

OPINION

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GUEST VIEW | INGRID NEWKIRK, PETA

Shelters should think about what 'no-kill' really means

I recently received a letter from the Wyandot County Humane Society, a shelter in Ohio that accepts all animals regardless of their condition — including the ones “no-kill” shelters reject, put on a waiting list or charge a fee to accept. Recently, they got a call from a woman who found a box of kittens. Her local shelter said it couldn’t take them because it was full — the usual refrain at shelters striving for “no-kill” status — and told her to call Wyandot Humane instead.

But the woman explained that she didn’t have the gas money for the two-hour round trip. What was the “no-kill” shelter’s solution? Just leave the kittens outside, they said — there was nothing they could do.

Wyandot Humane arranged to meet the woman halfway and pick up the kittens. “Could we guarantee none of them would be euthanized? No,” the shelter’s directors wrote. “But we could definitely guarantee they would have all the food they want, a warm safe place to be, toys and petting and blankets, and if necessary, a humane euthanasia in the arms of highly trained and skilled professionals who really care about the animals.”

We hear similar stories from shelters across the U.S. that are left to clean up the wreckage caused by the “life at any cost” mentality. PETA works to stop the killing of all animals, for food, clothing, experimentation and more, but we can’t — and won’t — turn our backs on dogs and cats in danger of being tossed out or whose owners can’t afford costly euthanasia services. To us, the choice is obvious. A humane death is better than a slow and painful one.

Many shelters have thanked us for accepting every animal — including elderly, ill and badly injured ones who need a peaceful end to their suffering, even if doing so is unpopular and often mischaracterized or misunderstood.

Jolene was one of those animals. A Portsmouth, Virginia, family acquired the dog from Craigslist on Christmas Eve 2014 and soon discovered why she had been given away: She was so aggressive that they couldn’t even feed her or let her out of the crate that she had been put in.

The family called one local agency, which said that it couldn’t help.

Another shelter told them that they had “made a bad decision” and would have to figure out what to do themselves. Finally, they called PETA. We accepted this terrified dog — she was indeed stunningly aggressive — and did what needed to be done. But what would have become of her if we hadn’t?

“The entire concept of the ‘no-kill’ movement is a fallacy,” Wyandot Humane writes. “While a particular shelter may turn animals away in order to call themselves no-kill, those animals will likely die — and badly — dumped on the road or given away to just anyone. ... We cannot understand how any organization can call themselves ‘humane’ and still turn away desperate people with desperate animals with no place to go.”

This problem is everywhere. In Odessa, Texas, seven puppies were found locked in a cage at a landfill without food or water. The local “no-kill” shelter had refused them entry. “We turn (animals) down every day, all day long because there’s no way we could handle all of them,” the shelter director explained. The same week, five more puppies were found in a crate next to a dumpster.

Pretending problems don’t exist hurts animals much more than a peaceful death does. The president of the board of directors of a Wisconsin shelter told us, “the cat population in this area is horrendous and we are the only open admissions shelter within a 100 mile radius. We just took in 3 week old kittens this week-end from another county where the neighbors’ idea of population control is to throw them in the dumpster. The Humane Society in that county said they couldn’t help. So ... here we are ... yet again, euthanizing someone else’s problem.”

So what can be done? Perhaps a shelter director in California has the right idea: “get the message out about the need to spay and neuter and reduce the animal population.” Yes, and stop glorifying “no-kill” policies until there is no longer a need to euthanize. Until then, no animal should have to suffer and die in pain simply because of wishful thinking.

—*Ingrid Newkirk is the president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, based in Norfolk, Va.*

WEEKLY COLUMN | SEN. TOM O'MARA

Keeping it 'Grown in New York'



TOM O'MARA

If anyone needed a reminder of just how important agriculture is to New York’s economy, to say nothing of local economies throughout the state, it arrived last week in the form of a report from the state comptroller.

The key point: New York’s agricultural sector, driven by more than 36,000 farm families, contributes \$5.4 billion annually to the overall state economy. Or, as New York Farm Bureau President summed it up, “The unmistakable conclusion is that agriculture is a cornerstone of our rural economy.”

In many places, as we know, it is the single greatest cornerstone.

And so it was also timely last week that the Senate was in the process of renewing our “Grown in New York” initiative to set the stage for a new batch of farm-based initiatives that we hope will be included in the upcoming state budget. We first introduced “Grown in New York” two years ago as a comprehensive tax and regulatory reform strategy with a straightforward mission: to make sure that New York State doesn’t tax, regulate or price farmers out of business. One of Grown in New York’s key planks became law in 2013 and placed a 2% cap on annual agricultural land assessment increases, a priority of individual farmers and agricultural advocates who had long noted that our farmers fight to survive under the nation’s second-highest property tax burden.

Last year, our renewed strategy focused on the next generation of farmers and in particular took direct aim by zeroing in on this fact: the average age of farmers in New York is approximately 57 years old. A growing percentage of all farmers are aged 65 and above. The state’s aging farmer population poses one of the most serious threats to the future of New York’s family farms, a fact reinforced by the new comptroller’s report. Among other successes,

last year’s Grown in NY-initiated actions have put in place a new start-up grant program for beginning farmers, as well as a new college loan forgiveness program.

So we’ve been replanting, if you will, Grown in NY year after year as some of our targeted initiatives become law and as new challenges arise.

Some of the new legislative seeds we’re putting down this year include:

- The creation of a “NYOneStop Program” which, based at Cornell University, would be the first comprehensive program to help farmers navigate regulations and find information about programs and services that can grow their businesses. More than 20 federal and state agencies currently oversee various programs and services, and rules and regulations that impact nearly every aspect of agriculture. Simply put, it can be a bureaucratic

nightmare for farmers.

■ A statewide expansion of Cornell’s successful Harvest NY program that provides hands-on and commodities-based expertise to assist family farmers, including with an emphasis on identifying new export opportunities as world economies continue to grow. Exports account for 23 percent of all farm sales in New York, but our state ranks 30th in the nation in agricultural exports. In other words, there’s room for growth and economic opportunity.

■ Creating up to five local transportation cooperatives where farmers can arrange to move their products to New York City and other major metropolitan areas.

■ Enhancing last year’s Young Farmer Student Loan Forgiveness Program to include agriculture educators as well as farm operators.

■ Additional support for school-based agricultural education, including Future Farmers of America and BOCES-based agricultural science education.

■ On-the-job training to aspiring farmers through the Cornell Cooperating Farm Apprenticeship.

■ The establishment of a

Farm Bank that would link new farmers with public and private land owners to create better opportunities. The state currently owns tens of thousands of acres of unused property and buildings, all of which could serve as incubators for aspiring agriculture professionals, farmers and producers.

■ Broadening the United States Department of Agriculture’s “Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program” to reach more senior consumers across the state.

■ A greater incentive to encourage schools to choose locally produced food.

■ Support for directing additional clean energy resources to farm-based projects, including the installation of solar technology and construction of new digesters.

You can read more about the Senate’s Grown in NY strategy, past and present, on my Senate website, www.omara.nysenate.gov.

—*Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, represents New York's 53rd Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County.*

ANOTHER VIEW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hammondsport mayor goes above and beyond

TO THE EDITOR | Village elections are fast approaching throughout the County and the Village of Hammondsport is no exception.

Hammondsport has several positions up for election including the Mayor. I have known the current Mayor Emery Cummings for many years as a friend and as the Mayor. Serving the village for 21 years and as the Mayor for 20 are commendable on its own, but going above and beyond and being proactive is what the current Mayor is all about.

The Mayor is constantly fielding calls from residents and merchants in regards to issues whereas the Mayor acts as a problem solver 24/7. No question it is a very time consuming and demanding title. The Mayor personally called me to arrange a discussion with myself and current DA Brooks Baker to meet with the Village Board on

ways to address the drug issues in the Hammondsport area. This resulted in the District Atty’s Drug Initiative becoming more active in that area.

I am not a resident of the Village of Hammondsport and do not have a vote but felt it was important to share with you what you currently have as a Mayor from someone on the outside looking in.

Regards,

Joel Ordway
Retired Steuben County Sheriff

Think before drinking on St. Patrick’s Day

TO THE EDITOR | I would like to congratulate Jeff Smith on an excellent article “Bars hope for warm-up to boost business.” The photography was excellent and captures the essence of your article.

Your article Jeff brings up some interesting points to consider:

- It is still that time of year to make resolutions and it is also Lent giving

up things, may be changing the habit of drinking out, at home or not as much or maybe not at all and this may not be a bad thing. (start working out, spend more time with the family, tackle that job around the house you’ve been meaning to get to, take the dog out more and good for you walking and meeting people and friends). The dog will appreciate it even more.

■ Your article is timely, in a few days it will be Saint Patrick’s Day a big day for drinking green beer and a big day for drinking and driving.

■ Police will be out with all the different police agencies in full force looking for drunk drivers.

■ It is one of the big holidays for DWI arrests.

■ Your article may cause people to think about what are they going to do if they do go out and celebrate. How will they get home safely? (including when the weather does get warmer and there are more events to go where drinking takes place)

- A drink is a drink. It

takes your liver around an hour to metabolize it.

■ How are you going to get home? Cab, designate driver, or do not drink at all.

■ A DWI costs money. (Court costs, DDP class, time lost from work and insurance) just to name a few.

■ Over the years working in this field, I have seen many people from all walks of life get arrested who all thought it was not going to happen to them on celebrating special occasions like Saint Patrick’s Day. (Even though it is Saint Patrick’s Day not even Saint Patrick can get you out of a DWI)

■ Can affect your job and reputation.

Enjoy Saint Patrick’s Day and be ready for the warmer weather, but a few things to ponder and make the right choices now before you start drinking and enjoy the warmer weather. Many think this cannot happen to them but it can.

Fran Avagliano
Corning

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