

HUMANE REVIEW

nyshumane.org

The Newsletter of the New York State Humane Association



Better Protections for NYS Animals!

NYSHA, along with other humane organizations, has worked for years to pass legislation to stop the wanton killing of wildlife by sports club members and other participants simply to win prizes based on the large number of animals they killed in wildlife killing contests.

Thankfully, things changed. The NYS Legislature finally heard the people – that means you with your calls, emails, and letters – and passed a bill to outlaw these horrific competitions. And your additional calls, emails, and letters urging Governor Hochul to sign the bill made a difference: she signed the bill into law!

How great is that! Countless numbers of squirrels, rabbits, opossums, raccoons, coyotes, and others will no longer be hunted and killed, or cruelly left to die of their injuries. Also, dependent young won't be left orphaned and defenseless against starvation, predation, and the elements. This great victory will go into effect in November of 2024 – apparently to provide time for organizations that hold these contests to find alternatives to such fundraising. But the law is in place and these contests will finally be illegal!

Yet another amazing thing happened. NYSHA, along with other animal welfare groups, had long advocated for bills that would stop the slaughter of all horses. A step in that direction occurred two years ago, when NYS passed a law outlawing the slaughter of racehorses. And this past year, because of the interest expressed by their constituents in saving *all* horses from horrific deaths in Canadian slaughter houses, legislators passed a law that did just



No longer targeted as just a number in a contest.

Photo: Lin Yan - Unsplash

that. It made it unlawful to import, export, sell, transfer, purchase or possess any horse with the intent of its being slaughtered. And again, Governor Hochul, peppered with calls, emails and letters from you, her compassionate constituents across the state, signed that bill into law. It goes into effect in April of this year.

Those who own horses who no longer have any quality of life because of age or illness now will have to find a humane alternative to that of dumping these loyal partners of man at an auction where they are very likely to be bought by kill buyers and sent to Canadian slaughter houses. Now the owners will have to do the responsible thing for their horses who have served them well. They will have to have them euthanized and then either have the body buried, transported to a crematory, or to a composting facility. No more trips up the Northway to Canada for these our loyal equine companions.

Lastly, Governor Hochul signed into law a bill that finally, after many years, increased the fines for any auctioneer who attempts to sell any equine who is diseased or debilitated – raised them from an unbelievably low of not more than \$5 – to a fine of not more than a \$1,000 now. This change coupled with the anti-slaughter bill will result in more protections for our equine companions.

2023 was a great year for protective animal legislation because you cared enough to make noise and not sit by while animals suffered! Let's all keep up the good work!

What You Can Do to Stop a Contest: With NYSHA's guidance, a concerned advocate successfully halted a coyote killing contest in upstate NY. The law ending these contests goes into effect in November. In the meantime, there are ways to get contests cancelled. Contact town legislators, speak at town meetings, send info to the local papers, spread the word on social media, and fire up neighbors for support. For more information, see NYSHA's article at nyshumane.org/wildlife-killing-contests. Let us know if your efforts are successful at info@nyshumane.org

President's Message

Justice is coming for a racehorse named Finish Line, though he is not alive to see it. In July 2023, Finish Line was beaten nearly to death with a metal pipe by his trainer, Frederick Bourgault, after the horse accidentally had stepped on his foot. As a result of the beating, Finish Line had to be euthanized by a veterinarian called to the scene.

In an attempt to hide the crime, Finish Line was quickly buried at the Pine Bush Training Facility in Crawford. Fortunately, the State Police were tipped off to what had happened and launched an investigation that included exhuming the horse and having him transported to Cornell for a necropsy. The results showed the horse's skull was cracked as a result of the beating. Based on the SP investigation, Bourgault was charged with two felonies and indicted by an Orange County grand jury earlier this year. We can't thank the State Police, the District Attorney's Office, and Cornell enough for their excellent work on this case.

The Orange County DA's Office is prosecuting Bourgault. When DA

Hoovler was asked for comment, he said, "As a society we cannot tolerate the mistreatment of horses or other animals, who cannot protect themselves. Animal abuse cases are a high priority in my Office." NYSHA has great faith in this department and its excellent prosecutors. Finish Line is not here to witness it, but his death will be avenged.

Sadly, this was not Bourgault's first offence. A Canadian national, he has a history of abusing horses and faced penalties in both Canada and New York for kicking and excessive whipping. But incredibly he has still been allowed to continue to work on racecourses here. Let's hope his conviction as a felon will end his shameful career.

In sum, there is more than enough suffering and exploitation in all forms of horse racing to go around. People should stop – just stop – going to this blood sport, so it will end – the quicker the better.

Please be kind to animals,

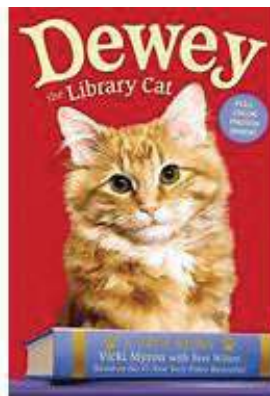
Patricia Valusek

Book Corner: Dewey the Library Cat

How many of us have sat with a good book and a cat snuggled up with us? Besides their history in literature, cats and books just seem to go together.

Written in 2008, but timeless, *Dewey the Library Cat* is the sweet and touching true tale of a tiny orange kitten discovered in the drop-off box at a small Iowa town's library one morning. Whether he was abandoned or put there by a well-meaning person to save him from the 10° temperatures at night, his future could only get better, and it did – for his caregivers, for the town, and for the world. Named through a town vote for the book cataloging system, his official name became Dewey Readmore Books.

Dewey's arrival was concurrent with hard times in the heartland. Farms were disappearing along with their towns, yet Dewey became



a beacon of hope and the center of life in Spencer. His charming antics in the library and his sensitivity and kindness to those in need – special needs children, elderly patrons, people just having a bad time – drew admirers from far and wide. He transformed the lives of his caregivers, the library, and his town – there was even a documentary made in Japan about him! Not only did Dewey evolve with the times, he changed them.

Dewey the Library Cat, written by Vicki Myron with Bret Witter, is an easy read, an inspirational book about hope, salvation, and love. A number of other books were later written about Dewey and his legacy, including

several for children. This amazing and magical cat is a perfect example of the impact of just one animal – and how rescue actually saves the rescuers.

NYSHA's Calendar

Animals Advocacy Day – April 8 – The Well in the Legislative Office Building in Albany. A great day for animal advocates to support legislation and show appreciation to compassionate legislators. NYSHA will be giving awards to legislators who sponsored successful legislation in 2022 and 2023.

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month – April – If you see cruelty, report it! See NYSHA's article online – [Nyshumane.org/article-improve-outcome-when-reporting-cruelty/](https://nyshumanity.org/article-improve-outcome-when-reporting-cruelty/)

National Adopt a Shelter Pet Day – April 30 – If you are unable to adopt a new pet, consider volunteering. Not only will this help your local animal shelter by providing the animals with exercise, companionship, and socialization, but it also gives you that wonderful animal love we all so enjoy. Donate, either money or something on their wish list.

Be Kind to Animals Week – May 5-11 – Began in 1915 by the American Humane Association, its aim is to spread awareness about the need to be kind to animals and to protect them and their habitats. It's important to be kind to every animal we come across – both this week and always.

Hug Your Cat Day – June 4 – Treat yourself and kitty to a big hug!

Our Voices in Albany

Though we had great success with protective legislation this past year as noted in the lead article, we are not done yet. Please contact your NYS representatives and encourage them to support the following bills.

- A776/S761 - removes the word SERIOUS from the felony cruelty law which would aid in prosecutions.
- A2881/S6365 - calls for vacated property to be searched for abandoned animals.
- A54-A/S6315-A – creates rules for tethering animals that police could use to help them.

- A270/S1960 – bans the use of performance enhancing drugs in racehorses.
- A4005-A/S4363-A – prohibits the issuance of permits to use wild animals in circuses.
- A110/S1619 – bans the use of the brutally cruel leg-hold trap.
- A4565/S2210 – OPPOSE – allows the killing of mourning doves.

Under the Legislation menu item on NYSHA's website, nys humane.org, you can find a chart of many current bills and their status, along with links to the bills on Assembly and Senate websites.

The Vet Is In: Cat Introductions

If you love cats, then you may be familiar with the expression, "Cats are like potato chips, you can't just have one."

You may have seen a plea on social media for a cat in need of a home, or there may even be a hungry cat who comes to your door for food. And indeed your local animal shelter is filled to capacity with wonderful cats waiting for a family. Therefore, if you are thinking of helping one of these kitties, but not sure how your cat will like this idea, please read on.

Cats in general thrive with another cat friend. They may groom each other, play wrestle, and even nap together. However, felines are by nature territorial and an adjustment period for both will take some patience and a strategic plan.

ISOLATE: Your new kitty will need a room of his or her own for a while. Provide the essentials – food, water, litterbox, a scratching post, and a cozy bed that the cat can go into to feel safe. Keep in mind your new rescue doesn't know where he or she is yet so you need to spend some time getting to know each other in this calm environment.

SCENTS: No doubt the cats will smell each other under the door and may even play pawsies. Brush each of them with the same brush to al-



Sissy and Dennis are proof that cats can have a best friend!

low for an exchange of scents. Wear something old and put it in each cat bed and then switch the clothing after a day so that each cat will identify your scent with that of the other one. Let your cat smell the carrier that the new kitty has been in.

BARRIER: After about 10 days, open the door a crack and allow each of them to finally see each other! You may want to put the new cat in a carrier at first and let the other cat sniff him or her to keep everyone safe. If possible, place a barrier between them, such as a propped up screen door or gate. Take note of how

they react to one another. If there is no major aggression displayed, continue allowing them to get used to each other by following the steps above. Once they appear to be curious (and not threatened), you are now ready to remove the barrier and let them establish a relationship.

ADJUSTMENT: There will be more sniffing and maybe even some hissing! Don't be alarmed. This is normal feline behavior in order to establish boundaries. Finally, remember cats are like people. We all need a bit of time to get to know each other. Follow the introduction process and then enjoy all the gifts that cats give to us with their endearing and captivating ways!

Our World Around Us: In Appreciation of Nature's Best Engineers

New York's state mammal, the beaver, seems to be receiving some long due recognition in recent years; not only here in New York, but throughout the country and even the world. Why the sudden admiration? It has everything to do with their engineering skills, and climate change.

Aside from humans, beavers are the only living being on the planet that can drastically alter their environment. While there's no denying that as beavers create and alter their habitats it can have devastating consequences for some, many others have come to realize that these changes are extraordinary gifts for wildlife and plants.

As climate change encroaches upon us, bringing with it erosion, flooding, droughts, warmer water temperatures, and wildfires, scientists have learned that the presence of beavers can significantly combat many of the climate issues facing us today.

Perhaps the most obvious benefit is that of the beaver's dam which slows erosion by slowing the water pressure. Less erosion means more vegetation and less flooding. A study in Canada found that where beavers were present, the riparian zone, (the area between

land and water) had an increase in herbaceous plants of 33%. A huge benefit for all wildlife.

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Beavers, our mighty eco-engineers.

Photo: Svetozar Cenisev-Unsplash

Spotlight: Nancy Beyerl of Peaceful Acres Horses

In our Spotlight articles, we frequently feature a sanctuary of some kind and highlight the person who started it. And no matter how many rescues there are, as Nanci Beyerl, Founder and Executive Director of Peaceful Acres Horses, will tell you, there are never enough – yet she and her team of volunteers at Peaceful Acres Horses have saved nearly 300 at-risk and slaughter-bound equines.

Nanci purchased her farm in Pattersonville, NY, in 2002, where she and her mother Tippie established a horse rescue as part of her personal journey seeking a better life, growth, and the means to help others, both people and animals.

And grow they did – developing a dedicated Board of Directors, volunteers, sponsors, educational programs, buddy companions, summer camps, workshops, youth and family programs, a guesthouse, enhanced facilities for

state of the art daily and veterinary care – and more.

But this was not enough for Nanci. She has become a Maxwell Leadership Certified Coach – an inspirational speaker and motivational leader concentrating on equine led transformative change. And – she just had a book published! *In Search of Purpose: One Woman's Journey to Save and*



Nanci with Hope

Restore Horses Who Bring Hope to People is now available through Amazon.

When I asked about what is most frustrating or difficult with rescue, Nanci shared a lot of the same thoughts as others we have featured – funding, the continued regard for equines as disposable beings, and awareness of the cruelty and suffering most of these horses and donkeys have sustained before coming to her. Yet, the more she does, the more she is inspired to do, and with her boundless energy and tireless commitment, we know she will.

Her optimism is contagious. Despite every day frustration, she has short and long-term goals that will only make life better for her equine residents and the people they impact and influence. After all, her sanctuary in rural Schenectady County is a beacon

of hope and love and peace.

On a personal level for NYSHA, one of our own Board members, Dr. Holly Cheever, is one of Nanci's heroes. Some of the animals they rescued together are still at Peaceful Acres!

As usual, space does not permit us to explore the dedication, success, and vision of someone like Nanci. You can read more about PAH at peacefulacreshorses.com.



Nanci and Suzie Q



Nanci with Cassie and mom Tippie, the inspiration for her work.

Our World Around Us Continued from page 3

Another discovery, from a study in the state of Washington, found that beaver dams actually recharged the aquifer enabling the stream systems to hold more water. Recharging the deep aquifers has not only lowered water temperatures, but has also prevented streams from drying up during droughts and hot summer months.

Furthermore, these new and replenished streams, along with the underground irrigation systems that beavers create, have been able to act as fire barriers during wildfires out west.

Beaver dams naturally filter out pollutants in the stream while lowering the water pressure. The lower water pressure enables nutrients to enter the water causing the water downstream from the dam to be not only cooler from the recharged aquifers but also cleaner and healthier.

But as with many animals in our environment, they are just interesting! They mate for life, but can adjust to a new partner if something kills one – frequently trapping (still legal) and car accidents. Their average lifespan is 10 to 12 years if allowed to live that long, they breed once yearly with 2 to 7 kits in a litter, weigh anywhere from 26 to 65 pounds, eat up to a ton of bark in the winter time, and can hold their breath as long as 15 minutes under water! The expression busy as a beaver certainly is well founded.

So as we combat erosion, flooding, droughts, wildfires, rising water temperatures, and pollution, isn't it wonderful to know that our mighty eco-engineer, the beaver, is hard at work doing the same?

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