

The Inmates Are In Charge of the Asylum

by James Dark

There is an old joke about the dire consequences of when inmates are allowed to run the asylum, and regrettably, one needs look no further than our own city of Dallas to see what happens when this occurs. When the city of Dallas fielded citizen complaints about a problem with stray dogs in their city, they elected to turn to their Animal Shelter Commission. These would be the aforementioned inmates...

When this panel was formed a few years back, those on the panel admit that it was formed by networking out to "animal rights" groups to decide who to get on the commission. Now, I don't consider myself a rocket scientist, but I'm willing to bet that discussions also occurred about who NOT to let on the panel.

After all, why would a panel charged with running an animal shelter be chock full of representatives (including the chairman) of both PETA and the Humane Society of the United States? Both organizations are opposed to pet ownership. Both believe that euthanizing a pet is preferable to having them live a life of "slavery" as a household pet. It should be noted that not a single representative of any kennel club, dog or cat group, or any group of pet owners was allowed on the panel.

I should also explain now, before I get any further, why the Texas State Rifle Association is concerned

about animal issues. First, the obvious answer is that any such pet issue will affect hunters in the subject city, as hunting dogs will be impacted by needless regulations. Second, the TSRA, NRA and other organizations with constituencies of hunters have long been plagued by tactics employed by these groups to stop legal hunting, even to the point of having activists threaten and disrupt hunts (even those protected by law).

The existing Dallas ordinances on animals contain significant restrictions, including a requirement for licensing, mandatory rabies vaccinations, tethering restrictions, dangerous dog laws, and the ability for either animal control or the police department to pick up and impound stray dogs.

The head of the local animal shelter commission, PETA activist Robert "Skip" Trimble, is a classic example of the hypocrisy that exemplifies most PETA members. A self-proclaimed "former animal abuser," he spearheaded an ultimately futile effort to shut down a primate retirement center in San Antonio. He fought long and hard, despite PETA's stated opposition to animal research, to send seven chimpanzees (who had been retired from medical research) to a holding facility in Louisiana where they could be returned to their former research program in Ohio, rather than leave them in retirement in Texas. During his role in this particular case, he is reported to have bragged to other

activists about his recent hunting trips, despite PETA's reputation as rabidly anti-hunting. (According to information gained in an open records request, Mr. Trimble has a history of purchasing Texas hunting and fishing licenses as recently as 2006).

I don't personally fault Mr. Trimble for hunting. I just find it a little unusual for a man who has been given awards by PETA for his work!

Much like gun laws, the problem in Dallas is not a problem of a lack of laws, it is a lack of enforcement. In a city with a population estimated at over 1.2 million people, the city has 8 animal control officers on duty during the peak day shift. They operate from a central facility, patrolling and responding to calls over an area of nearly 385 square miles.

The department is also chronically understaffed, although job vacancies typically are open at any given time. This is only a surmising on my part, but I can imagine that one's job would be pretty unrewarding if you spent your day hauling dogs into the shelter, where you knew they faced an 82% chance of being euthanized.

The City of Dallas, again because of lack of resources and staff, has no meaningful adoption system for stray pets, relying on the PETA

Continued on page 19

Executive Director's Message

Executive Director's Message from Page 5

and HSUS "kill them all and let God sort 'em out" mentality. Each day, 200 to 300 dogs and cats are dropped off at the shelter, and only eight or ten are adopted.

To combat the alleged legions of loose dogs, the Animal Shelter Commission (in conditions of secrecy until they got caught) began drafting ordinances. With no changes in staffing, other than filling a paltry number of vacancies, they drafted what would be one of the most draconian sets of animal ordinances in the nation, specifically aimed at the only portion of the population likely to follow the new laws: those who are following the current laws voluntarily (coincidentally, those who are also not part of the current problem). Specifically, the new ordinance would require:

-A \$500 breeder's permit, which would be issued on a "may issue" basis, by the director of the Animal Shelter (a position likely to be filled from outside the city by someone suitable to PETA and HSUS) for any dog or cat that is not neutered. This stands in stark contrast to the \$7 license for a neutered or spayed pet.

-A required permit, also issued by the Director on a "may-issue" basis, to have a litter of puppies or kittens. Statements were made by the commission members that these permits would not be granted for addresses in residential areas. This means a concerted effort to link the animal ordinances to zoning laws, to effectively stop ALL breeding

of puppies and kittens in Dallas.

-A limit of six pets to a household.

-Changes to the tethering ordinance that are well-intentioned, but likely unenforceable because of impossibly subjective language.

The only part of the proposed ordinances that make a lick of sense are the parts strengthening the ability of the city to deal with dangerous dogs that are impounded after attacks on humans.

Dallas Mayor Pro Tem Elba Garcia has stated that, "[she was] tired of the catch, cage and kill mentality." Trimble commented in a recent news article that "it was wrong for the city...to euthanize tens of thousands of unwanted animals each year without trying to stem their breeding." During a heated exchange with a Dallas council member, he betrayed what his true agenda is. While decrying the oversupply of animals, he said "that there is only one way to stop the supply, and that is to make them incapable of reproduction."

On the surface, calling for spaying and neutering of animals makes for compelling sound bites, but like everything else, some moderation is required. Are we actually calling for the extinction of dogs and cats? Because that is exactly what happens when you sterilize an entire generation.

Funny that question should come up...

Wayne Pacelle, the President and CEO of HSUS, was quoted in 1993

as saying, "We have no ethical obligation to preserve the different breeds of livestock produced through selective breeding...One generation and out. We have no problems with the extinction of domestic animals. They are creations of human selective breeding."

This likely explains why the HSUS (with their \$109 million in assets) and PETA (with their \$27 million in assets) prefers a mandatory spay/neuter program. The alternative, and even more moral, option would be to call for, or even as an organization devoted to making life better for animals, create a spay/neuter assistance program in Dallas that would actually target the neighborhoods allegedly overrun by stray dogs. They could also help the city with a meaningful adoption program. They could even help with (gasp!) funding!

Lack of tax dollars would mean that private organizations would have to supplement city coffers, or even run their own programs in these cities. But rather than risk their already ample budgets and endowments, PETA and HSUS call for extermination of animals simply because it is more expedient to buy sodium phenobarbital (the drug used to euthanize most animals) by the gallon.

Other cities have tried this type of law. San Antonio recently snuck it past their citizens. In the three months or so since passage, not a single "breeder's permit" has been issued. At last report, the forms on which to apply for one hadn't even

been developed!

Wisely, on the other hand, the city of Lubbock turned this proposal down flat, recognizing it as unworkable.

But most wisely of all, Santa Barbara, California, scrapped the entire proposal and sent it back to the drawing board, but this time with a new commission composed of something other than an entire board of animal rights whackos.

This proposal, if passed, will not solve the problems that the city has with stray dogs. It will exacerbate it. Rather than follow these ordinances, citizens will go underground with their dogs. Rather than submit to the current licenses, they will ignore them. License income, which could be used to hire more animal control officers, will evaporate. Dog and cat owners, fearing a city-mandated spay or neuter, may elect to forego rabies vaccinations and other visits to veterinarians,

risking a spread of deadly disease and a lower standard of living for the dogs already in the city. In the end, this proposed ordinance will end up killing cats and dogs, rather than saving them.

But then again, judging by Wayne Pacelle's own words, that is exactly what they are hoping for.

Perhaps in the next few weeks, the city of Dallas will realize that the inmates are carrying the keys for the asylum and take them back. Passing new laws they won't (or can't) enforce is no solution to a problem that can be easily controlled with the laws already on the books.

Gee, where have we heard that before?



Legislative Message from page 8

Next subject!

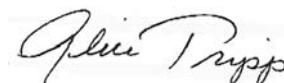
TSRA will have a booth at the state conventions in June, both the Democratic and the Republican. We're working hard to help old friends with their campaigns and make new friends along the way.

The Bradys are skulking around Texas looking to support likely candidates, such as Wendy Davis who's running against Fort Worth Senator Kim Brimer. Wendy Davis, a Fort Worth City Councilperson, was behind an attempt years ago to ban gun shows from Fort Worth city property. Davis wasn't successful then; she needs to be stopped in November. We don't need her in Austin.

Please look for Texans who need your physical help with their campaign. Call their district offices, find their websites, volunteer to put out yard signs or make calls. Also remember to send PAC money to TSRA as often as you can, as much as you can afford so we can help the good guys win.

This isn't the time to worry; this is the time to work! We have the summer to rally the troops and kick butt.

And as always, Keep the Faith,



TSRA State Championship Match Calendar

2008 Cowboy Lever Action Silhouette Championship, New Braunfels, August 30-September 1, 2008. Contact Rick Mariott at 817-517-5323.

TSRA Cowboy Action Championship Match, Agarita Ranch, Lockhart, September 27-28, 2008. Contact Chuck Leshikar at 512-376-2602.

For more match information see our website at www.tsra.com under Shooting Events.