

"THE TIDE IS TURNING"

Ron Hevener

What is it that drives us on? In spite of sorrow, loss, and all the battles of life, how do we keep going no matter what?

Those of us with animals know the answer. It's heart that keeps us going - passion; love. Isn't that what having animals is all about? But, as life becomes more political, with laws and public opinion telling us what we can and can't do - how we should think, how we should feel - what else are animals showing us? Let's talk about how our love for animals, and doing right by them, could be the very thing taking them away from us. And how it's not too late to turn the tide.

Lots of us contributed to groups claiming to have great compassion for animals over the years. We all wanted to do the right thing and it felt good being told how nice we were for donating to their "cause." We were doing something for animals and we all slept well because of it. The trouble is, it's about twenty years later now. Those little groups on the lunatic fringe became organizations, the organizations became publicity mongers and the whole bunch of them became full-scale corporations with payrolls, lawyers and presidents. It all morphed into something totally different from what we wanted and all of a sudden, their idea of compassion is turning out to be quite different from ours.

In recent days, the Associated Press has been reporting some interesting - and significant - developments affecting all of us with animals. At a standing-room-only hearing in the U.S. Senate, the Center for Consumer Freedom gave testimony blasting "the most visible animal rights groups" for hypocrisy and support of national terrorism. Yes, that's correct: terrorism. And, for the first time, these familiar organizations are being forced to defend themselves instead of attacking others.

The tide is turning. Besides this Senate hearing, the state of Florida took action against what we all know as HSUS (Humane Society of the United States) just a few days ago. What could the Humane Society do wrong, you ask? How about stealing an identity for starters? Lots of us are too busy taking care of our dogs to figure it out. But, "HSUS" isn't the local "humane shelter" in town. It isn't a humane shelter at all. It's a business name. Did you know you can register the name of a legitimate business in another state and nobody can stop you? How many of us gave money to "HSUS" thinking we were giving money to the humane society in our local county?

Florida lawmakers are just like the rest of us. They were busy making laws and confused about who this "HSUS" organization really is. Trying to do a good thing, they allowed this company to benefit from a lucrative state program. But, when they realized their mistake - to the tune of millions - Florida surprised everybody and fixed it. Of course, Florida is also the state that let HSUS get constitutional rights for pregnant pigs.

Sometimes, editors think my comments are bitter. I don't think they are bitter at all. I grew up loving animals and always will. But, along the way, I figured out something important, maybe even revolutionary: it's people that animals depend on. They cannot survive in this culture without us. They cannot buy their food. They cannot pay their vet bills (and perish the thought of any animal ever being able to pay thousands of dollars for the kind of care mentioned in a recent column of mine). When an organization pushes for laws that inhibit us from breeding animals, racing them, showing them, or having as many as we can care for - they are threatening the well-being of those animals and their many generations to come.

That isn't compassion. It isn't anything close to what animals stand for or how they inspire us to be. A horse named Afleet Alex bravely making his way around the far turn, past the corner pole and into the home stretch is the sight to behold. Before the eyes of millions, he drives his way forward - trying, doing his best, giving his all - and, suddenly, he stumbles. Like you - like me - out there, working day after day, giving all we've got to make a life for ourselves and our kids, buying a car, a house, paying our bills and getting ahead. And, just when you're getting somewhere, something trips you up. But that horse never takes his eyes off the finish line, the goal he's determined to reach - that horse keeps going. He keeps going and he pulls away from the pack! He keeps going, and he wins that race not by a nose, not by a neck. He wins it by four and three quarter lengths!

If anyone watching The Preakness could see that great horse and not be thrilled by what he showed us with his body, his heart and his mind, then they don't understand what animals and people are all about.

Sucking the air out of a record crowd of 115,318 and millions watching on NBC, a horse showed us what no high school, no Sunday school and no college ever could. That horse inspired us. He showed us never to give up. And people felt it.

The governor of Maryland felt it, too. As he presented the most valuable trophy in American sports to the team of people that brought the bay colt to glory, his law makers were dangerously close to losing one of the greatest sporting events on television. Accused of making "some kind of political statement" by refusing to approve measures that would increase the growth of Maryland's horse racing industry, they risked losing respect around the world and ripping the hope right out of people. The governor had seen for himself what animals mean to us and how we need them in ways that no law should touch - or ever take away. "We'll work it out," he told reporters. "The Preakness will never leave Maryland."

In time, we will understand how much of our joy and passion these organizations have taken away from us. Maybe the people who run them have never known the great heights, brilliant emotional colors and deep feelings that the rest of us know with our animals. Maybe they all live in a bland, polite, Ritalin world. But, time will change them. As people begin waking up, and lawmakers begin to see their mistakes, they will take more than a second look at the corporations that started with our contributions and grew up to bite the hands that feed them. You will see things like Wisconsin passing laws to protect its agricultural industry against interference by animal rights activists. You will see things like Michigan Institute of Technology taking a second look before offering credit courses on how to destroy the Greyhound racing industry instead of improving it. You will see less and less about them in the news, because press releases by animal rights groups will be more carefully evaluated by editors and program directors before being reported as gospel. The circus will be fun again, breeders won't worry about the safety of their animals, and horse races, county fairs and dog shows will be bigger than ever.

It's summer here. I go outside and look at the lake that I fell in love with the first time I saw this place that has become my home. The place where my horses and dogs live along with Mamie, the wild cat who isn't really so wild. I walk along the lake and imagine it's an ocean. Tossing a stone into the dark water, I pretend the ripples are waves rushing over the sands, then pulling back and leaving behind new things for us to think about, new things to discover. That's how it is at the shore, in your bare feet, as the waves roll a little further out each time. That's how it is when the tide is turning.

Sources:

[CCF Knocks Animal Rights Groups Back On Their Paws 5/19/05](#)

The nation's ultra-wealthy animal rights groups usually get a free pass from the media for being "compassionate." But from New York to Washington and beyond, the Center for Consumer Freedom is exposing those groups for their hypocrisy, and for their support of the movement's terrorist underbelly. Our work is paying off. The most visible animal rights groups are now being forced to turn their attention away from their propaganda and toward defending their indefensible acts.

Since we launched www.PetaKillsAnimals.com, hundreds of thousands of people have learned People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' dirty little secret. And yesterday, we told a standing-room-only U.S. Senate hearing how groups like PETA, the Humane Society of the United States, and the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine offer rhetorical and monetary support for groups like the FBI-designated terrorist Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and Earth Liberation Front (ELF). Agent John Lewis, deputy assistant director for counterterrorism, told the hearing that those groups pose the most serious domestic terror threat, saying: "There is nothing else going on in this country over the last several years that is racking up the high number of violent crimes and terrorist actions."

Judging from the comments of PETA, HSUS, and a leading ALF supporter in the wake of the Senate hearing, it looks like we've hit a nerve:

- An HSUS spokesman attempted to label our claims as "outrageous." That's certainly the appropriate word for HSUS's behavior.

- PETA's attorney said the group "has no involvement with alleged ALF or ELF actions." Yet a sentencing memorandum for convicted ALF arsonist Rodney Coronado indicates PETA president Ingrid Newkirk had advance knowledge of his crime.

- University of Texas El Paso professor Steven Best, an ardent defender and press officer for ALF who refused to appear at yesterday's Senate hearing or assist in any way, said: "I am in the above ground support movement, I do not operate in both worlds such that I am in contact with anyone in the ALF or recruit anyone for it." That's funny, since Best has been caught on camera saying: "It's the same thing with the ALF. We are breaking down doors, breaking into buildings, rescuing animals, and smashing property." He's also posed on camera posing with Rodney Coronado. The El Paso Times quotes CCF noting: "Dr. Best's academic position affords him a position of regrettable influence within the animal-rights movement."

Yesterday's Senate hearing received widespread media attention from outlets like the Associated Press, Copley News Service, UPI, and the San Diego Union Tribune. As CNN noted, Sen. James Inhofe "said there was 'a growing network of support for extremists like ELF and ALF,' and he singled out People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals for giving money to members of both groups." The Des Moines Register also reported: Inhofe said that although no one has been killed in an eco-terrorist attack, experts believe it is only a matter of time. "It is time to take a look at the culture and climate of support for criminally based activism like ELF and ALF and do something about it," he said.

[Florida Neuters HSUS Funding May 13, 2005](#)

While leading animal rights groups spend top dollars trying to steal meat off our tables, they spend precious little in the way of directly helping animals. As we've highlighted with our popular new website, PetaKillsAnimals.com, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals spends millions on offensive PR campaigns while it penny-pinches by killing more than 10,000 dogs and cats rather than caring for them or finding them new homes. This week, Florida legislators took funds from the state's "friends of animals" license plate away from the radical Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) after they discovered the ultra-rich HSUS doesn't operate any spay/neuter programs.

HSUS has over \$113 million in assets and an annual operating budget of \$69 million. The group's recent merger with The Fund For Animals will likely bump its budget into the \$80 million range. HSUS poured more than \$175,000 into a 2002 Florida ballot initiative which gave constitutional rights to pregnant pigs.

Meanwhile, as HSUS itself admits (in a disclosure buried deep within its website): The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is not affiliated with, nor is it a parent organization for, local humane societies, animal shelters, or animal care and control agencies ... The HSUS does not operate or have direct control over any animal shelter.

Reporter Mike Jackson poses the obvious question: Since HSUS doesn't administer any spaying or neutering programs, the legislature was quite correct to have blocked their receiving any future funds. The unanswered questions causing the red cheeks are simple: How did HSUS manage to get designated as a recipient of the funds in the first place, and will there be any move to recover any funds they've already received since they were apparently given to HSUS under false pretenses?

"HIGH STAKES"

"In this controversial novel, award-winning author Ron Hevener delivers to his readers a bold and daring commentary on today's changing society.

At a time when heroes are falling all around us, there is hope. "Don't be afraid," he says. "You are strong. You are great. You are beautiful. The powers that be cannot take away what you love ... unless you let them."

"HIGH STAKES", a commentary on the animal rights movement and its threat to today's society, is being called one of the most powerful novels ever written for animal lovers.

Estimated shipping date is from June 10, 2005.

www.ronhevener.com

