

Pro-Bear Referendum Narrowly Defeated

When the evening of November 2, 2004, began, the mood at the headquarters for Maine Citizens for Fair Bear Hunting was excited and upbeat. Early election results showed positive results for the bear referendum, and campaign volunteers who had gathered there wondered if this would be the start of a new day for black bears in the state. But when the final votes were tallied, the referendum to ban bear baiting, hounding, and trapping was narrowly defeated by a margin of 53 to 47 percent.

Although this loss was a bitter pill, the closeness of the vote represents a true victory in its own right, given the fact that our opponents outspent us by a two-to-one margin and enjoyed the support of powerful public officials. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed their efforts to this ballot initiative, from the early days of signature gathering, which produced more than twice the number of required signatures, to the scores of supportive letters that poured in to newspapers in the final months of the campaign, to the committed volunteers who attended rallies and held signs on Election Day.

continued on page 2



Safe Cats Scores Big at Worcester IceCats Hockey Game

Since the Safe Cats New England campaign launch, NERO staff members have hit the road to spread the message that a safe cat is a happy cat. During 2004, we exhibited the Safe Cats booth at four Pet Expos and six state and regional animal care and control conferences, as well as the Northeast Veterinary Conference. But the event that capped off our year-long campaign with true distinction involved the Worcester (MA) IceCats hockey team and a blue cat name Scratch. NERO partnered with the IceCats, a cat-friendly team whose mascot, Scratch, sets himself apart from the average feline with his bright turquoise fur, wide grin, and uncommon skating ability.

As the official sponsor of the IceCats' November 21, 2004, home game, NERO enjoyed high visibility throughout the evening, which included regular announcements over the public address system, on-air interviews, and the distribution of hundreds of campaign materials and promotional items to hockey fans. Several local animal shelters joined us for this event and promoted cat adoptions through the IceCats' Cats for Pets program.

As part of our promotional effort, we provided 500 free Safe Cats T-shirts, which proved to be the hit of the evening. Hundreds of shirts were tossed from the ice rink into the bleachers, and eager fans lined up when Scratch's sidekick, Pounce, made an appearance at NERO's booth to autograph more. We had the opportunity to speak to cat



Worcester IceCats mascot Pounce signs Safe Cats T-shirts for eager fans at the HSUS booth.

lovers of all stripes over the course of the evening, many of whom were already firm believers in keeping their cats indoors. Although the tone of the event was lighthearted, we hope the message of keeping cats safe will continue to resonate with those who picked up our materials or took the time to tell us about their wonderful kitties at home. And now we've got a small army of supporters who will help raise public awareness each time they wear their Safe Cats apparel.

But we're not resting on our laurels. In 2005 we are offering five \$1,000 grants to our 63 New England Safe Cats shelter partners for programs that promote safe, indoor cats. We'll also be stepping up our effort to reach out to the veterinary community. By working with diverse groups, we hope to help elevate the status of cats. Cats may be plentiful, but they should never be disposable. With only one life—not nine—cats deserve the best we can give them the first time around.

NH Animal Fighting Task Force Debuts Resources

Many New Englanders think animal fighting only happens in inner-city areas such as Hartford, Providence, or Boston. The truth is that this brutal act of animal cruelty, which involves pitting animals against each other in a deadly duel for “sport,” can happen anywhere. The proof in New England was the 2002 raid on the home of Christopher Devito in the sleepy, suburban, middle-class town of Newton, New Hampshire (see spring 2002 “NERO Regional News”). Authorities seized 43 pit bulls, a wide array of dogfighting paraphernalia, and nearly \$300,000 in cash during the largest organized animal fighting raid in the state.

That’s why the New Hampshire Animal Fighting Task Force, which NERO formed in response to the Devito case, is stepping up its efforts to help stop animal fighting in its tracks. Our latest project was the development and debut of a Web site last January, hosted by the New Hampshire SPCA at www.nhspca.org/nhafft. We hope this user-friendly site will give both residents and the law enforcement community the tools they need to recognize the signs of animal fighting and take steps to end it.

In addition, the Task Force developed a brochure about animal fighting that it sent to animal shelters, police departments, municipalities, and veterinary offices for public distribution. In the fall, we hope to debut a two-day in-service training on animal cruelty and animal fighting in cooperation with the New Hampshire Police Academy, getting our important message out to police officers throughout the state. We hope that by targeting our message to every individual and agency in New Hampshire that can help put an end to animal fighting, we can come a little closer toward that end.

NERO Staffers Lend a Hand Outside the Region

From a large-scale animal cruelty seizure to destructive hurricanes, NERO staff were enlisted to help our “sister” HSUS regional offices in both Montana and Florida last year. NERO Program Coordinators Hillary Twining and Linda Huebner both spent a week last summer assisting the Northern Rockies Regional Office (NRRO) with the operation of an emergency animal shelter for more than 100 dogs. NRRO staff had been asked by a rural sheriff’s office to help execute search and seizure warrants at two dog breeding operations that were allegedly keeping the animals in deplorable conditions. Although problems with the search warrants prompted charges to be dropped against the two primary defendants, we are hopeful that this case will prompt greater scrutiny of mass breeding facilities by federal and state officials.

In mid-August, Twining was in Punta Gorda, Florida, assisting with disaster response in the aftermath of Hurricane Charley. The devastation wrought by Charley was amazing to behold: mobile homes twisted into unrecognizable shapes, palm trees sheared off midway up their trunks, and thousands of people and animals left homeless. Fortunately HSUS’s Disaster Animal Response Teams mobilized quickly. During her deployment, Twining supervised the intake area at the HSUS’s main compound, where a steady stream of people and animals arrived looking tired, hot, and a little dazed. Some people brought in pets who needed veterinary care, others had found lost and stray animals, and still others—overwhelmed by the prospect of spending weeks and months trying to rebuild their lives—requested that we find new homes for their four-legged companions.

In September, NERO Director Joanne Bourbeau spent a week in the HSUS Southeast Regional Office helping respond to the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan, the last of four hurricanes to tax the resources (and wits) of Florida residents in six weeks’ time.

Back in New England, we are continuing to focus on state and local disaster preparedness. Before the close of 2004, NERO signed a memorandum of understanding with the state of Maine to assist with disaster planning and response, and plans are underway to co-sponsor training on emergency animal sheltering in both Maine and Connecticut in 2005. Although we escaped the damage of the 2004 hurricane season, we are not letting its lessons go unheeded.

continued from “Bear Referendum,” page 1

What is clear is that the bear baiting referendum brought sustained attention and scrutiny to bear hunting practices that have long avoided public debate. Although previous attempts to pass legislation prohibiting bear baiting, hounding, and trapping have failed, the campaign has generated new momentum to gain representation of non-hunting interests on the Joint Committee of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and to push for meaningful bear hunting reforms. After all, more than 270,000 Maine citizens expressed their disapproval of these practices by voting in favor of the initiative, and we plan to keep that long unheard voice in front of policymakers in the years to come.



LAURA BEVAN/HSUS

NERO Program Coordinator Hillary Twining checks in dogs who were displaced by Hurricane Charley. They were among hundreds of animals HSUS helped during Florida’s storms last year.

HSUS, Fund for Animals Join Forces

The HSUS and The Fund for Animals (The Fund) officially joined forces in an unprecedented and historic combination on January 1, 2005. This is the first time in the history of the animal protection movement that two national, high-profile organizations have united in order to advance their common mission.

“Our groups have decided to join forces not out of necessity, but because we believe we can do more to help animals together than we can do operating separately,” said David O. Wiebers, M.D., chair of The HSUS’s board of directors.

The two groups plan to operate their advocacy programs under the banner of The HSUS, building a new external affairs department to focus on major defining issues such as fur, sport hunting, factory farming, and malicious animal cruelty, including animal fighting. They will pursue these goals with a multifaceted approach involving investigations, litigation, communications, and professional campaigning.

“With our new campaigns, we will create meaningful social change for animals,” said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The HSUS. “Our goal is nothing short of a kinder society, where compassionate individuals join with us to ensure that animals are not abused either in random acts of cruelty or in institutional settings, such as industrial factory farms.”

Wolves in New England?

We cannot yet hear wolves’ haunting nighttime howls, but that day may not be far off for New Englanders. Animal advocates got a little closer to making that dream a reality when a generous donor gave \$20,000 to the HSUS’s Wildlife Land Trust (WLT) for wolf initiatives. The donation will be used to support the efforts of the Coalition to Restore the Eastern Wolf (CREW) by funding a part-time coordinator to update the group’s brochure, create fact sheets and a Web site, recruit new members, organize meetings, delegate activities, monitor state comprehensive wildlife conservation strategies, and develop presentations for outreach and advocacy.

Organized in 1977, this broad coalition, which includes both The HSUS and WLT, in addition to many other wildlife and habitat protection groups, strives to facilitate the recovery of the wolf in as much of its former northeastern range as possible. Wolf recovery would improve the health of the northern forest ecosystem, which has been devoid of large predators since wolves were extirpated about a century ago.

CREW scientists have done feasibility studies on natural corridors, and they are



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

If our efforts are successful, the wolf may one day grace New England territory again.

working to protect this vital land to allow wolves to move from Canada into the United States. CREW is also working with state wildlife departments to ensure protection for wolves if and when they arrive. Finally, CREW is reaching out to members of the public, to teach them about wolves so that they can anticipate their return with excitement, not fear.

NERO is very excited about this cooperative arrangement between WLT and CREW and even more excited about the prospect of hearing wolves howl in New England someday.

I want to learn how I can help our animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

Please send me information about

- Making a memorial donation to honor the life of a pet, friend, or relative.
- Providing for my pets in my will and in case of emergency.
- Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS.
- Using charitable gift annuities and trusts to support The HSUS.
- Giving The HSUS a gift of stock.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

DAYTIME PHONE _____

E-MAIL (OPTIONAL) _____



Promoting the protection of all animals

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES.
 NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL OFFICE
 Route 112
 P.O. Box 619 (mailing address)
 Jacksonville, VT 05342-0619

Director's Report



By Joanne Bourbeau
*Director of the New England
Regional Office*

There Are No Rules to Engagement

As we head into spring, our thoughts naturally turn to renewal. The return of green grass, the blossoming of our favorite garden perennials, the lure of longer days and warmer nights. This is also an exciting time for The HSUS. With a new leader at our helm and the recent merger with the Fund for Animals comes a renewed vision and focus for our organization.

So how do we as animal advocates best mobilize and maximize our resources in order to make serious, long-standing improvements for animals in our society? In our last regional newsletter, HSUS President and CEO Wayne Pacelle called on HSUS members to become active in supporting our work. He said, "Only with your active engagement will we see . . . a truly humane society." I'd like to tell you about some HSUS members and supporters here in New England who are doing just that.

Julie Lewin of Guilford, Connecticut, is the founder of Animal Advocacy Connecticut. She's been lobbying for the animals for decades. To share her vast knowledge, she formed the National

Institute for Animal Advocacy. She offers intensive training sessions for animal activists who want to learn how to be effective in local, state, and federal political arenas.

Susan Hall and Sharon Secovich have been the driving force behind a group called Spay Maine that has championed a tax check-off bill to provide money for the state's spay/neuter program. With their eyes on the prize, Hall and Secovich are now working on fundraising and public service announcements to keep the program afloat until revenue starts flowing after tax season.

Bob MacKay of Braintree, Massachusetts, has a strong interest in the plight of circus animals and was instrumental in forming the CircusSpotlight Coalition. He worked to successfully ban circuses in Braintree and Weymouth, and is currently working with legislators on the passage of a state-wide circus ban. Bob received the 2003-2004 HSUS Humane Citizen Lobbyist of the Year award for his work.

Suzanne Fournier of Milford, New Hampshire, coordinates the Animal Protection Activists Network. She and her dedicated volunteers led the charge to document, publicize, and fight the state's pheasant stocking program, in which these non-native birds with few survival skills are released in the wild to provide hunting opportunities. While the hunt wasn't stopped (this time), the group was successful in bringing this cruel hunting practice to light through widespread television and print media coverage.

Susan Parker of West Warwick, Rhode Island, has been involved with NERO's animal fighting coalition in that state. She has started a local pit bull rescue and has developed a program to work one-on-one with adoptable pit bulls in various private and municipal shelters, training them to become well-behaved companions.

Sue Skaskiw of Bridgewater, Vermont,



Susan Parker of West Warwick, Rhode Island, runs a local pit bull rescue group and is part of NERO's animal fighting coalition. She is just one of many activists who are truly engaged in helping animals in New England.

runs Vermont Volunteer Services for Animals. Although not part of her normal job duties with her all-volunteer organization, she also won a 2003-2004 HSUS Humane Citizen Lobbyist of the Year award for her efforts on behalf of two important legislative efforts: one that made significant improvements to the state's animal cruelty statute and another that instituted a state-subsidized spay/neuter assistance program.

These are just a few examples. I'm sure there are thousands more stories I could tell. Don't ever underestimate your power to make a difference. Together, we are engaged in the business (and privilege) of helping animals.

Contacting HSUS

Write:

HSUS New England Regional Office
P.O. Box 619
Jacksonville, VT 05342-0619

Fax:

802-368-2756

Call:

802-368-2790

Web Page:

www.hsus.org/nero

Promoting the protection of all animals

The *NERO Regional News* is a publication of The Humane Society of the United States, New England Regional Office, P.O. Box 619, Jacksonville, VT 05342-0619; 802-368-2790. Joanne Bourbeau, director. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on federal holidays.

© 2005 by The Humane Society of the United States. All rights reserved.
A COPY OF THE LATEST REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION FILED BY THE HSUS MAY BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING THE HSUS, OFFICE OF THE TREASURER, 2100 L ST., NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20037, 202-452-1100. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT.

Printed on recycled paper.