

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

Summer/Early Autumn 2007

aim
animal issues
magazine



Photo credit for "Maggie": Alice Mohr

Protecting Canada's Horses

President's Message: The Issue of Horse Slaughter in Canada

As the practice of slaughtering horses draws to a close in the United States, the international animal protection movement is carefully observing the proliferation of equine abattoirs in Canada. There are now six federally inspected facilities here that are permitted to slaughter horses. One has close ties to Cavel International, the last equine slaughterhouse in the U.S. to have closed its doors. The American people have spoken out staunchly against the killing of their national treasure for human consumption overseas, and their efforts have been successful! The next step south of the border will be enactment of the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act and/or state-by-state legislation banning the killing and transport of equines for the horsemeat industry. Until these protective measures are taken, we can expect truckloads of slaughter-bound horses to continue crossing borders from the U.S. into Canada and Mexico. The stage has been set for the massive killing of horses coast-to-coast in Canada. Animal welfare violations, which have already been widely documented, will become even more plentiful. A crucial step forward for our organization has been another series of meetings at the end of September with actor Bo Derek, who has enthusiastically agreed to assist with issues involving the safety and well-being of horses in Canada.

(See our feature article, "Protecting Canada's Horses", on page 7, and a photo taken during one of our meetings on page 9.)

I would also like to draw the attention of readers to our upcoming Annual General Meeting. This will be an inspiration-filled gathering of devoted people who are willing to spend time making a difference for the animals. The previous year's projects will be discussed, future plans unveiled, and a new executive voted in. Details are available on page 3.

Also, please note the inclusion of some very important documents in this issue of AIM. Did you know that Canada has no laws prohibiting the import of dog and cat fur into our country? It is time well spent if we can encourage our lawmakers to step up to the plate and enact legislation to protect these precious beings who give so freely and willingly of their love and loyalty. Signatures for this worthy cause will *not* be difficult to obtain!

For the animals,
Sinikka Crosland

TRACS Directors

President: Sinikka Crosland

Treasurer: Anna Schmidt

Secretary: Louise Adams

Director of Nutrition & Food Animal Issues: Brenda Davis

Directors of Youth Programs: Cory Davis & Carmen Crosland

Directors-at-Large: Michael Hooper, Alice Hooper, Courtney Murray, Joan Smythe,
Lauren Gaglardi

Newsletter Editor:

Carmen Crosland

AGM

AGM

AGM

AGM

Interested in being a part of our dynamic team? Come to our Annual General Meeting to find out more about TRACS! Lunch will be provided.

Date: Saturday, October 27, 2007

Time: 12:00 noon

Location: #30, 4401 Westside Road (about 5 minutes past Lake Okanagan Resort)

Phone: (250)769-7226

City of Kelowna Opens Fire on Canada Geese

In spite of TRACS' standing offer to put Parks officials nose-to-nose with goose conflict management experts, the City of Kelowna has up to 50 geese in its sights this fall. Many citizens are outraged. Lethal management is not only cruel—it is absolutely unnecessary and unwarranted in the face of other options, such as habitat modification.

This spring, with much assistance from Animal Alliance of Canada, goose defenders were able to use Canadian Wildlife Service rulings to stop the killing of Canada geese in the Kelowna area. However, itchy trigger fingers on the Okanagan Regional Goose Management Committee found a way to circumvent the ruling.

Please keep those letters coming! Phone, fax, and e-mail Mayor Sharon Shepherd and her council in an effort to stop the massacre of these regal birds:

Phone: (250) 469-8980

Fax: (250)862-3399 (Attention Jan Johnston)

E-mail: mayorandcouncil@kelowna.ca

Thanks for speaking up for the geese! It's their world, too....

Urban Bunnies

Our endearing fluffy-tailed friends have been observed over the spring and summer months in growing numbers on Kelowna city streets, mainly along Dilworth and Enterprise Way. TRACS is on standby to begin a sterilization/relocation project should their populations escalate to the point that they might be in peril, although simple observation proves that these adorable bunnies are well-loved by most tourists and residents who enjoy watching and feeding them. We have been in contact with a city official who has expressed interest in a bylaw requiring sterilization of all rabbits before sale. We are in favour of this and would support such action on the part of the city. A sterilization bylaw for rabbits would promote responsible decision-making in the companion animal industry.

Hot Off the Press

August 24, 2007—STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.—“ Clothing and accessories that include ‘real fur’ will have to say so in no uncertain terms under a new consumer and animal protection law signed by Gov. Eliot Spitzer last week. The new law will go into effect Nov. 13....The Humane Society of the United States says the law will protect anti-fur New Yorkers from a loophole in federal law that allowed retailers to avoid labeling the item as fur if the real fur on a garment was valued at \$150 or less” (“Calling fur by its name”, Leslie Palma-Simoncek, Staten Island Advance).

September 18, 2007—B.C.—“The B.C. government proposes to enact legislation by early 2008 granting itself new powers over the keeping of exotic animals -- including large predators such as tigers -- to track their ownership and ensure public safety, according to a Ministry of Environment discussion paper on the first major review of the Wildlife Act in 25 years” (“Changes proposed to exotic pet rules”, Larry Pynn, CanWest News Service).

Sept. 21, 2007—WASHINGTON, D.C.—“Today, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) hailed a decision by the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit upholding the State of Illinois’ decision to ban the slaughter of horses for human consumption. Illinois is home to the last remaining horse slaughter plant in the country, and the ruling effectively ends all slaughter of horses for food in the United States” (HSUS press release).

~~~~~



Sweet Nothing and her new shelter (photo by Dick Jackson)

### **And Most of All, I'll Miss Her Eyes**

And most of all, I'll miss her eyes,  
Those sweet brown orbs that spoke volumes  
In silence;  
Those accepting eyes.

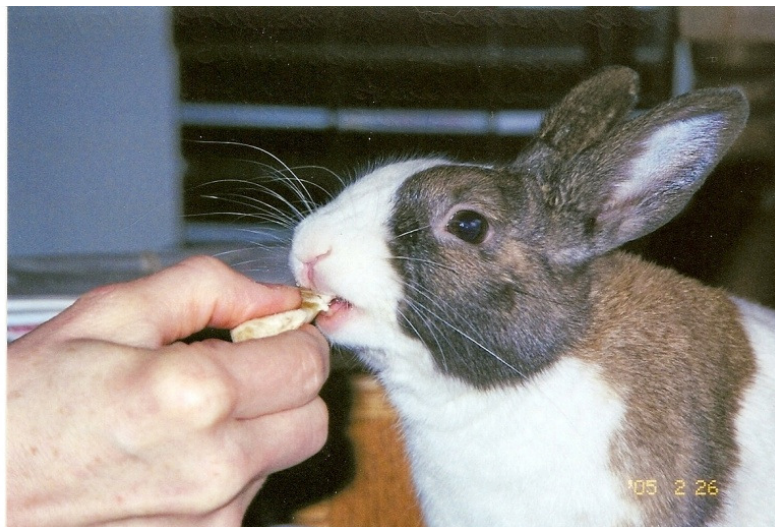
They once radiated her love  
For us;  
And the spark of life  
That danced on those trusting spheres,  
Graced our lives.

When death whispered,  
It's time to go,  
She quietly said goodbye,  
And the spark went out.

The ceremony was brief,  
Her candle was spent,  
Those eyes were clouded now  
with death's milk.

I passed my hand over her tiny head—  
And her eyes closed;  
Those beautiful eyes,  
Forever.

Her suffering was gone,  
And she seemed to be smiling;  
An angel carried her spirit away,  
And even as the tears streamed  
down my cheeks,  
I saw her eyes open in heaven.



### *Remembering Barney*

*Our deepest condolences are extended to Bill and Joan Bennett, who have lost a dear friend and treasured family member. Barney's sweet spirit will forever be etched in the hearts of those who knew and loved him. He is sorely missed by Joan, Bill, the kittens, and their old cat Molder, who was accustomed to walking with Bill and Barney.*



*Barney*

### *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...*



"Every year tens of thousands of animals suffer and die in laboratory tests of cosmetics and household products....despite the fact that the test results do not help prevent or treat accidental or purposeful misuse of the products. Please join me in using your voice for those whose cries are forever sealed behind the laboratory doors."

~ Woody Harrelson

## Protecting Canada's Horses

"Help us lead Canada's horses away from barbarism . . . and into the protected pastures of a civilized nation."

Their story begins in the stables, paddocks and fields of rural Canada. Newborn foals, endearing with their deep, soulful eyes and wobbly innocence, have become nearly as vulnerable to future harm as any livestock animal on our nation's soil.

Referred to as "crops" of foals, they are simply a commodity on many breeding and hobby farms as well as Pregnant Mare Urine (Premarkin) ranches.<sup>(1)</sup> Undesirable animals are culled and shipped to auction marts, where "killer" buyers swarm. Meat sales accept not only the old and the lame, but equines of all sizes, colours, ages, and breeds. It is not unusual to see even miniature horses and donkeys paraded about in auction rings. Frightened young foals, force-weaned and separated from their mothers at about three months of age or less, can be found at September auctions throughout Canada. Animal welfare violations abound. Although the Recommended Code of Practice governing PMU operations states that foals should not be weaned prior to three months old, the youngest "Premarkin" horse salvaged from a meat auction by TRACS was tiny six-week-old Jasper. His best friend, Jasmine, a filly of only eight weeks, was rescued as well. Another heart-rending example involved Angel, a three-month-old PMU foal who stumbled, shaking, into the auction ring and was quickly added to that year's already-overflowing quota of rescue cases. Marks resembling rope burns darkened her swollen neck; X-rays later confirmed a cervical fracture. Miraculously, Angel's broken neck healed and today she is happy, healthy, and pain-free. But we are left to wonder what violence she had to endure, possibly when being forcibly separated from her mother.



*Jasper and Jasmine*



*Angel*

The above are but a few of the numerous compassion cases that surface every single year and are documented regularly by equine rescue organizations. Many, many other animals slip through the cracks and become victims of a killing industry whose tentacles are reaching far across the nation. Recently we have observed a proliferation of equine slaughter activities in Canada. What is fueling this?

After years of public awareness work, our horse protection allies south of the border have achieved monumental strides. All equine slaughterhouses have now been shut down in the U.S., with the recent closure of Cavel International in Illinois. It is expected that the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, already supported by a majority of the House of Representatives in September 2006 (but failing to pass before the end of the 109th Congress), will eventually become law. This piece of legislation would prevent horses from being slaughtered in the U.S. for human consumption and, additionally, would prohibit the export of live horses for the same purpose. Both Canadian and U.S. horse advocates are hoping for speedy enactment of the AHSPA.

In the meantime, equines from the United States are crossing borders into Canada and Mexico, where many will join our nation's ill-fated horses in becoming slaughter and live export statistics. In anticipation of a lucrative market in horseflesh, Canadian equine abattoirs have now mushroomed to six: one in B.C. (Westwold), two in Alberta (Lacombe and Fort Macleod), one in Saskatchewan (Neudorf), and two in Quebec (Massueville and St. Andre-Avellin). Over 50,000 equine lives were lost to the horse slaughter industry in 2006, and we fully expect those numbers to be far higher as this year draws to a close.



*Horses awaiting slaughter in an Alberta feedlot*

Public reaction to the slaughter of horses for human consumption is often one of astonishment and revulsion. Shrouded in secrecy for decades, this industry has gained notoriety simply as a result of an outcry from passionate horse advocates the world over. Investigations conducted by groups such as the European Animals' Angels organization have sent shock waves throughout the international animal welfare community.

A recent report published on their website describes the appalling treatment of horses at an equine slaughterhouse in Quebec, including such scenarios as a horse left shuddering in the killing box while workers went on break. In addition, due to the layout of the facility, horses are forced to watch as herdmates ahead of them are killed. (2) Death occurs at some abattoirs by way of a 22 gauge rifle, aimed at the head of a terrified horse who is attempting to escape the smell and sight of blood. Multiple shots may be needed to kill a horse in this state. Other slaughterhouses use a captive bolt stun gun which supposedly renders an animal insensible before she is bled out and butchered--but only if correctly applied. It is clear that gross violations of even the most basic animal welfare principles can occur during this high-stress assembly-line process.



One of the biggest lies spewed by industry proponents is that horse slaughter is a humane way to dispose of unwanted, homeless animals. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Horse slaughter is *not* humane euthanasia. In addition to the intense, crippling psychological stress suffered by these intelligent beings as they enter the kill facility, a quick, painless death is no guarantee as slaughterhouse personnel grapple with panicking horses and a fast-paced work environment. Further, the very nature of such a job fosters insensitivity to animal suffering. There is no comparison between death via lethal injection performed by a qualified professional and the terror-filled, often prolonged ending to life suffered by animals in a slaughterhouse.(3)

Those not in favour of a ban on equine slaughter frequently argue that unwanted horses must be sent to market because there is no other solution. They maintain that our country would soon be rife with homeless horses if we were to end this disposal method. To the contrary, since the state of California outlawed equine slaughter in 1998, the incidence of neglect cases did not rise, and horse theft actually decreased by 34%. In addition, when Cavel in DeKalb, Illinois, was destroyed by fire in 2002, horse abuse had dropped by about 100 cases by the end of the following year. (Until 2002, statistics had shown an annual increase of approximately 100 new equine abuse incidents.)

If horse slaughter were abolished, where would all the animals go? They would be sold, adopted out, sent to sanctuaries (numbers of which are growing in Canada), or retained by their families. Most importantly, many foals would not be born at all. Ending horse slaughter would increase public accountability, from the rural family home to the world of breeders. Removing an "easy out" disposal system would eventually result in less horses bred, increased likelihood of finding good homes for existing horses, and a more concentrated effort made to secure those homes.

It should be noted that under current federal legislation in Canada, horses have little protection, and provincial laws vary in their ability to shield horses from suffering. Although attempts have been made to update the Criminal Code's anti-cruelty statutes, animals in general, at this time, have no more than a pathetic level of protection that was enacted over a century ago. (4) Additionally, horses are considered "livestock" animals under Canadian law, placing them at easy risk of exploitation by the food industry, and they are therefore as readily victimized as any other livestock animal. However, in the hearts of many Canadians, horses are valued as companions. A 2004 Ipsos-Reid poll revealed that almost 2/3 (64%) of Canadian respondents do not believe in slaughtering horses for human consumption. (5)

Surely all animals are deserving of our profound respect, protection, and compassion. With the assistance of the general public, it is highly possible that the battle for the lives of one species--the horse--will be won, and a movement of reform will sweep the entire livestock industry. With the U.S. on the brink of major legislative change, the time for Canadians to act on behalf of horses is *now*. Slaughter is the ultimate act of betrayal, and the suffering that accompanies every facet of this industry can be overlooked no more. Many animal advocates are seeking the support of their Members of Parliament in an effort to raise the bar for these noble, beautiful, and highly intelligent animals.

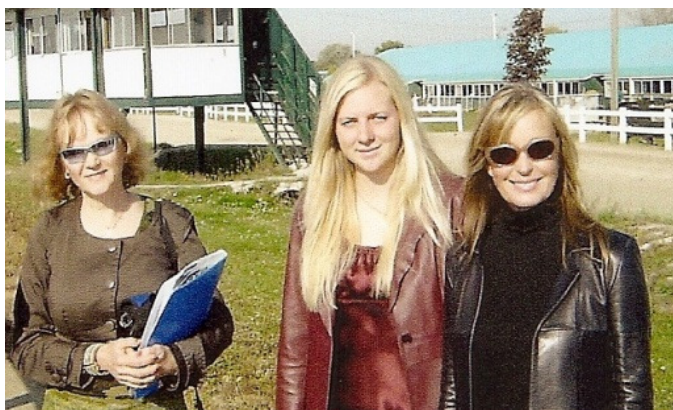
May peaceful pastures, not barbarism, be our legacy for future generations of Canadian horses.

Footnotes:

- (1)The PMU industry involves the prolonged confinement of pregnant mares and the collection of their hormone-rich urine for the production of an estrogen replacement drug, Premarin. This industry has been linked with extensive abuse of horses. Often considered disposable by-products of this type of factory farming, the lives of countless foals over the decades have ended in slaughterhouses and their flesh has been shipped to overseas markets.
- (2) [http://www.animals-angels.com/index.php?pageID=start\\_us&sessionLang=us](http://www.animals-angels.com/index.php?pageID=start_us&sessionLang=us) (Animals' Angels)
- (3) <http://www.sharkonline.org/?P=000000528> (Horsekillers.com: The Reality of Horse Slaughter)
- (4) [http://cfhs.ca/law/federal\\_legislation/](http://cfhs.ca/law/federal_legislation/) (Canadian Federation of Humane Societies)
- (5) <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/pressrelease.cfm?id=2252> ("Canadians on Horse Slaughter", Ipsos-Reid)

--Sinikka Crosland

["Protecting Canada's Horses" was recently published in animalnewsmagazine.org]



Left to right: Sinikka, Bo's niece Molly, Bo  
September 30/07, Toronto, Ontario

**Shocking Statistics: According to Statistics Canada, more than two million animals are killed each year by the Canadian fur industry. This figure does not take into account the estimated 9 million "trash" animals, including dogs, cats, birds and even endangered species that are caught in the traps each year and then discarded because they have no economic value (Global Action Network).**

TRACS