

the vancouver humane society newsletter

ANIMAL *Writes*

303-8623 GRANVILLE ST., VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA, V6P 5A2

VOLUME 34 - SPRING 2006

End exotic pet trade now!

UHS urges Vancouver residents to speak out for new city bylaw. See page 3



This caiman, which can grow to five feet long, is a wild animal, not a plaything for people. VHS is calling on all Vancouver residents to contact Vancouver City Council and show their support for a proposed bylaw that would ban the sale and ownership of exotic animals like this one.

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EDITORIAL: The ugly truth behind the avian flu

By DEBRA PROBERT

From the Globe and Mail (Nov. 23, 2005)

The inexorable increase in avian influenza hysteria is leading governments locally and internationally to consider increasingly radical measures to contain the perceived threat of a human pandemic

The swift and lethal response of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to the duck infected with a harmless H5 virus in British Columbia is a good example, and the recent discovery that people have been infected in China can only exacerbate this situation. These measures include keeping all domestic birds indoors, away from wild birds; culling flocks at the first sign of even a harmless strain of flu; draining wetlands; culling wild populations of birds and stockpiling masses of expensive drugs of questionable efficacy. But before we impose such drastic methods, we should heed the root cause of the problem.

Many strains of avian influenza circulate in wild birds at low levels, without causing illness. Natural selection plays an important role in regulating wildlife populations. A virus enters a population and removes those that are unable to defend themselves from the attack. Biological diversity is the key to the population's survival. Animals that survive infection and reproduce will likely pass on their "resistant" or "tolerant" genes to future generations.

The conditions in modern, intensive poultry farms are quite different from those found in nature. There is no question that the virulence and rapid spread of the H7N3 outbreak in British Columbia, in February of 2004, was exacerbated by the limited genetic diversity of the birds and the way they are raised. They spend their short lives eating, sleeping and defecating in the same confined space before they are sent to slaughter. Under these conditions, natural immunity is virtually impossible.

In contrast, backyard and organic flocks are typically more diverse and more closely

emulate nature. During the 2004 outbreak in British Columbia, of 553 backyard flocks tested, only one tested positive for the virus, and that was after testing negative twice.

What does this have to do with the spread of the virus in Southeast Asia, China and Europe? Why, in apparently more open systems, have avian flu outbreaks been increasing? The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) lists six contributing factors affecting the spread of highly pathogenic viruses in Asia. Three of these have to do with an increase of poultry populations and intensification of poultry production.

Asia has seen an explosion of industrial poultry farming and is expected to eventually dominate global production. Not only have developed countries exported their insatiable appetite for animal products, they have also exported intensive poultry and egg production technology.

But this technology is being exported into a potentially devastating environment. In developing countries, a dramatic increase in intensive poultry production is often combined with poor hygiene and little or no bio-security. Domestic birds from different areas travel long distances, sometimes hundreds of miles, and are brought together in poultry markets crowded with people. National and international monitoring systems are ignored or inadequate.

In both developed and developing countries, intensively farmed poultry populations are a jackpot for viruses. The cramped quarters make transmission from host to host extremely easy. The diversity that is key to the survival of wild bird populations does not exist among domestic flocks and animals' immune systems are compromised, rendering them susceptible to infection.

Before we resort to extreme measures that can and will have a permanent effect on nature as we now know it, we need to assess the devastation wreaked globally by the unsustainable appetite for animal protein.



Vancouver Humane Society

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Exotics need your help

Now is your chance, maybe your last chance, to help end the suffering of thousands of exotic animals in Vancouver.

City Council is considering taking the first step toward a bylaw banning the sale and ownership of exotic pets and public opinion will be a deciding factor. VHS is calling for Vancouver residents to support a motion by Councillor Kim Capri to instruct city staff to come up with recommendations for an exotic animal bylaw. The motion is to be considered at an upcoming council meeting (A date had not been confirmed at press time – watch our website at www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca).

VHS has been working hard to provide council with information and evidence to make its decision and is hoping Vancouver's humane community will also make itself heard on the issue.

If the motion is approved, the city staff will carry out research and come back with recommendations, which will then be debated by council at a further meeting. Fierce opposition to a bylaw will come from the exotic pet trade, reptile keepers and animal rental agencies. These vested interests could sway the debate if they are not countered by strong arguments in favour of a bylaw.

VHS is telling councillors that back yards and living rooms are no places for wild or exotic animals (particularly reptiles) and that there is clear evidence that exotic pets suffer in captivity. VHS has submitted a statement of support to the council from world-renowned reptile expert Clifford Warwick, whose studies show that captivity is physically and psychologically harmful to reptiles.

Many people buy exotic animals from pet

stores or through the Internet only to find that their care requires more time, money or expertise than expected. The result is that many become sick, die or are abandoned. During the past year at least a dozen large snakes from Vancouver have been turned over to the Rainforest Reptile Refuge in Surrey. Animals are dumped there every day. In 2005 police found a four-foot long caiman (a crocodile-like reptile) in a one-inch deep pool of water in the bedroom of a Vancouver home. The sick and starving animal was turned over to the refuge. Some people abandon unwanted reptiles in local parks or habitats, where the animals die of starvation or of exposure to a harsh climate.

Other municipalities in B.C., such as New Westminster, Abbotsford and Kelowna, already have bylaws banning the sale and keeping of exotic pets. Major Canadian cities, such as Ottawa and Toronto, also have exotic animal bylaws. The BC SPCA, Zoocheck Canada and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association all oppose the ownership of exotic animals, as do virtually all animal protection agencies.

Meanwhile, the exotic pet trade is booming, and contrary to common belief, up to 95 per cent of traded reptiles are wild-caught. Exotic pet bylaws reduce demand for these animals and thus protect global wildlife.

City Councillors can be contacted by email at mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca and by mail at:

Mayor and Council
City Hall, Third Floor
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Y 1V4

Animals exploited for profit in Telus ad campaign

VHS has complained to telecommunications company Telus about its use of animals in commercials. The ads, which have featured Hazina the hippo at the Greater Vancouver Zoo, are popular, but many people don't realize that most of the animals are from 'animal rental agencies' or zoos that profit from their exploitation.

Once the cameras are turned off, animals like Hazina are returned to their cages, pens or tanks where they languish in confined and unnatural conditions until the next assignment. In a letter, VHS told Telus that its advertising helps perpetuate the captive animal industry, which involves the trading, breeding, transport and incarceration of thousands of exotic species – all for human amusement. VHS urged the company to make use of Computer Generated Image (CGI) technology, which an increasing number of film companies are employing to avoid the use of real animals.

The Telus commercials also encourage fad or impulse purchases of animals. For example, a classified ad recently spotted on the Internet read: "Looking for a bunny for Christmas. Preferably a caramel colored one like in the Telus commercials."

Telus has refused to reconsider using animals in its advertising campaigns. Readers' views can be expressed to: Wade Oosterman, Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing, TELUS Mobility, 200 Consilium Place, Suite 1600, Scarborough, Ontario, M1H 3J3.

Party no place for tigers, lions: VHS

VHS and its supporters stopped a restaurant in Whistler from using tigers and lions as part of the entertainment at a party last November.

Billed as an "adult-rated extravaganza of decadence," the party at the Bearfoot Bistro was planning to use Siberian Magic, a travelling animal performance business, to entertain up to 2000 partygoers with chained tigers and lions.

VHS initiated a telephone and email protest and issued a news release condemning the performance, which triggered intense media interest and coverage. The protest grew and the restaurant was del-



Tigers were to be chained at a party in Whistler.

ugged with complaints. Within three hours the tiger show was cancelled.

Remembering Tina

Although Tina the elephant died back in July of 2004, she has not been forgotten. The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee, where she spent her final days, still receives tributes to her on its website at

www.elephants.com/tina/tina_tributes.php. The heartfelt messages show just what an emotional impact her story has on people. Tina lived in poor conditions for 30 years at the Greater Vancouver Zoo until pressure from VHS and Zoocheck Canada led to her transfer to the sanctuary.





Photo — PETA

YAAA members supported a PETA demo against KFC in Kelowna. VHS volunteer Ashley Fruno (wearing the bikini) braved below-zero temperatures to draw attention to KFC's cruel practices.

Demonstrating compassion

By CARMEN CROSLAND

Youth Against Animal Abuse got the chance to help out with hosting two PETA members who were in Kelowna to do a Kentucky Fried Chicken protest. Ashley Fruno drove from the Lower Mainland and R.J. Bailot flew in from Calgary. The media were excited to film Ashley in a yellow bathing suit and fuzzy faux fur boots. Her message to the reporters was that standing in the cold for a full hour isn't nearly as bad as what happens to the chickens who are often scalded alive for KFC.

YAAA also took part in a local anti-fur demonstration in February in Kelowna, B.C. Three of our members joined TRACS (The Responsible Animal Care Society). About

20 people and seven dogs showed up to protest. Our canine friends were popular with the cameras, and there was a lot of support from passing motorists. A week prior to the demonstration, a couple volunteers had taken educational pamphlets around to Kelowna stores selling fur. Faux fur was popular at most of the stores.

Some employees and one manager in stores carrying genuine fur were surprised and somewhat horrified to see what they were supporting. Others did not want to hear the message. TRACS and YAAA are considering doing DNA testing on coats obtained from Kelowna stores in order to determine the origins of the fur. Unlabelled and mislabelled fur from China and Southeast Asia can actually be from dogs or cats.

B.C. ministry blocks grizzly bear rehab

VHS is supporting a Zoocheck Canada effort to return two orphaned grizzly bear cubs to the wild through a rehabilitation program – but the B.C. government is blocking the initiative.

The bears, Koda and Banff, are currently being kept at the Calgary Zoo while provincial and federal bureaucrats decide their fate. A bear rehabilitation facility near Smithers, B.C. is willing to take them, with the aim of ultimately setting them free.

Despite evidence from bear rehabilitation experts supporting the idea, the provincial government will not (to date) allow the bears to be transferred to the facility. If they are not rehabilitated to live in the wild, the bears will live the rest of their lives in captivity.



Koda is one of two orphaned grizzly bear cubs that animal protection groups hope the BC government will allow to be rehabilitated back to the wild.

We have a great PINK STICKER for our Chicken Out! Project – phone the office at 604 266 9744 and we'll send you some!

VHS endorses SPCA anti-cruelty drive

VHS is endorsing a campaign by the B.C. SPCA to increase legal protection for abused animals in B.C. The campaign, entitled "End Animal Cruelty" calls on the provincial government to strengthen B.C.'s inadequate laws protecting animals from violence and abuse.

The SPCA says current provincial laws do little to protect animals from abuse or to bring those who inflict pain and suffering on animals to justice.

For example, current anti-cruelty laws only apply to the person responsible for the animal. If another person abuses, tortures

or even kills an animal, the law won't apply.

The campaign is also calling for stronger penalties for those convicted of animal cruelty. The maximum penalty for someone convicted of animal cruelty is \$2,000, six months in jail and/or a prohibition on keeping animals – and judges rarely hand down maximum sentences.

The SPCA is also petitioning the provincial government for increased funding for its cruelty investigations. For more information call 1-800-665-1868 or 604-681-7271, or visit www.EndAnimalCruelty.com

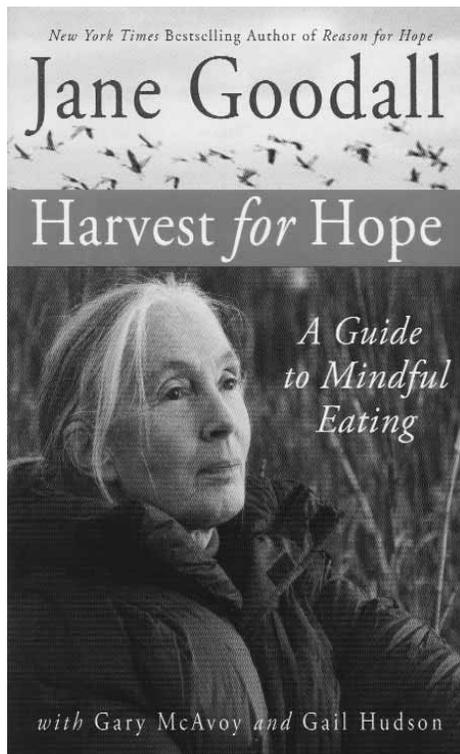
News briefs

KFC's U.S. parent company, Yum! Brands, received a failing grade for corporate social responsibility in the *Globe & Mail's Report on Business*. The magazine cited animal rights controversy generated when Drs. Temple Grandin and Ian Duncan resigned from the animal welfare committee due to lack of action, and Pamela Anderson's call for a boycott because of cruelty to chickens. (*Report on Business, The Globe and Mail*, March, 2006)

The best toys to give rabbits are objects they can hide in or under, then chew and destroy, according to York University. Cardboard boxes and large, empty paper bags rate high. (*AWI Quarterly*, Fall 2005, Animal Welfare Institute)

More than half of hogs sent to provincial slaughterhouses showed resistance to two common antibiotics used to deal with food poisoning, according to the Animal Health Laboratory at the University of Guelph. (*Manitoba Co-operator*, January 19, 2006)

Flocks raised outdoors are not high risk for spreading avian influenza, according to the Canadian Co-operative Wildlife Health Centre and Dr. Brian Evans, Canada's chief veterinary officer. The deadly forms of avian influenza are not common among wild birds, and when they are infected, they are picking it up from domestic flocks. (*Manitoba Co-operator*, January 19, 2006)



Goodall offers hope

Jane Goodall, the renowned scientist who changed our understanding of primates, has written a book that shows how modern food production is torturing animals, poisoning humans and destroying the environment. Yet Harvest for Hope also describes the many movements, organizations, projects and individuals who are fighting back. Most important, Goodall also tells us what each one of us can do to change the world "one purchase, one meal, one bite at a time."

VHS wants to sink airport's aquarium plan

VHS is protesting plans by the Vancouver International Airport Authority to include an aquarium as part of an extension to the international terminal at YVR. The extension, due for completion in 2007, will incorporate a 25,000 to 30,000 gallon tank containing various fish native to BC and a 300 to 400 gallon tank for indigenous jellyfish.

In a letter to the authority, VHS stated: "It seems perverse that these wild species will be collected from their natural habitats in the waterways of BC, only to be put on show for tourists. It is the unspoiled wildness of BC's flora and fauna that attracts so many people here from around the world. How sad that the first thing many will now see on arrival here will be captive fish in a glass tank... Using aquatic wildlife as mere decoration to greet foreign tourists only devalues such wildlife and perpetuates the notion that animals exist only to satisfy our whims."

The authority has invited VHS to a meeting to discuss the issue. In the meantime, readers can express their opinions to: Ann Murray, Community and Environmental Affairs, Vancouver International Airport Authority, P.O. Box 23750, Airport Postal Outlet, Richmond, BC, V7B 1Y7.

Reptile breeding a B.C. growth industry

Pythons, lizards and boa constrictors may be exotic, but they're being marketed by a thriving reptile breeding industry right here in B.C. And thanks to the Internet, these animals are being bred, packaged and shipped thousands of miles to sit in glass tanks in suburban basements all over North America and beyond.

At least five reptile-breeding companies are based in B.C., all advertising a range of animals for sale - from geckos and bearded dragons to ball pythons and kingsnakes.

A troll through their websites gives a glimpse of how these companies' "products" are criss-crossing the globe:

"Our reptiles are professionally packed with heat packs in the correct styrofoam boxes with cardboard outers..."

"I can ship virtually to anywhere year round."

And at least one B.C. company is in the

repugnant business of supplying "feeder" animals to reptile owners. With shocking callousness, the

company, Coast to Coast Mice (www.coasttocoastmice.ca), breeds and sells live (or frozen) baby mice and rats for the sole purpose of being thrown to snakes or lizards as food. (While it's true that reptiles eat rodents in the wild, these animals have no life except as food and no chance of escape.)

The mice are labeled as "pinkies" (newborn) or "fuzzies" (not weaned) or "hoppers" (weaned and active) and are shipped across Canada in containers holding up to 100 live mice or 500 frozen. A grotesque



Baby mice are placed in this syringe and fed to reptiles.

instrument, called a "pinkie pump" is used by reptile owners to feed their animals. Essentially a syringe, it is loaded with dead newborn mice, which are then compressed and pushed into captive reptiles' mouths.

These companies are just a small part of the worldwide exotic animal industry. There are hundreds of them trading on the Internet, quietly making profits through the exploitation of animals.

VHS opposes this industry because their "products" end up abandoned, ill or dead. Even if they are captive-bred they retain the biological and behavioural needs of wild animals. No glass tank can replicate the specific environments that these animals have evolved to thrive in.

People who buy reptiles or other exotic animals are contributing to a cruel global industry that causes animal suffering and ultimately endangers wild animal populations.

Hard starts, happy endings

Three hard-luck animals beat the odds thanks to compassionate VHS staffers

What do VHS staffers have in common? Dysfunctional animal companions, that's what!! We thought we'd feature three of our little friends, who, if we hadn't taken them in, would probably have been euthanized.

HAIRY (By Debra Probert)

Hairy has a lot of strikes against him. When he was found as a starving kitten, he was blind from cataracts. The decision was made to euthanize him, but when the time came, the vet could not do it!

Hairy and his friends Mattie and Scary, were all adopted out to a loving family. Ten years later (hard to believe, I know) they were all given back to VHS due to a family tragedy. Since placing older cats is impossible, I took them home. Mattie and Scary have since passed away, but the seemingly most pathetic of the three, Hairy, is still going strong!

Hairy has many (expensive) medical problems. He is hyper-thyroid; has irritable bowel syndrome; is deaf and is nearly blind due to

scarring from his cataract operation when he was little. This means that he requires much special care. He has medication twice a day, is on a special diet and must be monitored constantly for various bodily functions (which I won't go into in any further detail!!)

Because I have other cats with behavioural issues, Hairy needs to have a room all to himself when unsupervised, so that he can eat whenever he's hungry and not be bullied. My former piano studio has become his apartment, and most evenings you can find him stretched out in front of the gas fireplace on his back, all four feet in the air!

In the six years that Hairy's lived with my family, we had never seen him play, apart from rolling around with something soaked in catnip. We attributed this to his sight, since he's very careful not to venture out into the centre of a room – he always hugs the walls, which is his way of knowing where he is. But as you can see from the picture, Hairy *does* like to play. I was touched to the point of tears to find him upside down under our lit-



Ben: Saved by a behaviourist and several Frisbees.

tle Christmas tree, batting at a handmade tree ornament. He played like this for over an hour, and I realized that he can see enough to make his life interesting!

Hairy's quality of life is very high. Although a year ago we nearly lost him – his illnesses seemed to worsen and he quit eating for long enough to endanger his life – he's happy again, purring and snuggling with me every day when I stroke or brush him. I'm grateful that I'm able to give him the opportunity to live out the rest of his life in comfort.

BEN (By Peter Fricker)

When my wife Carolyn and I came home from the RSPCA shelter with Ben, a six-month-old border collie cross, we had no idea what we were in for. Although we knew that border collies are high-maintenance dogs, we thought Ben, a mongrel, would have "diluted" collie traits.

But not only did he have border collie intensity, he also had aggression and dominance issues; a fear-biting problem; severe noise sen-

Thanks to monthly donors for their vital contributions

Thank you to our very special monthly donors.

As I helped to print out the year-end receipts, I was overwhelmed by the outstanding support of our monthly donors. It's so heartening, when faced day after day with animal abuse issues, to know that all of you are right behind us, supporting us with your monthly commitment.

It doesn't have to be much to make a difference. Some of you give \$5 a month, some of you

\$100. However large or small, please know that your donation makes a difference. It all adds up. And we do our best to stretch our funding as far as it will go.

What does your monthly support provide? Peace of mind. Stability. The ability to plan ahead for animals tomorrow and next week, as well as today.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

Debra Probert
Executive Director

Tax receipts? Don't worry – you will get them in time

Do you ever wonder why your tax receipt for your donation takes so long to get to you?

There's a good reason! We deeply appreciate your support and we want you to have your receipt as soon as possible. However, if you've donated by cheque, we're required by our accountant to hold your receipt until your cheque clears the bank. That's usually about three weeks.

If you've donated by credit card, we try to get your receipt to

you right away. Sometimes, however, we're distracted by an animal issue that can't wait.

Remember, we operate on a shoestring, so everyone has to pitch in if there's an emergency! Please call the office if you have any concerns about your donations.

Want to make it even easier? Donate to VHS on a monthly basis. Then we'll simply issue a receipt once a year. You can give by postdated cheque, credit card or direct debit.



Hairy: Even though his illnesses seem to worsen, he's happy again, purring and snuggling with Debra.

sitivity and a host of other behavioural problems. (It emerged he had been given away by a family for snapping at children.)

He was head-shy – if you tried to pet him he would bite. He was destructive – furniture chewed; carpets ripped up; wall paper torn off the wall. He was crazy – if you turned on a blender or a vacuum cleaner he became hysterical. And he had endless energy. No matter how much we exercised him he remained hyperactive.

We consulted our vet and read lots of dog training books. We took him to an obedience class, where he got bored, barked non-stop and became aggressive. The trainer worked with him one-on-one and concluded: "You have an extremely wilful dog." Ben was expelled. We didn't know what to do.

Two things saved us: an animal behaviourist and a Frisbee. The behaviourist (at the UK's University of Bristol) showed us that, for dogs like Ben, traditional training methods don't work (and usually make things worse). She taught us to change our behav-

our and our responses to Ben's actions.

Mainly, we had to ignore him, since much of his "bad" behaviour was attention seeking. As a working breed, Ben needed a job. And since it couldn't be herding sheep, it became chasing the Frisbee – for several hours a day.

But Ben let the behaviourist know that he wasn't going to change easily. When we brought him into her office we were told to let him off his leash so he could be observed in action. He promptly jumped on her desk, knocking her paperwork flying. Then he bounded across the room, stuck his nose in Carolyn's coat pocket, pulled out a tampon, and paraded around the room with it, as if smoking a prize cigar.

Eventually, most of Ben's problems disappeared or became manageable. (He still won't let strangers pet him.) This year he'll be 14 and his eyesight, hearing and back legs are starting to fail. He's no longer a champion Frisbee-catcher.

Now, as always, he's just the best dog in the world.



Daisy: The fastest three-legged cat you ever saw.

DAISY (By Lesley Fox)

When Daisy was an abandoned stray kitten she climbed up into the warm engine of a pick-up truck for shelter. When the driver returned, he was unaware that Daisy was in the engine and when he started it, the fan belt broke Daisy's leg.

Animal Control was called and they were able to pull Daisy from inside the truck. She endured emergency surgery to pin her tiny leg and then she was put up for adoption.

I adopted her shortly after. However, only one year later, her leg became badly infected and veterinary specialists said that it needed to be amputated or she would die. It turned out Daisy would have to endure two surgeries to have her leg amputated. But it wasn't long before she was fully recovered.

Today, she still lives with her adoptive family (me and Wookie, another adopted cat). She enjoys a full and active life of jumping, running, playing, sleeping and snoring. She is the fastest three-legged cat you ever saw and she is very affectionate, loving and quite vocal.

Join us at this year's Sun Run and lend hens a helping foot

Love running? Love chickens? Then join Vancouver Humane Society staff and our volunteers at the Vancouver Sun Run on April 23 as we run for the hens!!

Henny, our five-foot battery hen mascot, will be cheering us along from the sidelines. We'll have shirts with a giant orange chicken, promoting the Chicken Out! website, so we can educate others about the cruelty to battery hens.

You don't have to run! You

can walk! But please sign up at www.canada.com/vancouver-sun/sunrun/index.html. Then, get in touch with us at the office (604 266 9744) and we'll provide you with your own nifty chicken shirt!!

This is a unique opportunity to expose THOUSANDS of people to our message of compassion for animals. We hope to have at least 20 runners with Chicken Out! shirts at various points in the crowd.

Another avian flu outbreak equals another cruel slaughter

Another outbreak of avian flu in the Fraser Valley last November resulted in the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) once again using discredited, inhumane methods – this time to cull 65,000 ducks. The agency used carbon dioxide to gas the birds despite the failure of the gas to kill ducks and geese humanely during the spring 2004 outbreak.

A parliamentary committee investigating the first outbreak criticized the method, citing scien-

tific sources that stated: "carbon dioxide is not acceptable for waterfowl."

Despite having a year and half to learn lessons from the previous cull, the CFIA has yet to amend its procedures for humane slaughter. The CFIA's promised working group, which is meant to investigate alternatives to carbon dioxide, has not even met. VHS protested the repetition of the inhumane methods and raised the issue in media.

UPC Hosts 6th Annual Forum

April 8-9, 2006 — Columbus, Ohio
"Using the Media Effectively to Promote Farmed Animal and Vegetarian Issues"

Learn how to:

Write a publishable letter to the editor

Talk confidently to reporters

Do call-in radio

Start your own broadcast

Get media to tell your story

Register Now! UPC's 6th Annual Forum, April 8-9, 2006, University Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Columbus, Ohio.

Forum Registration: \$90 includes 2 breakfasts and two vegan lunches.

Seniors/Students: \$65. Registration due by April 1, 2006 payable to United Poultry Concerns.

Registration AFTER April 1: \$100.

\$75 Students/Seniors

University Plaza Hotel Rooms: \$89 each. Call toll-free 877-677-5292

Exhibitor Table: \$100 plus

Registration Fee

Speakers:

Janice Blue, Founder-Producer, Go Vegan Texas

Karen Davis, Founder-President, United Poultry Concerns

Karen Dawn, Founder-Producer, Dawn Watch

Bruce Friedrich, Director of Vegan Campaigns, PETA

Fran Henry, Mega-Farm Agricultural Reporter, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

Debra Probert, Executive Director, Vancouver Humane Society

Nathan Runkle, Founder-Director Mercy for Animals

Paul Shapiro, Factory Farming Campaign Manager, Humane Society of the United States

Jeff Sharp, Team Leader - Ohio Survey of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Issues, Rural Sociology Program, Ohio State University

Kim Sturla, Co-Founder-Director, Animal Place

Special Film Presentation: *The Emotional World of Farm Animals* Produced by Animal Place.



Photo — United Poultry Concerns

Chickens are not products. They will exhibit the same behaviours as other birds given the chance.

UHS head to address conference on farm animals and the media

VHS executive director Debra Probert has been invited to speak at the 6th Annual United Poultry Concerns Forum in Columbus, Ohio, about VHS's success in drawing media attention to the cruel treatment of chickens.

In 2005, VHS showed the first ever undercover footage of a battery hen farm in Canada and also forced its way into Canada's otherwise blinkered coverage of the brutal handling of the 2004 avian flu

outbreak in British Columbia.

Debra says: "I'll begin my talk by noting that every time we call the media with an elephant or hippo issue, we have TV crews banging on our door, but we have to use every trick in the book to get chickens on the media's agenda."

Despite the obstacles, VHS has succeeded in getting chicken welfare in the news. At the forum, she'll share our "tricks" with other animal welfare groups.

Get Smarter — buy books and help UHS

Help VHS and animals every time you purchase a 'SMARTER than JACK' book

'Smarter than Jack' is the name of a unique series of books containing inspiring animal stories from around the world. VHS has partnered with the publishers to make it possible for anyone purchasing one of the books to help VHS's work at the same time.

VHS receives \$5 every time a book is



ordered and \$10 if the series is ordered.

All you need to do is click on the Smarter than Jack logo on the VHS website at www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca. This will take you to an ordering site where purchases can be made on-line.

By purchasing these books not only will you be rewarded with entertaining true stories of smart animals, but you will also be helping to raise money for animal protection.

For general information on the Smarter than Jack books, visit www.smarterthan-jack.com.

Feral cats want in out of the cold

By JANET KANEHARA

They're dying for a second chance. No one knows exactly how many cats live a feral existence, but rescue groups estimate there are 25,000 homeless cats – abandoned, lost, feral and wild – in the B.C. Lower Mainland.

In the U.S., it is estimated that there may be as many as 73 million cats living a feral existence. The BC SPCA alone reports caring for more than 69,000 animals each year in B.C., largely cats and dogs. The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies estimates 150,000 cats end up each year with humane societies. Owners reclaim fewer than five per cent of cats in shelters. Almost 50 per cent of these animals are euthanized – mainly because of the lack of homes. In the U.S., as many as five million cats and dogs are euthanized each year.

Feral cats usually live only three to five years. About 50 per cent of kittens born in the wild die and a further 25 per cent will die before six months. Their lives are filled with disease, danger from predators, hunger, temperature extremes.

One response to the problem has been trap, neuter and release (TNR) programs, the costs borne largely by animal rescue and welfare groups, as well as by concerned citizens. However, the number of cats dealt with under TNR programs is estimated to be only five per cent of the feral cat population.



Kaz needs a home. Can you give him one?

The serious pet overpopulation problem has produced a dire shortage of homes for adoption. The Petfinder.org adoption website lists 700 cats for adoption.

Working with several animal rescue groups since 1992, I find homeless cats and kittens a permanent home if adoptable. The animal is first spayed or neutered and provided with whatever medical care is needed through a network of supporting veterinarians. I have several cats needing loving, responsible homes. These animals come from a multitude of locations. Kaz Kazoo (pictured) and Angel Girl came from a drug house with 20 kittens, six unsplayed females and several male adults. Dandy is from a low-income rental neighborhood, where 58 cats and kittens have been humanely trapped over four years. Raven, badly mauled by a dog, is barely surviving in winter with abscesses on her entire hindquarters.

If you are interested in providing a home, please call Janet at 604-931-3693. The adoption fee includes neuter/spay, vaccination and deworming.

Thanks to VHS for its support and financial aid to local rescue groups to cover spay/neuter costs and veterinary care.

VHS helps bring humane education to schools

Local secondary school students will soon discover how social justice issues such as animal exploitation, environmental degradation and human oppression, are all interconnected.

"Power of One" is VHS's new humane education program that will help youth develop critical thinking and media literacy skills so they can make informed choices in and out of the classroom. Through school presentations, activities and resource packages, students and teachers will learn respect and reverence for all beings and the environment.

Made possible in part by a generous grant from the Vancouver Foundation and a donation of printing from Orca Printing, this program aims to fill a gap in secondary school education.

"Humane education helps young people advance civilized values and encourages them to develop positive social behaviours. This is a benefit to our community because it helps to reduce violent acts against all beings, including animals," says Lesley Fox, Humane Education Program Director.

The program is being modeled after successful programs and activities developed by the International Institute for Humane Education.

Supported by



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The right way to write a letter

Want to help animals without leaving the house? Write a letter to the editor!

PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has a great brochure called *The PETA Guide to Letter-Writing, or how to flex your activist muscle from your armchair*. You can download a copy on-line at www.peta.org or we have a few copies at the office – just call 604 266 9744 and we'll send you one!

Some letter-writing tips:

- Read local papers and magazines for fuel for letters. Watch for articles, ads or letters that mention animals.

- Letters don't have to be rebuttals. Circus in town? See a lot of strays? At Easter, tell readers not to buy bunnies.
- Write about good news as well as bad. Thank the paper for its coverage of an anti-fur protest.
- Be brief! Often one short, pithy paragraph is enough. Try to stay under 300 words and type, if possible.
- Look for opportunities to write op-ed pieces for local papers. These are longer articles of about 500 to 800 words that summarize an issue, develop an argument and propose a solution.

Summer auction

The VHS Summer Solstice Online Auction will take place on June 21st! All proceeds will go toward our humane education project, 'Power of One'. Dozens of items will be up for bidding, including stunning pieces of art, gift certificates, dining, travel, fitness and entertainment packages. Save money and jump-start your summer vacation while supporting this great new project! Watch for details coming soon on our website www.vancouverhumanesociety.bc.ca

CCFA update: Write on, Pam Anderson!

The Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals (CCFA) is a coalition of charities and non-profit organizations concerned with the treatment of farm animals. VHS is one of the founding members of the coalition. Visit www.humane-food.ca for more information.

Pamela Anderson supports cage-free eggs

Pammy's on our side. In a letter to Loblaw, Canada's biggest grocery retailer, Canadian-born superstar Pamela Anderson stated: "I would like to support the request of the Vancouver Humane Society and CCFA for Loblaw to label all battery eggs as 'eggs from caged hens'."

In her second letter, responding to a form letter sent to her by Loblaw vice-president Geoff Wilson, Anderson stated: "If Loblaw took animal welfare seriously, you would refuse to sell eggs from this horribly cruel system. But at the very least, there is no reason why Loblaw cannot put up signs or label the shelves, thus enabling consumers to decide for themselves whether or not they want to support this cruelty."



Photo — PETA

Pamela Anderson wrote to Loblaw on behalf of hens.

The media attention received by Ms. Anderson's

involvement was astounding. In an article in the *Ottawa Citizen* in December, Loblaw was urged to "slap some stickers on those egg trays that Pam is bleating about... As they say in the egg business, 'Get crackin'."

CCFA's new Loblaw campaign

Pamela Anderson's intervention is help-



Send this postcard to Loblaw.

ing CCFA's exciting new campaign aimed at Loblaw. Thanks to the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and its generous funding of the project, CCFA has produced 100,000 catchy mail-in cards which ask company president, John Lederer, to use clear, in-store signage to identify eggs from caged hens and to provide consumers with at least 50% cage free alternatives. The cards are simple: people sign them, add a stamp and mail them in.

Can you help distribute them?

The goal is to have all 100,000 received by Mr. Lederer by the end of 2006. Please contact CCFA at info@humanefood.ca or 1-866-303-2232 and let CCFA know how many cards you would be able to distribute.

In a Canadian Press story, Loblaw vice president Geoffrey Wilson stated that the company would consider labelling eggs "if there is significant consumer interest."

Poll results

According to a new Decima Research poll conducted on behalf of CCFA and the World Society for the Protection of Animals:

- 75% of Canadians feel that fast food restaurants should ensure the pork and eggs they buy come from farms that don't keep their animals in small cages
- 76% agree that grocery stores should offer customers more eggs and pork from farms that don't keep animals in small

cages

- 80% agree that confining farm animals to small cages that prevent them from turning around is unacceptable

- 94% agree that it is important that farm animals be treated humanely

"This poll sends a clear message to the food industry that Canadians care about farm animals and want to see them humanely treated," says CCFA spokesperson John Youngman. The poll results are based on a sample of 1028 Canadians and are considered accurate to within +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. To read more on this story, go to

www.humanefood.ca/poll05.html.

New CCFA report on gestation stalls and the welfare of sows in Canada

As part of its Quit Stalling project, CCFA has produced an in-depth, scientific review on gestation stalls and the welfare of sows in Canada. VHS's Bruce Passmore wrote the report and the printing was kindly funded by WSPA. It's available at www.humane-food.ca/resources.html.

Thoughts on animal transport?

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is inviting comments on animal transportation regulations until March 15, 2006. See the link below for information on current Canadian transport regulations; recommendations for change from CCFA and Animals' Angels; and how to make email-comments. Support our recommendations for transport regulations. See http://humanefood.ca/News/news_84.html

Website goes bilingual

With the generous help of Lucie Savard and her associates, CCFA has begun making its website bilingual. Starting with the fact sheets, CCFA hopes to have the entire site available in both of Canada's official languages by the end of 2006.

Congratulations to B.C.'s cage-free egg retailers

As part of VHS's Chicken Out! project, an education initiative to end the use of battery cages for egg-laying hens (www.chicken-out.ca), VHS would like to publicly congratulate all the retailers in the Lower Mainland who have chosen to go 100% cage-free with regards to shelled eggs.

Capers Community Markets (Vancouver)
Whole Foods Market (West Vancouver)
Drive Organics (Vancouver)
Mainly Organics (Vancouver)
West Pointe Organic Produce

(Vancouver)

Small Potatoes Urban Delivery – SPUD (Lower Mainland and Victoria)

Green Earth Organics (Vancouver and Toronto)

Ladybug Organics (Surrey and Lower Mainland)

Organics @ Home (North Vancouver and surrounding area)

Why is this important?

Every year, 26 million hens are kept in battery cages in Canada. These cruel and

inhumane cages are a direct result of consumer demand. When grocery retailers, delivery services, and ultimately consumers, start demanding alternatives, farming practices will have to change.

The next step in the process is a two-minute Internet video that will rival the Meatrix www.themeatrix.com.

Fundraising for the video is underway and has been given a shot in the arm by CETFA, which has provided a generous grant of \$1000!

VHS out and about

We've been busy!

Since the last newsletter, VHS has attended a number of events to promote animal protection, including the B.C. SPCA 'Paws for a Cause' walk and Simon Fraser University's Welcome Week.

We also had tables at malls around the Lower Mainland, including Richmond Centre and Metrotown.

Henny, our battery hen mascot, appeared at Loblaw-owned grocery retailers Super Valu and Superstore to encourage Loblaw to label eggs that are not from caged hens. Henny's appearances are drawing attention to VHS's ongoing Chicken Out! campaign. For more information, visit www.chickenout.ca



Henny gave a lump of coal to Super Valu at Christmas to highlight parent company Loblaw's failure to label its eggs from caged hens.

Upcoming events

VHS would love your help at our events. Here are a few proposed dates:

- Sat March 26 (11 am to 4 pm) – International Meatout Day (Robson Street)
- April 15 (10 am to 5 pm) – National Farm Animals Day (Robson Street)
- April 22 (10 am to 5 pm) – Capers Sustainable Living Fair (Robson Street)
- April 23 (9 am to noon) – Vancouver Sun Run (downtown)
- May 4 (11 am to 1 pm) – International Respect for Chickens Day (downtown)
- June 10 (11 am to 5 pm) – Chicken Dance Party 2006 (Robson Street)
- Around June 10 (7 pm to 10 PM) – Chicken Dance Party concert 2006 (TBA)

Are you free on any other days? Let us know and maybe we can set up another event.

VHS would like to say a special thank you to all the incredible volunteers who helped to make 2005 one of our most successful years ever. Your tireless dedication and support of VHS allowed us to help countless animals. We, and the animals, thank you for your continued support.

Animals lose two devoted supporters

We are sad to report that we have lost two committed animal people in the last two months. John and Enid Harris have both passed away. They were very active in wildlife rehabilitation, particularly of rac-

coons. Their association with VHS involved the rodeo – Mr. Harris was very supportive of our efforts to expose rodeo, especially calf-roping, for the cruelty that it is.

They will both be sorely missed.

HERE ARE 4 GOOD REASONS



WHY YOU SHOULD REMEMBER ANIMALS IN YOUR WILL



Vancouver Humane Society

Please contact our office for further information.



HAPPY ENDINGS



Rocky

VHS helped six-year-old chow-cross Rocky, who needed surgery for a tumour on his paw. Rocky is recovering well.



Jerry

Fifteen-year-old Jerry is recovering after surgery to repair a broken femur. Jerry's guardian wrote to

VHS after we helped with the costs of the operation: "Words cannot express how grateful I am. Thank you again for answering my prayers."

Pi

Pi had four teeth successfully extracted, despite concerns about her age (15 years) and a previous bad reaction to anaesthetic. Pi's guardian wrote to VHS to say: "I live alone and am disabled. Pi means the world to me. I am grateful to have some more time with my beloved companion. Thanks again."



Lucky

Sometimes there isn't a happy ending, but it's not for any lack of effort or compassion on the part of



people who care about animals.

When Diana Hershman found a very ill five-month-old Maltese puppy abandoned in a pet carrier on the roadside in Maple Ridge, she did everything she could to save him.

After taking little 'Lucky' to Haney Animal Hospital, she began raising funds to treat his infected paws and parvovirus. VHS offered its help and a newspaper story galvanized local people, who began arriving at the hospital with donations.

Lucky rallied at first, wagging his tail as Diana held him for hours. But he lost his struggle. Lucky died the next day, but without pain, comfortably and with people who cared — not alone on a roadside.

Thanks to organizations that make it their business to help

Thank you to the following businesses and organizations that so generously support VHS's work:

- Samadi Yoga Centre – Port Coquitlam
- Fleetwood Lions Club
- Kama Natural Soap
- AAA Wildlife Control

- Rakes & Ladders Garden & Property Services
- Buckland Southerst Gallery
- Eija Productions B.C. Ltd.
- Cambridge Plumbing Systems Ltd.
- Bombshell Enterprizes Inc.
- Eagle Ridge Mechanical Contracting Ltd.

A special thank you to Mike Rogozinski and Marie Noel of BMO's Vancouver District Cash Management team who contributed the proceedings from a Christmas auction to VHS.

Awesome!

Our Privacy Commitment to You

You, our supporters, are our most valuable resource. Without you, we would not be able to do the work that we do. You are our lifeblood. When we expose and protest animal abuse, we know that you are right behind us, ready to speak out for those who cannot defend themselves. And for that, we thank you.

Sometimes it is very advantageous for groups like ours to share information. This is the fastest and most economical way for us to inform people like you about animal issues. It is also the most efficient way for VHS to grow and become more effective.

It is very frustrating for all of us when we open our mailbox to find that we have received donation requests from worthy organizations, many of which we would like to support. Not only is it a waste of paper and postage, it is often heartbreaking to open the envelope and be told yet another story of sadness and despair.

That is why when we do share information about our supporters, we do it ONLY with like-minded organizations - other people who care about animal suffering and want to put their resources towards exposing and stopping it. If you allow us to share information with other like-minded groups, simply

put, we can help more animals. And it is our sincere promise to you that we will only exchange lists with organizations with similar views and policies. Even knowing how important it is to us, if you still do not want VHS to share your name, just phone the office and we will honor your request.

Do you want to become a VHS member? Just let us know. The membership fee is \$2 per year. The only other things we require are that you have interests that are compatible with our goals and philosophy, and that you donate two hours per week (or the equivalent) of your time.