

TRACS

*The Responsible
Animal Care Society*

PO Box 26097
Westbank, BC
Canada V4T 2G3
Ph/fax: 250-768-4803
tracs@shaw.ca
www.tracs-bc.ca

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aim

animal issues
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Horse Protection Initiatives

Letter to Editor: Stewie

My daughter's part time job is located along Enterprise Way, in the heart of what was considered the Kelowna bunny population. When the culling of the rabbits began, she witnessed with her own eyes the sheer inhumane ways the rabbits were dealt with. My daughter took it upon herself to do what she thought was right. Knowing that she could make a difference, no matter what the size, she rescued one of the Enterprise bunnies and brought him into our family's home. We have a Schnauzer/Beagle dog named Nasi who is 2 years old and presented a major obstacle. However, after reading the amazing information on the internet about how to socialize and train the bunny (we named him Stewie), within a few weeks the project proved to be a major success and became one of the most positive experiences of our lives.

When my daughter came home with Stewie, we set up our den as his bedroom (cords removed) and added a litter box. Stewie self-trained with ease to use the litter box and, given a few cardboard boxes for houses, he was right at home immediately.

We wanted Stewie to run free in our house with the dog, so we started our plan. Stewie would not walk on our hardwood floor so we bunny-proofed the living room, stairs and top foyer (the places with carpet that Stewie felt comfortable walking on) by tying the cords and phone lines up high and ensuring he could not get behind the TV. Cords to bunnies are like roots in the wild and they try to chew through them as a natural instinct.

In a controlled supervised manner and with our dog on a leash to watch, we slowly allowed Stewie free access into the house. This process took several weeks but was well worth it. After controlled socializing we then allowed Stewie and the dog to run free in the house together, still always under our supervision.

This process was such a success! The two are great friends and entertain each other. (See photo on page 7.) Stewie sleeps overnight in his bedroom (the den) and stays there when we are not home. But as soon as we return we get Stewie out into the house socializing with us; this includes moving the litter box out into the family area as well. Stewie runs around, up and down the stairs, and enjoys sitting with the kids while they do their homework and watch TV. He walks on their laptops to get their attention and stands at the kitchen door to get a treat when we are making dinner. Now that spring is coming we have a bunny pen we put on the grass in the yard. Stewie enjoys his time outside.

We also had Stewie neutered, which reduced his dominant male tendencies. Further, we did not want to contribute to the rabbit population should he come in contact with a female. The procedure was inexpensive, and Stewie had no complications.

Stewie is very caring and loving; he jumps on the couch to sit with us, and enjoys lots of attention, so we call him an attention mooch!

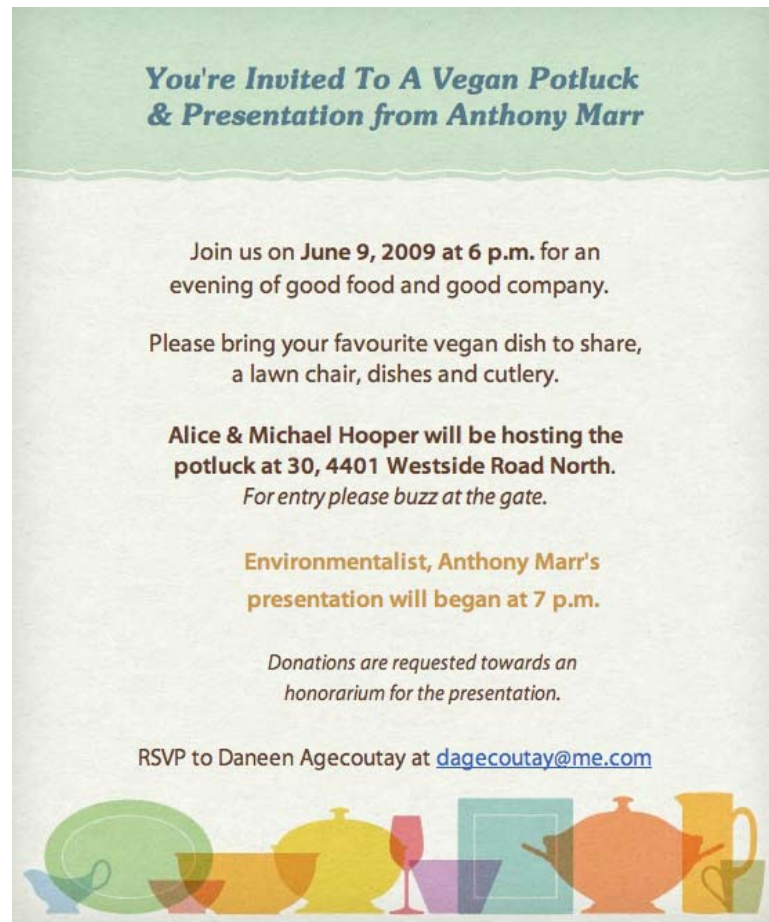
Stewie is one of the most loving and enjoyable animals we have ever had and by far the easiest, cleanest animal you could have in your house.

--Kim McDivitt

TRACS Directors

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AGM, Potluck Dinner and Presentation



*Come early to Alice and Michael's home on **June 9th** and attend **TRACS' Annual General Meeting at 5:00 p.m.** We'd love to see you there!*

About Anthony Marr

Anthony Marr holds a science degree from UBC and has worked as a field geophysicist and an environmental technologist. In 1995, he became a full time wildlife preservationist, which brought him to India three times, earning him the title of the "Champion of the Bengal Tiger" in the Champions of the Wild TV series aired in 20 countries. As an anti-hunting activist, he has conducted high profile campaigns in Canada for the bears and seals, and has been to Japan twice for the whales and dolphins. He is the founder of Heal Our Planet Earth (HOPE) and is currently on his fourth Compassion for Animals Road Expedition (CARE-4), covering 40 states. He is also the author of Omni-Science and an avid crusader for environmental protection.

Horse Protection Initiatives

Overview

Thanks to a generous grant from Vancouver Foundation, TRACS has launched a project designed to raise awareness about the plight of equines in our country and to promote the adoption of horses to good homes. According to Agriculture Canada, *112,887 horses were slaughtered in Canada in 2008*. These animals arrived at one of seven federally-inspected slaughter plants from a variety of directions. Many were so-called "culls" from breeding operations (for instance, the quarter horse and thoroughbred racehorse industries) and many others arrived from private homes no longer able or willing to continue caring for their horses. Still others came from defunct trail riding businesses, rodeos, and from the PMU (Pregnant Mare Urine) industry, well-known for sending its unwanted foals and spent mares to auction and feedlots. Also in 2008, tens of thousands of horses arrived as imports for slaughter from the United States, where the last of the equine slaughter plants had been shut down in Illinois and Texas.



Pregnant Buttercup was rescued from a feedlot by TRACS and subsequently gave birth to a foal, Romeo.

Facilitating Adoptions Through Public Awareness

Over the years, TRACS has rescued and re-homed hundreds of horses, many of them foals from the PMU industry. We have celebrated the lives that we were able to save, and have grieved over those left behind at auctions where feedlot operators picked up their quota. Typically, TRACS rescuers expressed regret about the fact that more could not be salvaged. Monetary and space constraints were always factors that prevented us from saving additional horses. With respect to funding, not only must organizations pay to purchase horses-at-risk from auctions (and sometimes directly from feedlots), but they must cover maintenance costs for rescued animals also. These expenses, depending on how long animals are held until adoptive homes are found, can be crippling. Hay costs, farrier fees, dewormers, and veterinary care are all part and parcel of horse maintenance.

In an effort to facilitate the adoption of equines who may otherwise remain indefinitely in sanctuary, TRACS is developing a website database of qualified horse rescue centres, listed by Canadian provinces. A visitor can quickly peruse the list and find the rescue centre closest to home. We encourage additions to this list, but require references on individual facilities that we are not familiar with.

A second database is in the development stage at this time also. We are compiling an extensive list of horse-related businesses. Our goal is to inform large animal veterinarians, farriers, tack shop management, riding instructors, and other people involved in equine care and management about horse rescue centres that are closest to their area. We will encourage information-sharing between businesses and clientele in an effort to advertise the existence of facilities in various communities.

Adoption Initiatives

Often in their search for "the perfect horse", potential adopters or buyers are not aware of the tireless work of rescuers, who rehabilitate and train sound, beautiful animals solely for the purpose of giving them a second chance. As an adoption incentive (made possible through Vancouver Foundation), TRACS is offering a \$50 rebate to be paid, as funds permit, to adopters obtaining a horse from one of the qualified rescues listed on our website. In the event that an animal is returned for any reason to the rescue centre, the rebate amount will be deducted from the funds owing to the adopter and will be returned to TRACS by the centre.

Euthanasia Assistance

One of the arguments often presented by families who reluctantly send their horses to slaughter is that the cost of euthanasia is prohibitively high. TRACS would like to assist by offering \$250 toward the cost of humane euthanasia performed by a veterinarian, again as funds allow, and only where circumstances of illness or infirmity are shown to cause suffering to the animal.

Applications for both euthanasia assistance as well as adoption rebate will be listed on www.tracs-bc.ca shortly.

Public Service Announcements

Finally, in an effort to inform potential adopters across Canada about the location of qualified horse rescue centres, we are working on a PSA to be aired on community channels. We are looking for citizens willing to connect us with such resources in their local areas. If you can help, please e-mail us: tracs@shaw.ca .

Keeping the Fund Alive

As our program takes wing, we are hopeful that donors will recognize the benefits of promoting adoptions from hardworking rescue centres that effectively intercept the movement of individual horses along the pipeline to slaughter. We also hope that the benefits of our Euthanasia Assistance Program will be recognized so that fewer elderly, infirm and ill horses will need to endure long-distance transport to the killing plants.

For more information on the slaughter of horses in Canada, visit the website of the Canadian Horse Defence Coalition: www.defendhorsescanada.org .

Would you like to receive an electronic copy of aim? Contact us: tracs@shaw.ca .

WISH LIST

For our Feral Rabbit Rescue Program:

- volunteers with handyman skills to build bunny pens
- volunteers to help clean pens
- foster homes
- landowners willing to provide space and TLC for rabbits in large pens; anyone out there with a large, secure barn that is not being used?
- donations of hay, bunny pellets, building materials and funding.

For Horse Protection Initiatives:

- donations toward adoption incentives, euthanasia fund and PSA

For our Feral Cat Rescue Program:

- foster homes, food, kitty litter and cash donations.

*A gift of love (\$250.00) for the animals
was received in memory of
Raymond Ernest Langston,
Sept. 16, 1923 to Jan. 15, 2009.
--Wendy Gillett & family*



*A wonderful donation of \$500 was made
to TRACS by Judy Werts in memory of her
beloved companions, a cat named Dolly and
a dog named Cole.*

Caring For Their Future

Animals need long-lasting protection, and TRACS has a proven history of acting staunchly and valiantly on their behalf. Please consider making a bequest to The Responsible Animal Care Society in your will, and your compassion will help the animals for years to come....

TRACS Receives Kelowna's Feral Rabbit Control Contract

It was a long battle fraught with anger, bitterness and grief as the city's hired contractor, EBB Environmental Consulting, slaughtered hundreds of rabbits on the streets of Kelowna. But while these deeds were being carried out, the tireless efforts of TRACS volunteers succeeded in saving the lives of almost as many rabbits as EBB killed. A fundraising team was formed, foster homes found, and a small building crew assembled to build pens. Donors stepped forth to assist, and concerned members of the public contacted us to find out how they could become involved. Some took it upon themselves to capture rabbits off the streets (see Stewie's story on Page 2).



Stewie and Nasi

When EBB's contract for \$54,000 ran out in March 2009, the City of Kelowna voted to hire TRACS to deal with the remaining rabbits. At last—a humane solution had been agreed upon. Our contract came into effect on April 1, 2009 and covers *sterilizations only* for the amount of \$12,127.50 (including GST) for one year. Staunchly committed to the cause, our wonderful volunteers (who have become expert rabbit catchers) managed to humanely remove 25 rabbits from Kelowna streets during the month of April. Further, 18 baby bunnies were born to heavily pregnant females captured during the same month. Our foster homes are a-buzz with activity, capturing is proceeding well with an additional 19 rabbits caught by mid-May, and more pens are in the process of being built.

Our work will not end when the feral rabbit numbers in Kelowna have dropped to nil or hardly any. Therefore, we are appealing to the public for donations to assist in the care and housing of the rabbits we have caught. *Sterilization costs are only a small part of what is required to maintain the rabbits we have rescued. We need to build more pens, buy food on an ongoing basis, and pay for additional veterinary bills for sick and injured rabbits.*

Please consider supporting our rabbit rescue program today!

In Our Hands

The "newbie" on the TRACS bunny catching, fostering, and pen-cleaning team, I consider myself blessed beyond belief to work with such an amazing group of people who have incredible hearts for these little darlings. Every capture to me is a wonderful experience, knowing that when we get the rabbits to safety their chances at a happy, healthy life have increased dramatically. As I take the bunnies out of the cage or trap, I always tell them, "You'll be OK, we love you...you are going to be all right now." I can't say that they understand me, but I believe that these softly-spoken words bring them some reassurance.

The story of one of my own "foster babes" needs to be told. My little "Miracle", as we call him, came to me on December 19/ 08. Miracle was found on Hwy. 97 by a young guy who recalled, "All these cars where driving around this small black dot ...they didn't want to hit it, but they didn't stop." At that time, the temperatures were reaching minus 25 degrees for a high, and minus 30 and lower at night. This little bunny was alone and cold, with no other rabbits around. When I first held him in my hands I looked at him and knew that this was my "Miracle". No more than four weeks old, he fit in the palm of my hand and I felt that if he could survive this, he would survive anything. He was so calm and relaxed and didn't squirm or flinch; it was like he knew he was going to be just fine. He would lie in my arms and fall asleep, and he ate non stop, often more than the bigger bunnies. People were amazed that with his relaxed nature he was a "feral rabbit." Miracle is now a "teenager", full of energy, spunk, and enthusiasm (and a reasonable amount of mischief), but he will always remain my "Miracle."

Another amazing little friend of mine is "Captain." We received a call about some rabbits at a trailer park behind Canadian Tire, and I went there one evening around dusk. I saw two bunnies, a small one and one slightly larger, who seemed to have a different "hop". I knew immediately that something was wrong with one of his back legs. I tried to catch him, but he wanted nothing to do with that idea. He went around the side of a building, and as I was coming around, he poked his little nose out to see where I was. Mr. Personality! He got away that night, but not for long. The next morning when I returned to the trailer park I caught another bunny and saw "Captain" around one of the trailers. So began the dash through two trailer lots, back and forth and up onto patios as he put me up to a good challenge. His back leg didn't look good, which made the situation that much more urgent. Eventually with his injured leg he became tired and I was able to drop the cage over him in a corner of the lot, and then we were on our way to the veterinary clinic.

Captain had a compound break with two small bones sticking out of his leg. I told the people at the clinic what a fighter he was and that we needed to give him a chance. The vet did an examination and said they would give amputation a try if we agreed. That is where the compassion and care of TRACS entered in as a decision in support of Captain's life was made. The amputation turned out to be a success. I have had several visits with our Captain who is recovering very well in a foster home. He will always have a huge place in my heart as a little bunny with a lot of odds against him and an incredible will to live.

I want to thank TRACS for the amazing experiences that I have had and continue to have. We cannot put a dollar value on the lives of these critters because they are our treasures.

--Cyndy Mymka

Goose Killings

On the heels of humanely resolving the rabbit issue by hiring TRACS to trap, sterilize and relocate the animals, a City of Kelowna contractor was caught killing geese on Okanagan Lake. Under permit from the Canadian Wildlife Service, a division of Environment Canada, the city had fifty geese in its sights and the contractor had already shot thirty birds. Scare tactics, they claimed, had not proven effective. Ian Wilson, City Parks Manager, stated to castanet.net on May 7, 2009, that goose control methods during 2007 and 2008 had worked in reducing coliform levels in the lake. Included in goose management has been the invasive strategy of "addling" (shaking the eggs to destroy the embryos within). Wilson's comments are interesting in light of the fact that the CWS had withdrawn Kelowna's permit to kill up to 200 geese in 2007. Therefore, a drop in coliform levels certainly could not be attributed to lethal methods employed against adult geese.

Kelowna's permit to kill was withdrawn in 2007 because it violated the federal Migratory Bird Convention Act. Thanks to quick action on the part of the Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada, a letter sent from a Toronto lawyer to the CWS quickly halted the goose slaughter in Kelowna. According to the Act, lethal methods cannot be used against adult geese where the issue involves water or beach quality, whereas egg addling under these circumstances is deemed acceptable. The Act specifies that a permit for killing will only be issued in the event of property damage by geese.

On hearing about the 2009 killings, TRACS acted by reminding the CWS about the regulations to be found in the Migratory Bird Convention Act. In response, the CWS placed Kelowna's permit-to-kill on hold while they are in the process of reviewing the Act and how it pertains to Kelowna geese. Letters to the CWS are encouraged. Resident and migratory geese in Kelowna are *not* causing property damage. The City has a machine with which feces can be removed from beaches, and feces itself does not cause property damage. As for water quality, city officials should look a little harder at the sources of human sewage entering the lake—for instance, a floating trailer court of houseboats can be found on the west side of the lake (Gellatly Bay) at this time.

Killing serves no useful purpose over the long term; it is hurtful and cruel and teaches the community that conflicts ought to be handled with weapons. Please remind the CWS that habitat modification has proven to be an effective non-lethal, non-invasive method of controlling goose populations in parks and beach areas across North America.

Letters supporting these points can be faxed or e-mailed to: Saul Schneider, Acting Manager, Population Conservation, Canadian Wildlife Service, Pacific and Yukon Region; fax: 604-664-4068; e-mail: saul.schneider@ec.gc.ca .

Making History for the Seals

On May 5, 2009, the European Parliament passed a bill that will impose an import ban on seal products. The bill states that commercial seal hunting, notably in Canada, is "inherently inhumane."

Shocking Statistics: **112,887 horses were slaughtered in Canada in 2008**
(Source: Agriculture Canada).



Blenz Cares: Fundraising for the Animals

Blenz Coffee Company has launched an initiative to support charities. Visit www.blenzcares.com/.

Join TRACS....

Help us continue our crucial work for the animals—become a member and receive our quarterly newsletter.



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone: (____) _____

e-mail: _____

I am enclosing the following (please check):

_____ \$15 for Individual Membership

_____ \$20 for Family Membership

_____ Donation \$ _____

Return to: TRACS, P.O. Box 26097, Westbank, B.C.
V4T 2G3 Canada

Thanks from the animals!