

## NYSHA

Summer 2022

### Greetings

Summer again, and once more we focus on equines and the need to change the public perception of horse racing. It is animal cruelty, pure and simple. But we have made some strides in legislation in New York State and increasing numbers of people are becoming aware of the horrific results in almost anything that commercializes horses. So once again we devote space here to this crucial issue. Let's hope we can all continue to influence minds and change hearts about this so-called sport of kings.



With fall approaching, NYSHA will continue concentrating on humane education issues to be able to reach learners of all levels in multiple venues. Each of us is an educator every day, so use your voice to speak up for animals. Several of our articles this month suggest many ways.

### Summer is Not Fun for Horses at RaceTracks

Look, I get it, I really do. The weather is gorgeous and we're human beings, so naturally we look for outdoor things to do. In the Capital Region, for so many, for so long, the centerpiece of summer fun has been world-renowned Saratoga Race Course – “the oldest,” so they say, “sporting venue in the nation.” What better way, the thinking goes, to spend a lazy July or August afternoon than to watch those beautiful, majestic animals doing what they love – run. Well, facts, as the great John Adams famously said, are stubborn things, and here are a few on “The Sport of Kings.”

The typical racehorse is torn from his mother as a mere babe, thrust into an intensive training regimen at 18 months – long before his body is even remotely mature – and first raced at two, the rough equivalent of a first-grader. From there, the incessant *grinding* – again, on an unformed skeleton – begins, because if he's not racing, he's not earning. He is kept locked – alone – in a tiny 12x12 stall for over 23 hours a day, commodified (lip tattoos, auctions, “claiming races”), controlled (cribbing



collars, lip/nose chains, tongue ties, eye blinders, metal mouth-bits), and cowed (whips). Bought and sold multiple times over the course of his so-called career, he lives a stressful, tenuous existence that in and of itself causes pain: studies show that upward of 90% of active racehorses suffer from chronic ulcers.

Then, too, death. Since 2009, over 1,600 horses have died at NYS tracks. Saratoga, with but a short eight-week meet, averages 15 kills per summer. 15 dead horses – for \$2 bets and frivolous entertainment. Nationally, Horseracing Wrongs has documented (through FOIA) over 8,000 confirmed deaths since 2014; its research shows that well over 2,000 horses are killed at U.S. tracks annually. *Aortic rupture, pulmonary hemorrhage, blunt-force head trauma, broken necks, severed spines, ruptured ligaments, shattered legs.* Over 2,000 – that's about six every single day.



What's more, while Racing desperately tries to downplay the extent of the problem, two independent studies (and industry admissions) indicate that most spent or simply no-longer-wanted racehorses, including, eventually, many of the ones who will be racing at Saratoga this summer, are brutally bled-out and butchered at "career's" end – some 10,000-15,000 erstwhile "athletes" slaughtered annually.

In short, at its core, horseracing is unmitigated cruelty and wholesale killing, a world away from the sport it purports to be. In fact, in regard to how the animals are treated, horseracing is not a whit different than dogracing, which is all but dead in America, having been *outlawed on moral grounds* in 42 states. Horseracing should – must – be next. Please help spread the word, and if possible, join Horseracing Wrongs at one of its several planned protests at Saratoga this summer. Thank you. (For more information, please visit [horseracingwrongs.org](http://horseracingwrongs.org).)

Patrick Battuello, NYSHA Board Member and Founder of Horseracing Wrongs

## Legislation Waiting for Gov. Hochul's Signature

Great news about bills NYSHA joined with others in supporting and promoting. These bills have passed, but as of this date are still waiting to go to Governor Hochul's desk. Please [contact her](#) and ask her to sign them into law. (518) 474-8390

The Puppy Mill Pipeline bill ([A.4283/S.1130](#)), which prohibits the sale of dogs and cats and rabbits by NY retail pet shops, will save untold suffering of animals bred in dreadful circumstances. The bill authorizes collaboration with humane organizations to provide space to showcase cats, dogs, and rabbits awaiting adoption.

The NY Cruelty-Free Cosmetic Act ([A.5653/S.4839B](#)) will ban manufacture or sale of most cosmetics products or ingredients that have been tested on animals after 1/1/2023.

The Shelter Standards bill ([A.6246/S.6870B](#)) will protect animals by providing standards of care for ones held in or being transported by animal shelters and humane organizations.

## Can You Break a Car Window to Rescue an Animal in Distress?

Summer especially is a season to watch

or listen for any animals left in a car as you walk through a parking lot. What can you do to help if you see an animal in distress in a hot car in New York?

Know that it is against the law in New York to leave a companion animal in a vehicle in extreme temperatures. We all know the dangers of closed vehicles, even in the shade. Although it is tempting to break the car window, **don't**.



First ask the store or mall manager or security guard – providing them with the make of car and license plate -- to make an announcement to try to locate the owner of the vehicle. If owner is not **quickly** located, contact an authorized person who can legally take the necessary steps to remove the animal from the car. In New York, “a police officer, peace officer, peace officer acting as an agent of a humane society, emergency medical services personnel, paid firefighter, or volunteer firefighter who in the performance of such volunteer firefighter's duties” is directed to respond to a call for assistance to remove the animal or animals from the vehicle.

If all else fails, and the animal is in such distress, you may make the choice to break the window, but be aware that you may face charges and have to pay for repairs -- but if you save the animal, it may be worth it.

You might want to have a copy of the law, **Confinement of companion animals in vehicles: extreme temperatures**, on you or be able to access it on your phone. <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/AGM/353-D>

## Ask the Vet: Helping an Overheated Animal

If you assist with an overheated animal rescued from a hot vehicle or if your own companion animal becomes overheated, here are some tips on what you can do.

Take the animal to a cool area. Offer the animal cool (not ice) water and dampen the skin with cool water to gradually bring his/her temperature down. Do not plunge him/her into water or use ice water, which could make matters worse. Use a fan to help with cooling.

If the animal continues panting and drooling and does not seem to respond to these cooling attempts, he/she may be experiencing heat stroke, which can affect the organs and be deadly. Symptoms will be continued excessive panting, and he/she may experience weakness, seizures, and bloody diarrhea. The animal will need to immediately be taken to a veterinary clinic for emergency care.

Holly Cheever, DVM, NYSHA VP

Here are a couple of links for more information.

[Southtown Animal Hospital](https://southtownsanimalhospital.com/uncategorized/overheating-and-heatstroke/)

<https://southtownsanimalhospital.com/uncategorized/overheating-and-heatstroke/>

[Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine](https://www.vet.cornell.edu/departments-centers-and-institutes/canine-health-center/health-info/summer-heat-safety-tips-dogs)

<https://www.vet.cornell.edu/departments-centers-and-institutes/canine-health-center/health-info/summer-heat-safety-tips-dogs>



## Some Summer Tips to Keep Your Companion Animal Comfortable and Healthy

Remember -- reduce exercise for your dog or cat in hot weather, including bicycle run-alongs, stay on the shady side of the street or park, and always bring water with you for your furry friend.

Be mindful of hot asphalt which can heat up their bodies and burn their paws.

Although a summer haircut may seem like a cooling idea, don't trim the coat too short or down to the skin, as the coat provides protection against the heat and sun.

## Yikes! A Snake

While hiking on a rocky trail in the Adirondacks recently, I was casually reminded to be watchful of snakes. I have to admit, I was so captivated by the beauty around me, that I forgot that we humans were walking through the homes of many different and amazing creatures who didn't exactly invite us.

While many think of snakes with evil and/or mystical connotations, **snakes are fascinating beings** who are generally quite harmless to humans and play an important role in their habitats. Snakes are good predators and good prey for a wide range of animals in our state.

**Of 17 different species in NY, only 3 are venomous.**

The **copperhead** is the least venomous and most common of the three. These snakes have a thick body that can grow up to 2-3 feet in length. They're identified by their copper-red diamond-shaped head and a light body covered with a striking green or reddish-brown pattern. Copperheads are found mainly in the lower Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains. A copperhead bite can cause serious injury and in rare cases, death.

The rarely encountered **eastern massasauga rattlesnake**, also known as the swamp rattler, is recognized by their stout body, with large black or dark brown hourglass markings and nine large scales on the crown of their head. They are the smallest of the venomous snakes averaging 27 inches in length. The swamp rattler can be found in large wetlands northeast of Syracuse and west of Rochester, and are listed as Endangered.

The most venomous of the three is the **timber rattlesnake**. The timber rattler is listed as Threatened and found in the Hudson Valley region, the Adirondacks, and Central New York. Herpetologists consider timber rattlesnakes to have three primary color variations,

or morphs, black, yellow, or tan. Regardless of their morphs, all timber rattlesnakes have broad heads, a black tail with a rattler, and average between 3 to 4 1/2 feet in length. While they aren't aggressive and would prefer to be left alone, timber rattlers will rattle and strike if confronted. The timber rattler is highly venomous. A bite is extremely dangerous and potentially deadly.

Timber rattlesnakes have suffered significant declines in population due to several decades of bounty hunting along with commercial capture for snakeskin products and the pet trade, loss of habitat, and indiscriminate killing. Collecting timber rattlesnakes from the wild is now prohibited by law under Environmental Conservation Law 11-0535 and 11-0103(2)(c).



**If you happen to come across a snake**, the obvious is true -- leave it alone. If a snake is in your path, remain at least 6 feet away and calmly walk around it. Most snakes are quite shy and will quickly slither away, but the timber rattler is likely to hold their position.

**If you are bitten by a snake**, call 911 immediately. Do not try to suck out the venom with your mouth, do not take ibuprofen, aspirin, or painkillers that thin your blood, and do not apply a tourniquet. Do remove restrictive clothing and jewelry from the bitten area, do try to minimize movement, do try to identify the snake, and always seek medical attention immediately.

Diane Fingar, NYSHA Board Member and Wildlife Rehabilitator

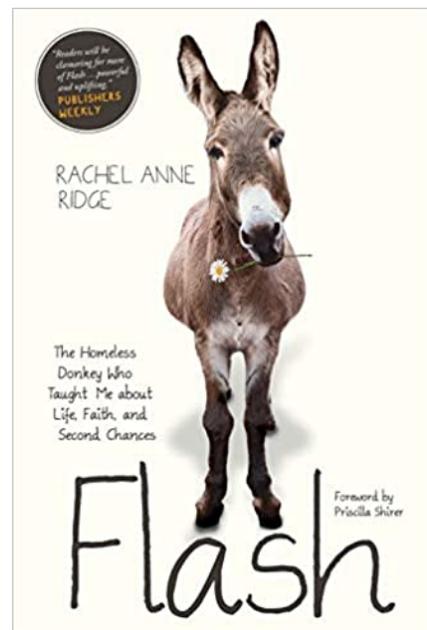
## Book Review: Flash: The Homeless Donkey Who Taught Me About Life, Faith, and Second Chances

As you can tell from our lead story, the summer focus for many people is on horses -- racing or rescuing them.

Often overlooked by the public are the donkeys and ponies who are companions for equines at the track and frequently discarded when the racing season is over. Donkeys are extremely endearing and loyal creatures. Often adopted as pets, they face abandonment or the slaughter house when people tire of them or the care that they need.

We all know about stray cats and dogs, but how about stray donkeys? Well, Flash was a stray and disheveled donkey who was taken in by a family and changed their life. The author, Rachel Anne Ridge, began a journey with him and as he grew, so did she -- on a spiritual, emotional, educational, professional and intellectual trip.

Each chapter is devoted to one of Flash's adventures or lifestyle and the parallels with what is going on in Rachel's life. It is an easy read and, for those who don't know donkeys very well, a great way to learn about them.



For educators, there is a study guide if needed and the book can be used on all levels. In fact, it is a wonderful book club selection and, by using the selected topics, a perfect way to educate people about these amazing barnyard companions.

Making the connection with Flash opened up worlds to Rachel. He has his own Facebook page! She has become an advocate for donkeys and now has a website detailing his happy days with Henry, a rescued mini-donkey, to share his -- and her -- life. In the back of the book there's a list of rescue organizations and facts about donkeys and their treatment worldwide.

So -- a chance encounter on a dark country road not only saved Flash but encouraged and enabled another being to become a spokesperson for many other unfortunate animals. It's an inspiring example of the power each of us has. Even though the book has strong spiritual overtones, its basic messages of kindness, love, and welcoming unexpected animals into our lives explain the power they have to change us. When many of us are told that our animals are lucky to be with us, so many of us feel just the opposite -- that we are the lucky ones. For Rachel, Flash was truly an unexpected blessing.

*This book can be purchased at various on-line book stores.*

## The Economy and Empty Food Dishes



During the early days of the pandemic, a group of NYSHA reps and volunteers in the area of the organization's office personally responded to the need for animal food at local food pantries. They envisioned the need to be short-term, but with the current inflation, they find that pantries are in need of this food now more than ever. The volunteers believe it is necessary to continue collecting among themselves and donating to pantries on a regular basis.

So, we again encourage you or a group of you to check out food pantries in your area and donate if you can. Your local animal shelter would also appreciate donations to help with today's increased prices. A dog or cat in your community will certainly appreciate having a full tummy.

## Thank You for Your Support!

For more information on what NYSHA has been up to, please check our newly refreshed website -- [nyshumane.org](http://nyshumane.org) ! There's a wealth of information including a list of wildlife rehabilitators who are often needed at this time of year. Remember we can all make a difference and overcome cruelty and ignorance. Even if it's just one animal at a time, it makes a difference for that animal - as we've all learned from the companions that we have rescued!

Thank you for your continued support of NYSHA. Wishing you and yours -- Including your four-legged family members -- a safe and happy summer.

### The Board and Staff at NYSHA

**Thank you for caring and taking action!**

***NYSHA is a 501-c-3 non-profit organization. Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. No goods or services are received in return for your kind gift.***

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