



Visit to a Farm Sanctuary

It has been said that if people could see for themselves the terrible atrocities that animals go through in slaughterhouses, many more would be vegetarians. I think the same is true if people could visit a sanctuary and get to know the farm animals “up close and personal.” I had occasion to volunteer at one recently and came away with a new respect and love for the pigs, goats, sheep, turkeys, chickens, and other farm animals who make up this victimized and abused massive animal population. These farm animals share the same features as dogs and cats; they are smart, love attention and affection, like to play, and give back unconditional love. It’s unimaginable what these wonderful animals go through under the domination of our human species. Pain, terror, suffering are the lot of billions of these innocent beings who want nothing more than to live quiet, peaceful, enjoyable lives without conflict, pain, and stress – just like the rest of us.

New York State has several sanctuaries for farm animals. Two well-known ones are Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glen and Catskill Animal Sanctuary in Saugerties. The one I visited is a jewel known as Safe Haven Farm Sanctuary (safehavenfarmsanctuary.org) nestled in the Mid-Hudson Valley in the town of Poughquag. They were just moving from their compact, limited facilities they’ve had since 2006 to a much larger farm property down the road, and about 100 farm animals of all kinds had to be crated with minimum stress to the animals (smart as they were, attempts to explain how much better the new digs would be went over their heads) and moved by horse trailer and volunteer cars the mile distance. I wish I could have read their minds when they saw the new pastures and pens 10 times the size or more than their old ones. It didn’t take long to see how happy they were with their new home.



Little Clyde with pals Scarlett, Savanna, Nicholas and Noah, unwanted by-products of a school egg hatching project, a practice we would like to end legislatively.



Charlotte and Gus, found abandoned at 2 ½ months old, enjoy the new digs.

I got to know Charlotte and Gus, young pigs rescued by compassionate people as the two lay on a pile of dead animals, thrown there by a roadside zoo keeper. (All the animals at Safe Haven are rescues.) Charlotte loved belly rubs and attention right away. Gus was more wary, but when he saw the attention his sister was getting, he came to love belly rubs too. My wife Andrea and I also got to know the 10 ducks we transported in our car, telling them between quacks that their new home would “knock their socks off,” if they had been wearing any.

When we were helping release them into their new home, I bonded with Violet, a 17-year-old goat wearing a coat to keep her warm. She rested her head on my leg and enjoyed all the pats and rubs I gave her, just like my dogs and cats do at home. I helped take Charlotte and Gus to their new large pasture and helped take pigs Leo and Gracie to a pasture as big as a football field. Must have seemed like heaven to those sweet, affectionate pigs. Later, we went to see the turkeys, who rushed over to us, anxious to meet the new humans. We also enjoyed seeing all the chickens, pecking away at the ground for goodies the way they like to, and the two horses, good buddies, in their big new pasture.

The new location has room for more farm animals. Bill and Ellen Crain, the founders of Safe Haven, hope to rescue some cows and donkeys soon. Knowing them, it won’t be long before some very lucky ones will be making many new friends at the sanctuary.

After rounding out the day with a few slices of vegan pizza, we said goodbye to Bill and Ellen, happy to have volunteered and even happier to have made friends with so many amazing farm animals. I can’t wait to go back.

Harold Hovel, NYSHA Board of Directors

Stop Wildlife Killing Contests in NY

Most people aren't aware of many cruel events some organizations across our state and nation employ either for fundraising or to rid an area of a particular animal – wildlife killing contests, organized events in which participants compete for prizes by attempting to kill the most animals, such as coyotes, squirrels, or other animals, over a certain time period. Prizes are usually money and guns. Not only are these killings environmentally detrimental, but murdering living creatures for a prize

sends a message, especially to young people, that wild animals have no inherent value. These contests not only cause the loss of innocent wildlife, but can also result in people devaluing life in general. We want to end this brutality in NY with the passage of a bill now in the Legislature – A.722 (Glick)/S.7542 (Martinez). Please contact your legislators and ask them to support these bills to end this inhumane activity. For more information, see our memo on the Legislative chart on our website.

President's Message

The NYSHA website contains a wealth of material on topics related to animals, but many folks are unaware of its treasures, so I am going to highlight some of the topics and urge you to explore nyshumane.org for yourselves.

For those of you fighting animal cruelty, on the right side of the homepage, there is a **Manual of Procedures on Investigating Animal Cruelty**, along with examples of search warrants, criminal Informations, and court-ready veterinarian forms under **ATTENTION: Police Officers/Veterinarians**. Below that are PDFs of Article 26 and Article 7.

Important to humane agencies holding animals in cruelty cases, there is a description of the security bond posting application procedure, located at **ATTENTION: NYS Humane Agencies**. The write-up contains downloadable forms where you fill in the blanks and are ready to go. The forms were developed by a senior ADA and have been successfully used by many humane agencies.

On the left side of the homepage, we have the Second Edition of *The Connection Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence*, by Board Member Harry Hovel, Ph.D. You can download the booklet to show DAs and judges the relationship between animal crimes and future anti-social acts. You can also download *Introduction to Animal Law*, by NYSHA member Valerie Lang Waldin; it contains a repository of online resources for research and laws. Relevant to these issues, further down the page is a listing of NYSHA Cruelty Investigations Workshops and dates.

Additionally, the homepage link **It's the Law** provides teachers with resources to use for humane education, as well as forms for students who wish to opt out of performing dissection in biology class.

For those interested in ending the horrors of horse racing, we provide **The Ugly Truth About Horse Racing**, a link that contains the NYS Senate Hearing held on Welfare of Racehorses – a real eye-opener for most people -- as well as Bryant Gumbel's HBO segment, *Raced to Death*, a powerful, fact-based piece on what happens on the track and off.

An important feature is **Our Voices in Albany**, which links to a chart of the key animal welfare bills currently in the Legislature. This section also provides a link so you can find your legislators. Please look at the chart, find the bills most important to you, and contact your legislators.

Of interest, if you find injured or abandoned infant wildlife, is the link **Locate a Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator**.

NYSHA's Calendar

NYS Animals Advocacy Day – April 23, 9:30 AM – Visit our table in the Well of the Legislative Office Building in Albany. Join hundreds of others to advocate for strengthening and modernizing our animal cruelty laws.

Investigating Equine Cruelty and Neglect Workshop – June 18 – We are supporting this important workshop for law enforcement being presented by Little Brook Farm – B.I.T.S. Contact Lynn Cross at (518) 821-5506 or email lynnlittlebrookfarm@yahoo.com if you are interested.

National Animal Control Appreciation Week – April 4-8 – Show your appreciation for these dedicated officers who provide such important services for their communities and animals. Perhaps you or a group could offer to sponsor some training or equipment that their towns might not otherwise offer them.

Be Kind to Animals Week – May 3-9 – A celebration that highlights the importance of compassion. You can join by committing to kindness toward all animals 365 days a year, teach your children to respect and appreciate all domestic and wild animals, and report any animal abuse that you see.

National Pet Preparedness Month – June -- Make sure you and your pets are prepared for a natural or manmade disaster. Never leave your pets behind. Our website – nyshumane.org – has a link that will provide you with all the information you will need and may not have thought about.

Lastly, at the top of the homepage, is the **NEWSLETTERS** tab, containing past newsletters with stories of cruelty cases and their resolution that you can use as a reference when dealing with your own. This dropdown also contains **The Vet is In** columns by Holly Cheever, DVM, Board member, providing veterinary information useful to pet owners.

So don't be a stranger to the NYSHA website. There is something for everyone.

Always be kind to animals,

Patricia Valusek

Our Voices in Albany

NYSHA is supporting numerous bills we believe to be important to the welfare of the animals in the state, all of which are cited on the legislation chart on the NYSHA website – nyshumane.org. Highlighted here are among the most important, and we ask you to contact your legislators and urge their support. (Also see the article on the important wildlife killing contests bill.)

“The Pet Store Bill,” A.6298A/S.4234A, prohibits the sale of cats, dogs, and rabbits by retail pet shops. Instead, the stores would showcase animals for adoption from various humane groups.

Improving the felony cruelty law, A.8155A/S.5807A, removes the two-year sentence cap for individuals convicted of aggravated cruelty to animals.

Improving lives for retired racehorses, A.3535B/S.1974B, establishes a commission to help ensure the proper placement and treatment of

retired racehorses and includes a registry to track them as well.

“Bella’s Law,” A.342/S.3867, moves the animal cruelty laws from the Agriculture and Markets Law to the Penal Law where they belong. Their inclusion in the Penal Law will enable all police to be properly trained on these laws.

“Kirby and Quigley’s Law,” A.1834/S.0186, expands the definition of felony cruelty to include harm to companion animals committed during the commission of a felony.

Rodeo Bill, A.8554/S.7971, prohibits certain acts in rodeos and imposes penalties for the violation of such acts.

Your voice is important. Please contact your NY legislators. The animals need your help!

The Vet Is In – Working with Rescues and Sanctuaries

Many of NYSHA’s members are involved with animal rescue organizations: either volunteering or fostering animals, relinquishing an animal or adopting, or perhaps donating money or supplies. Whenever working with a rescue group or sanctuary, it is important to know whether the organization is reputable and will improve the animals’ lives, or is instead a source of suffering and cruelty, seeking donations that never benefit the animals who allegedly receive them.

In order to be certain that you are working with or leaving an animal with a reliable rescue group or sanctuary, ask to be shown the full facility, and avoid any group that will not permit you to see their entire premises. If they want to meet you to take or give you a pet at a public place such as a parking lot, refuse. Some “rescues” are, in fact, hoarders who take on far too many animals, resulting in illness, starvation, and death.

When visiting the animals, check for easy access to fresh water, nourishing food appropriate for age and species, and living space that is adequate in size and hygiene: there should be no foul odors. There should be a quarantine area for new arrivals to decrease their ability to transmit any developing infections to current residents. The animals should be friendly for the most part, allowing for nervousness in new situations, but most should not be hiding or afraid of contact.

If any of the animals look like they’re in bad shape – thin, lethargic, in need of medical attention – don’t necessarily believe the excuse that they just came in this way. Some may have but find out how long

they’ve been there and do some research – ask what the plan is to take care of them. The same goes for unsanitary conditions. A frequent excuse from hoarders is, “I was sick today and my volunteers did not show up.”

The animals who are up for adoption should have had a veterinary exam and fecal sample testing, ideally. If the animal lacks a fecal test, have it done ASAP by your own veterinarian, who can also check for heartworm disease, fungal dermatitis, and external parasites like fleas and ticks.

If leaving a bequest or large donation, check out the organization carefully to make sure that your money will be used for something you believe in. Does the organization have a board or directors? Who is on the board? Is it registered with the appropriate bureau of charities? Speak with management or the development director to be sure that there is a succession plan that can handle the gift. When doing a will, have a lawyer verify the reputation of the organization and check on legal actions against it.

Most importantly – if you are in doubt about the care the animals are getting or the purpose of the organization, contact local authorities to express your concerns. Witnessing and reporting animal cruelty in a supposedly safe situation is the greatest contribution you can make.

Holly Cheever, DVM, NYSHA Board of Directors

The World Around Us – Bats

Spring is around the corner! With it comes spring cleaning, and we are likely to encounter bats or their nests. It is important to encourage them to remain, and if need be, safely relocated if indoors.

Poor bats! Unfairly maligned in literature, movies, TV, and certainly at Halloween, how many of us are terrified when we find them in our chimneys, barns, or somehow in our homes? Yet without their help controlling the insect population we would be in dire straits, both personally and in the environment at large.

There are 39 species of bats in the United States. One of the most common in New York



Bats are an important part of our ecosystem.

State is the northern long-eared bat, which is comparatively small, with a wingspan of 3.4 inches. Like most bats in New York, females give birth to one pup in July. They roost with their young among branches in interior forests, and migrate in autumn from the forest canopy to a cave, which can often be shared with other bat species.

Northern long-eared bats, like most bats, have long been appreciated for their diet of primarily insects, providing humans with at least a little relief from pesky bugs. Some have been recorded living as long as 18 years in the wild!

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Spotlight – John Di Leonardo

As discouraging as the struggle for justice for animals is, it is easy to forget about many of the victories and how inspiring some of the people who lead these fights are. One of our Board members adopted some rescued chickens from Long Island Orchestrating for Nature (LION) and put us in touch with its founder and executive director, John Di Leonardo. In addition to a BS in psychology, he holds an MS Science in Anthrozoology from Canisius College, a graduate certificate in Jain Studies from the International School of Jain Studies in India, and he also took graduate courses at the former Humane Society University. His story and work are impressive examples to us all.



For his day job, John manages the Grassroots Campaign of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), arming activists around the world with tools for effective demonstrations. He also heads PETA's Animals in Entertainment Campaign, coordinating a team against the use and abuse of animals in circuses, dolphinariums, roadside zoos, and dog-sledding operations.

Under his leadership, LION is the foremost animal advocacy organization on Long Island. They stopped the slaughter of thousands of deer and hundreds of geese and eliminated multiple wild animal acts and rodeos from New York City to Suffolk County. He and LION have also been responsible for shutting down puppy and fur stores and extending its activities. In 2019, LION defeated SeaQuest Aquariums' application to expand to Long Island, sparing untold thousands of animals from death, and eliminated animal acts at a major street festival.

Both a direct rescue and animal advocacy organization, LION is the leading domestic fowl rescue in the Northeast, saving hundreds of wild and farmed animals every year from abandonment, neglect, or injury, transporting wild animals to wildlife rehabilitators and treating, fostering, and transporting farmed animals -- mostly fowl, who make up 95% of farmed animals in the U.S. -- to sanctuaries throughout the U.S. In 2019, LION barred a fowl slaughterhouse from opening, saving about 40,000 ducks and chickens annually.

Currently, they are campaigning to end school hatching projects in New York State. As John explained, "Educators teach children the wrong lessons -- not that ducks, chickens and other fowl are feeling individuals, but that they are objects to be thrown out like trash or abandoned when the project is over, which really is no different than abandoning a dog or cat."

LION is completely funded by private donations, as few grants apply to the work they do. Looking to the future, John said that, "... as one of the most successful grassroots animal rights organizations and one of the only domestic fowl rescues in the country, we are always trying to expand our pool of charitable donors and would welcome any assistance anyone can offer." When asked about LION's goals, he quickly responded, "In the immediacy, LION desperately needs to raise funds for a new van to replace our old, broken down vehicle. This is vital for us to continue to answer the calls of animals in need. The messages adorning this vehicle, especially the hatching project messaging, will help us reach our next goal, of ending cruel hatching experiments that leave infant animals crippled, dead, or orphaned in schools throughout New York."

During his tenure with PETA, he has had the pleasure of seeing Cole Bros. Circus fold its tents for the last time, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus shut down after 146 years, and SeaWorld announce the end of its sordid orca breeding program. Formerly, John managed day programs on Long Island for people with developmental disabilities and drove the Horseless eCarriage campaign, a humane alternative to New York City's cruel horse-drawn carriage industry. His life's work clearly is focused on service, change, and the greater good.

He has been honored to be profiled by the Long Island Herald and Long Island Pulse Magazine and has received awards from the Suffolk County SPCA and the Humane Society of the United States, as well as the distinction of being named Mr. February in Rescue Men USA's 2016 Calendar.

We had the pleasure of a short but fascinating conversation with John recently and wish it could've been longer. For the full interview, please see a link from this Spotlight article on our website.

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However, such a life span would be a rare occurrence today. Due to white-nose syndrome, the population of most bat species in New York has decreased by at least 90%. The northern long-eared bat was the hardest hit by this fungus and has completely disappeared from many areas, compelling both the state and federal governments to label them as "threatened."

White-nose syndrome was discovered in 2006 in a cave in Schoharie County, NY. It appears as a white powdery film on the muzzle and wings of infected bats and grows best in lower temperatures, making hibernacula, such as caves, mines, and crevices, threatening to their health. During dormant winter months, a bat's body temperature drops and immune system is depressed. Unfortunately, this fungus can persist in warmer weather, enabling it to re-infect any surviving bats the following year.

Amazingly, recent research shows that one species of bats has been able to survive – the little brown bat population in New York State appears to be on the rise. This resilient group had a lower fungal growth than those who were in decline. Although reasons for their resilience are unclear, it may be that these bats have developed an immune response or they have a different collection of micro-organisms on their skin to protect them.

While scientists work to understand the causes of the bats' decline across the country, we can celebrate this glimmer of hope that the eradication of bat populations throughout the state and country may not be the elimination of all bats, who are a very important part of our ecosystem. So...we wish them luck surviving another obstacle besides loss of habitat, disease, and, of course, their undeserved reputation!

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