

Humane Society Not Welcome

Guest Editorial By ZUZANA KUKOL

Recently, Nye county Nevada was trying to pass a new animal ordinance, which was rejected for legal reasons. I was one of the few animal owners who showed up at the rejected Nye county animal ordinance hearing on March 16, 2010. I was shocked to learn that one of the groups writing to support this ordinance was a total outsider -- the Humane Society of the United States.

HSUS is an animal rights group that many confuse with local "humane society" shelters; HSUS is not affiliated with any of them.

It is a powerful, well-funded group which, instead of helping shelters and animals directly, works hard on eventually removing pets from our homes, meat from our tables, leather goods from our closets and animals from zoos and circuses.

What is especially disconcerting is that HSUS, a group many expect to care about animal welfare, is making money selling animal euthanasia manuals.

The HSUS letter written to Nye county commissioners by its California-based "Nevada state director" claims it has "over 11 million members and constituents with over 77,000 located in the state of Nevada."

However, according to HSUS's 2008 tax return, all who contribute \$25 or more annually are "voting members of the Society."

Each member is supposed to receive HSUS' bi-monthly "All Animals" magazine. So how come HSUS admits it only mailed out 420,000 copies in 2008? How is HSUS counting their supposed members and constituents?

HSUS averages \$160-200 million per year in assets. Judging by its 2008 tax return, only a little more than \$450,000 went to pet shelters. It spent around 35 million on salaries, employee benefits, pension plans and payroll accounting taxes, over \$5.3 million on travel, over \$7.8 million on advertising and more than \$10 million on mailing costs.

According to a Department of Homeland Security unclassified 2008 document, "Ecoterrorism: Environmental and Animal-Rights Militants in the United States," HSUS is a mainstream organization "with known or possible links to ecoterrorism."

<http://www.rexano.org//Documents/DHS-Eco-Terrorism-in-US-2008.pdf>

In their letter to Nye county commissioners, HSUS director also asked for a ban on exotic animals (called 'special conditions animals' in the ordinance). It claims that with primates, "The injuries (and deaths) are unfortunately, quite numerous." That is pure propaganda. Where the dangers of exotic animals are concerned, since 1990 in the whole U.S., on average captive non-human primates kill zero people per year, big cats kill one person, captive venomous snake, 0.8 people, cap-



Zuzana Kukol with her white tiger, Elvis.

Photo by Scott Shoemaker

tive non-venomous snake, 0.5 people, and captive elephants, 0.7 people.

<http://www.rexano.org/Education.htm>

Most of these fatalities are owners, family members, friends and trainers voluntarily on the property where the animals were kept. These were voluntarily accepted hazards, not a public safety issue. Meanwhile, traffic accidents kill between 120 and 130 people per day.

Elections are coming, and I hope the Nevada voters and legislators will keep outsiders, such as lobby groups like HSUS, out of Nevada. Our legislators need to listen to us, the local residents and taxpayers, and hands-on animal lovers, not some vegan outsiders whose latest adventure is to promote and sell vegan dog food.

Reno tent city for homeless to remain open

RENO, Nev. (AP) - Reno's 100-tent homeless camping area won't be shutting down. City officials say it's a matter of humanity and law that homeless people can't be harassed or arrested for lacking a place to stay. However, the encampment will be under some new guidelines, written by a committee of 13 "tent city" residents and approved by homeless center staff and the mayor. The regulations are designed to ensure the area is safe and doesn't present a health hazard.

The tent city started about 18 months ago when homeless people who couldn't or wouldn't take advantage of the city's services were given permission to stay on Reno's homeless services campus.

Jodi Royal-Goodwin, Reno's community reinvestment manager, said the policy was meant to be a temporary measure, but with the growth of the homeless population and the closure of Reno's overflow homeless shelter, the encampment will continue.

"We'd like to have an exit strategy, but right now there isn't one," Royal-Goodwin said. "These people have to live somewhere. It's not a place to stay indefinitely, but we have an obligation to provide a place where it's safe."