, some of my other activities have included attending protests, facilitating spay/neuter programs, rescue of animals, forming a community coalition, writing a lot of letters, and studying wildlife rehabilitation.

I am thrilled to be a part of NYSHA working with humane education issues and legislation. Both go hand in hand. In my teaching career, I run the after school animal club that focuses on humane issues. Through NYSHA, I hope to spread the importance of humane education to educators throughout the state. I also think it is just as important to educate the public about the issues facing animals today and am thankful to have the platform of NYSHA to do so.



Diane Fingar with Duke and Catalina



Marc Kissel with Bailey

Marc Kissel, Esq.

When I was about 7 years old, my father brought home a stray cat. By age 11 or so my bedroom was filled with all sorts of animals. I now share my home with three dogs and a cat (all rescues), and an 8-year-old Corn Snake, Skully, my daughter cares for. Every single animal I have had was special. Each has a unique personality and an independent meaning.

I started working at the Hudson Valley Humane Society (formerly the Rockland County SPCA) before I could drive -- cleaning cages, walking the dogs, and crushing cans which were recycled to raise money. I saw sweet animals that were abandoned and needed help. That left an impression.

Fifteen years ago, I joined the Hudson Valley Humane Society Board, and in 2002 was put in charge of the law enforcement activities after completing Peace Officer Training. Law Enforcement as a means to aid in improving animals lives is my primary focus. Being an officer means having additional tools to bring to bear making animals' lives better, and helping the humans around them understand what that means.

I established regular classes and present them throughout the year to law enforcement in Rockland County on animal abuse awareness, animal cruelty laws, assessing dogs for officer safety and handling them without unnecessary force. I also have also presented at the Health Department, Probation Department, and several local schools.

After the State made animal abuse training mandatory for all new police recruits, it was a privilege to be one of four people who helped the Department of Criminal Justice Services create the curriculum and presentation to be used statewide. NYSHA representative Sue McDonough and Ulster County Sheriff's Deputy Andrea Fister were on the team along with Scott Neff from DCJS.

Being on the NYSHA Board gives a broader reach and voice to this work and provides access to reach more SPCAs, police departments, legislators, and others throughout the state. I hope to assist NYSHA and its Board members in other aspects of its mission, and look forward to applying the skills learned as an attorney to this endeavor.

My family and my co-workers have asked about all the time spent on this work. My answer is that some guys play golf or watch professional sports, and I do this instead.

Spotlight

Teamwork frequently yields better results than working alone, and for animal protection groups, there is often strength in numbers. NYSHA is proud that we are able to work with Little Brook Farm, one of the oldest, largest, and most important facilities of its kind in the United States.

Little Brook Farm's founder/director, Lynn Cross, is an amazing and dedicated pioneer in rescue work of equines, as well as other deserving animals with nowhere else to turn. Created in 1986, B.I.T.S -- Lynn's educational division -- has reached thousands of people, young and old alike. Their mission is to advocate for the humane treatment of all animals through rescue, sanctuary, and rehabilitation in conjunction with education, vocational, and therapeutic programs. They blend an innovative, multi-faceted approach that links the needs of the rescued equines with the specific goals of their students.

Each spring, NYSHA helps sponsor and participates in the Little Brook Farm onsite, day-long workshop to train police officers and other law enforcement officials on the intricacies of equine abuse cases.

On July 16, some of Little Brook's volunteers and professionals were honored at their 30th Anniversary of B.I.T.S Gala. NYSHA committee

member, Sue McDonough, received a special award for her many years of saving animals from abuse, in addition to using her knowledge and skills to train others to address and alleviate cruelty. Honoree Dr. Steve Naile remarked, "Thank you, Lynn, for the recognition, and also for implementing the law enforcement training. It was a stroke of genius that is already benefitting the horse population."

Thanks to Lynn and all the volunteers and supporters who make Little Brook Farm such a shining example of true rescue work, a magical and inspiring place, both for the animals and the people lucky enough to be a part of it.



Lynn Cross with animal welfare advocate, WTEN's Chief Meteorologist, Steve Caporizzo



Gala honoree, Dr. Steve Naile

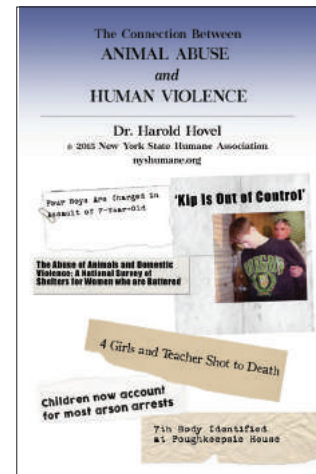
Did You Know?

It seems quite appropriate now to celebrate the progress made for elephants as they leave a major circus, hopefully paving the way for other captive animals in entertainment venues. In honor of these magnificent creatures and to celebrate the recognition finally afforded their intelligence, sensitivity, and natural needs, we found two extraordinary websites to share with our readers.

Using a video about the elephants walking through a hotel lobby in Zaire, two of our Board members, teachers Diane Fingar and Laura-Ann Cammisa, took the opportunity to talk to students about the effects of taking away land inhabited by native species, and to point out that in this rare case, the elephants' needs were accommodated – to the delight of everyone at the hotel. A second video speaks to the power of change that just one individual can effect. To find the links for these videos, please go to NYSHA's website – nyshumane.org.



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How Fighting Animal Cruelty Brings Major Benefits to Human Beings

Animal cruelty is linked directly or indirectly with every type of violent crime and with some non-violent crime. Dr. Harold Hovel, NYSHA Board member and current Chairperson, has written *The Connection Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence*, providing convincing statistics, and he discusses what causes young people to abuse animals and what needs to happen in early childhood to prevent it. This booklet, which NYSHA is making available to judges, law enforcement, etc., is also accessible online at nyshumane.org.

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