

HUMANE REVIEW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW YORK STATE HUMANE ASSOCIATION



Cooperative Effort Shuts Down Irresponsible Racehorse Breeder

On May 18, one-time Wall Street executive and disgraced racehorse breeder, Ernie Paragallo, was led away in handcuffs after Greene County Judge George Pulver sentenced him to two years in jail and a \$33,000 fine. In March, Paragallo had been found guilty of 33 counts of animal cruelty in a non-jury trial presided over by Judge Pulver and prosecuted by Greene County District Attorney Terry Wilhelm.

Though Paragallo apologized and his attorney pleaded for a light sentence, Judge Pulver would have none of it. Addressing Paragallo, Judge Pulver said, "Your sense of integrity, your code of conduct, your perception of right and wrong, was perhaps formed by your days on either mean streets or Wall Street. Money, the bottom line, and opulence in your mind, trumps morality, honesty, and civility."

A hearing to determine the amount of restitution that Paragallo must pay to Equine Rescue Resource of Orange County and the Columbia-Greene Humane Society will occur in July.

A chain of events, involving several agencies, brought this case to light and succeeded not only in ending the suffering



Yearling after four months in recovery.

of the horses on this particular farm, but also in providing better oversight of breeding farms across the state.

In April 2009, an upstate horse dealer purchased some horses she believed could be rehabilitated from a trader who buys and then sells horses for slaughter. The horse dealer noticed another group of horses too emaciated to be sold -- even for slaughter. Upset by their appearance, the horse trader contacted a Pennsylvania (PA) horse rescue group that bought and trucked the skinny horses to PA. Subsequently, it was discovered that the horses had belonged to Paragallo. News that Paragallo had sent emaciated horses to slaughter went "viral" on the Internet.

Seeing the frightening report, a woman on Long Island who was boarding a yearling and his mother at Paragallo's farm became concerned. She contacted the PA rescue for assistance, and they in turn reached out to Colleen Segarra of Equine Rescue Resource in Orange County. Segarra agreed to visit the Greene County farm and remove the two horses. Shortly before Segarra's arrival, the woman called the farm and ordered them to give the horses to Segarra.

When Segarra arrived, she watched as some horses were being chased by a tractor. Shortly afterward, she was presented

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Emaciated yearling examined at Cornell

President's Message

For those of us who care about animals and are involved every day trying to protect them, the news can be so discouraging. Yet, in the large picture, there are some good trends and reasons for hope.

Lobby Day, an annual event co-sponsored by NYSHA with The Humane Society of the United States in March, was an unprecedented success. This year, almost 200 people from all over New York met with their legislators and have already seen success because of their efforts. In April, Senator Eric Adams organized a Roundtable to discuss a number of key issues of interest to animal advocates. I, along with NYSHA's Legislation Committee Chair, Samantha Mullen, attended the event, which was co-facilitated by Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal.

April saw Earth Day: Animal Law Symposia, held at the University at Albany's Law School, which promoted legal action in the humane field. In addition, Hudson Valley Community College's Animal Law certificate program was approved, thanks in large part to the tireless work of our Board member, Valerie Lang, who teaches humane law courses at HVCC.

On a more day-to-day level, New York State now has laws providing more protection for animals in extreme weather. One enables police and humane agents to break into cars in very hot or cold conditions if necessary to rescue animals before they are seriously harmed. We have posted a link to this measure (Agriculture & Markets Law, Article 26, Section 353-d) on NYSHA's website. Another law now requires dogs to have shelter when left outside (A & M Law, Article 26, Section 353-b). This indicates, along with other recent legislation, that we are moving in the right direction!

Also, passed last year were: Executive Law, Section 840, Section 1, Subdivision 1, requiring training in animal protection laws for municipal police and peace officers; and A & M Law, Article 26, Section 374, banning carbon monoxide chambers and making other humane provisions for euthanasia of shelter animals. Such legislative progress, while slow in coming, should be welcomed by all who are working on behalf of animals.

There is a LONG way to go, especially for cats, horses, farm animals, and wildlife. For right now, though, one thing each of us can do is educate others about the dangers of leaving animals in hot cars, where temperatures can reach fatal levels in minutes. Even air conditioners malfunction with tragic results. Be on the alert in parking lots and leave flyers in public places to warn pet parents it is better to leave a four-legged family member home in warm weather.

Wishing you and yours a happy, healthy, and safe summer.

As always, for the animals,
Laura-Ann Cammisa

NYSHA's Calendar

NYSHA's Fall 2010 Animal Cruelty Investigation Workshop – For location, date, and a registration form for the upcoming workshop in the fall, please check NYSHA's website – nyshumane.org – later in the summer.

NYSHA's Empire State Animal Protection Forum – October 1 & 2 in Troy, NY, at Hudson Valley Community College, held in cooperation with the Animal Outreach Club at HVCC. (See article in this issue of Humane Review.)

Daisy Case Update

In our last issue, we reported on Daisy, a sweet Beagle who had been left to die in a garbage bag in a Saratoga County wooded area. NYSHA was managing the reward fund, with everyone hoping that the amount in the fund, plus the monies pledged by other humane groups and individuals, would tease forth a useful tip to the Sheriff's Office. To date, that has not happened; Daisy's abuser is still at large. Should that abuser be found and arrested, NYSHA will let you know.

Humane Legislation

Please see the President's Message for a summary of animal protective legislation passed in 2009-2010 session and in the session preceding it.

This issue of Humane Review was prepared as the 2009-2010 legislative session was nearing its projected (but expected to be extended) official conclusion date of June 21, but before any of the animal-related bills we've been working on or monitoring had passed. Therefore, we are not including a legislative article in the current issue. Please check NYSHA's website (www.nyshumane.org) for updates about key animal bills.

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Law Enforcement Presence at Workshops Continues to Grow

"I arranged to have this workshop here because animal cruelty is a problem that is not going away, so we have to know how to deal with it," said Undersheriff Ron Stevens of the Schoharie County Sheriff's Office when welcoming the 21 attendees at NYSHA's "Investigating Animal Cruelty" workshop held in Schoharie on May 22.

The Sheriff's Office in Tioga County and Chief John Kaplan of the Potsdam Police Department shared that view when they hosted NYSHA's workshops in April of this year and the fall of last year respectively. Because of the increased concern about animal abuse on the part of the public and its demand that something be done, Sheriff's offices are welcoming NYSHA's instruction. In fact, because of the excellence of our training, some are requesting that NYSHA return and conduct refresher courses in their areas.

And that interest is reflected in the number of law enforcement



Tioga County Deputies, Tom Schmidt, Paul Garlitz, and Alan Bobier, with NYSHA speaker, Dr. Harry Hovel

officers attending our training. When we started conducting workshops some 11 years ago, there was a ratio of about a quarter to a third law enforcement, and the rest of the attendees were a combination of humane investigators, animal control officers, and other interested individuals. Now, the ratio of law enforcement has increased to more than half of the class. This is very positive for the animals of the state.



NYSHA speaker Deputy Andrea Fister, Schoharie Undersheriff Ron Stevens, NYSHA Chair, Pat Valusek

Another boost to animal cruelty investigation has been the addition of animal cruelty investigation to the curriculum of the police academies that train new municipal police -- a curriculum that was developed based on the course produced by NYSHA's instructors, Sue McDonough, Holly Cheever, DVM, and Harry Hovel, Ph.D. and put in the appropriate format by Andrea Fister, a Deputy of the Ulster County Sheriff's Office and also a NYSHA instructor.

We are very proud to have played a major role in the promulgation of this type of training across the state, and with your support, we hope to continue providing workshops for the foreseeable future, so that all veteran police officers can be trained.



Empire State Animal Protection Forum

October 1 and 2 are the Dates to Save for the 2010 Empire State Animal

Protection Forum. If you care for or about animals, you will enjoy and benefit from attending this year's conference.

Among our sponsors this year are the ASPCA, PetSmart Charities, and The HSUS, who will provide gifts for all attendees.

To begin with some fun and to get everyone acquainted, NYSHA will hold a reception, with scrumptious food, on Friday evening at the Holiday Inn Express in Rensselaer. Discount rate rooms for those staying overnight will be available. (Call 518-286-1011 and let the Front Desk know you are making a reservation for the NYS Humane Association -- HVCC conference. Rates are \$99 S/D per room.)

Mark Your Calendar ESAPF 2010 – October 1 & 2

On Saturday, October 2, at the Hudson Valley Community College in Troy (just across the Hudson River from Albany), the Animal Outreach Club at HVCC will join us in providing a day of great workshops. The morning will begin with a general session on the latest on puppy mills and pet stores, presented by Dale Bartlett (The HSUS) and Mary Anne Kowalski (Humane Society of the Capital District).

Throughout the remainder of the day, experts from state and national organizations will speak on topics falling into one of these categories: 1) Animal Care Facilities Operations, 2) Animal Care Facilities Management, and 3) Animal Protection and Cruelty. You can attend one track of three workshops, or mix and match among the nine workshops.

Following lunch, you will be inspired at an awards ceremony as we honor those who have done outstanding work to help animals in New York.

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Irresponsible Racehorse Breeder... Continued from page 1

with the yearling who had a leg injury, resulting from the chase, and was half the size he should have been. She asked to be taken to his mother, and as she walked through the barn, she saw various emaciated horses. When she asked why they looked like that, the barn help told her that there had been insufficient food all winter. She got to the stall with the mother and was horrified. The horse was underweight, covered with lice, and suffered from serious hair loss.

Segarra immediately called the area State Police (SP) barracks to report these conditions. As the SP were unable to respond to the scene immediately, Segarra loaded the two horses and drove them to the barracks. Upon seeing their condition, the SP had Segarra, an experienced horsewoman, write a statement describing what she had seen at the farm. Subsequently, the SP, with the assistance of the Columbia-Greene Humane Society (CGHS), executed a search warrant on the Paragallo farm. CGHS took charge of 177 horses and impounded them on the property. Paragallo surrendered most of the horses. Though some had to be euthanized, homes were found for the rest.

Later that month, in an effort to befriend Segarra, Paragallo called her and offered to pay the cost of the Cornell veterinary care that was necessary for the yearling and his mother. Segarra, alarmed, contacted NYSHA. NYSHA had provided Segarra with guidance on other cases in which she was involved and had coached her through a challenging security posting hearing. In this situation, NYSHA advised her not to talk to him as his behavior constituted witness tampering and to report Paragallo's actions to the DA's Office and CGHS which she did.

Months passed before the case was concluded, but it was worth the wait. In addition to the sentence, some long-term changes have occurred. In December 2009, the New York Racing Association (NYRA) said it would bar owners from racing if any of their horses were sold for slaughter. The NYS Racing and Wagering Board (Board) forced Paragallo to surrender his agent's license, and his daughters gave up their owners' license. (Paragallo had previously lost his owner's license because of improper business dealings.) When Paragallo began selling his healthy racing stock, the Board stopped the sales, pending a Board decision on the

case. The Board further started an action that would prevent Paragallo from ever racing again in NYS and impose civil fines stemming from the 33 counts of cruelty. In addition, the state's Thoroughbred Breeding and Development Fund, from which Paragallo had collected hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years, has now established stringent, yearly inspection standards for the 400 breeding farms in the state, rather than acting only as census takers.

What you can do:

One person can make an enormous difference. If you see cruelty, report it. Do not be deterred.

Write letters to Judge Pulver and DA Wilhem thanking them for their excellent work on this case. (Judge George Pulver, Greene Co. Courthouse, 320 Main St., Catskill, NY 12412. District Attorney Terry Wilhelm, 411 Main St., Catskill, NY 12414)

Support NYSHA, so we can continue to provide animal cruelty investigation workshops and to act as a resource to the community.

Matching Grants

Have you checked to see if your workplace matches employee's donations to qualified organizations? If not sure, please ask your employer. You may be able to double your donation to NYSHA.

Mark Your Calendar... Continued from page 3

During the day, you will be able to visit exhibitors with helpful information on animal-related products, organizations, and businesses.

The fee for ESAPF, including reception, workshops, and meals (continental breakfast and lunch on Oct. 2) is \$75. For more information, visit NYSHA's website – nyshumane.org. To place your name on our mailing list, please send contact info, including email address to: info@nyshumane.org, specifying that you wish to receive a registration or sponsorship/exhibitor application for ESAPF.

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us!

Your Will Can Be Your Way...

Your will can be your way to continue helping animals after your lifetime. We are grateful that many of you have given NYSHA generous donations. If you also wish to remember NYSHA in your will, please ask your attorney to specify our official name and address as follows: New York State Humane Association, Inc., 99 Victor Road, Fairport, NY 14450

• Federal ID Number 22-2238112

Note: This address is for bequests only. For other donations, questions, or information about our programs, write NYSHA at PO Box 3068, Kingston, NY 12402.