

WINTER 2015



MAINE FRIENDS OF ANIMALS

news

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Read about MFOA's animal protection work over the last 17 years by clicking on Timeline at www.mfoa.net



The Moral Arc of the Universe

By Robert Fisk, Jr. and Don Lopreino

One truism about history is that much of it is forgotten. Nonetheless, history often becomes relevant to modern causes and concerns in ways we cannot always measure.

During the mid-19th century, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Theodore Parker, an American minister of the Unitarian church, were household names and notable figures in the abolitionist movement.

Parker lamented nothing came easy and there was virtually no discernible progress. Nonetheless, he remained optimistic and wrote: "Look at the facts of the world. You see a continual and progressive triumph of the right. I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice."

Many years later, the same sentiment, in nearly the exact language, was echoed by Dr. Martin Luther King as part of a sermon he delivered in April 1967: "The moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

Now, in 2015, we can apply that notion of justice prevailing to the efforts of those of us who seek to improve the treatment of animals. Why? Because the common thread of cruelty links both causes, based on the indifference to the feelings of fellow humans (slaves) as well as other species (animals), coupled with an attitude of perceived superiority that permits and condones abuse.

It would be misleading as well as untrue to say that Theodore Parker and Dr. King, as well as other prominent figures of other movements, were never discouraged about the lack of progress. Of course they were, just as we are today when humane measures are voted down or when special interest groups, despite our best efforts, prevail as they did in the 2004 and 2014 bear referendums. Not to be discouraged is not to pay attention; but to give up, to go away, to move on is exactly what our opponents want, just as those who opposed Parker and King hoped for.

In 1848, the first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York. After two days of discussion and debate, 68 women and 32 men signed a Declaration of Sentiments, which outlines grievances and sets the agenda for the women's rights movement. A set of 12 resolutions is adopted calling for equal treatment of women and men under the law and voting rights.

On August 20, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting the women the right to vote, was signed, 72 years later.

Today we see that gay rights and legalization of marijuana have reached the critical mass. They, like the animal rights movement, experienced the same uneven progress, but the pendulum of support is swinging our way, albeit much too slowly.

As noted animal advocate Kim Stallwood has written, there are five stages of social movements: public education, public policy, legislation, implementation and public acceptance. Gay rights and marijuana are between stages four and five, animal protection is probably somewhere between two and three.

Being aware of (and having a strong belief in) the inevitable course of history, as Parker pointed out, even though they could see "only a small part of it and cannot calculate the curve" and were unable to "complete the figure by the experience of sight," they could "divine it by conscience" and knew they would ultimately prevail. He and others knew that a step forward might well be followed by a step back, and while that was certainly demoralizing, the key was not to give up, not to lose heart. And realize steps to progress are often inadvertently small in nature.



Parker and King also knew that while the arc bends towards justice its momentum can be increased, it can bend faster with active human involvement. For all their lives, and the lives of so many others who felt the same, they did whatever they could to achieve their goals and, most importantly, never wavered in their unshakable belief that their causes were just.

If we choose to follow it, a course has been charted, one that has proven effective over time. Donate your energy and talent. Make a financial contribution to support what you believe. Speak out against cruelty wherever you find it. Write letters, send e-mails, use social media to spread the word. Promote legislation that favors animal welfare; oppose legislation that doesn't. Accept discouragement in stride, but never consider it defeat.

And remember through your actions you are planting seeds, although you may never know when they germinate. You seldom will see measurable progress, like legislation, but as the old saying goes, "persistence and determination are omnipotent" and the more seeds we plant, the more quickly justice comes to our fellow creatures.

Care to get more involved in animal protection?

Maine Friends of Animals is seeking to fill two positions on its Board of Directors

Fundraising member

As we continue to grow in membership and address more issues of concern, we have identified the need for someone to serve as a Board member and Fundraising Committee Chair. Responsibilities include a commitment to the development, oversight, and direction of fundraising projects for the general operation of the organization. The Committee would eventually oversee a Development Director.

At-large member

An At-large member of the Board shall assist other Board members in their responsibilities as needed and as directed by the President and the Board of Directors. At-large members may also be asked to provide individual expertise to enhance the Board's mission and assist in ad-hoc projects.

The Board typically meets on the third Wednesday of the month, with a summer and holiday break. If you would like more information or know someone who may be interested in either of these positions, please contact MFOA at info@mfoa.net or (207) 781-2187.

Enjoy working with eager children?

How about sharing the word of a Pet Club as a presenter?

As MFOA moves forward establishing our Pet Club model, we are looking for another presenter / promoter. Given the hundreds of city and rural elementary and middle schools across Maine, you will have the freedom to create your own opportunities and schedule. Responsibilities include school and lead teacher recruitment, meeting with administrators / teachers, providing presentations to the children, and securing local sponsors. The MFOA office provides materials and support to each presenter throughout the program. This is a great part-time position with financial compensation based on new schools and established Pet Clubs. Pet Club packets, guidelines / procedures and a great PowerPoint presentation are ready to go.

If you share MFOA's concern for animal welfare, enjoy teaching kids, and want to help MFOA spread the word on the proper care, compassion and advocacy for companion animals, contact us at info@mfoa.net or 207-781-2817.

MFOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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STAY INFORMED & GET INVOLVED

We make it easy for you to take action and help animals. Get on MFOA's ACTION ALERT Updates list. Send us your email address at info@mfoa.net



Are you a MFOA member? Be a part of Maine's leading animal protection organization. Go to www.mfoa.net and click on DONATION.

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Maine Friends of Animals Co-Sponsors Kim Stallwood Visit



Maine Friends of Animals and the Maine Animal Coalition sponsored an evening event with renowned animal advocate Kim Stallwood on November 15, 2014 at USM in Portland.

For four decades, Stallwood has had a front seat in the animal rights movement, starting at the grassroots level in England and working his way up to leadership positions at some of the best known organizations in the world. He is the European director for the Animals and Society Institute, an animal rights

think tank. He was promoting his book "Growl - Life Lessons, Hard Truths, and Bold Strategies from an Animal Advocate."

"An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Dogs and Cats in Pet Shops"

FACT SHEET

Why is a ban on the sale of puppies and kittens by pet shops an important initiative for Maine?

- By allowing Maine pet shops to sell puppies and kittens, we enable and support out-of-state puppy mills and kitten mills (primarily in the mid-west), thereby promoting the inhumane treatment of companion animals.
- A review of the importation certificates on file at the Maine Department of Agriculture reveals that the vast majority (over 95%) of puppies and kittens sold by Maine pet shops are obtained from out-of-state, large scale commercial breeding facilities (aka puppy/kitten mills), most of which were cited for significant violations during their 2014 USDA inspections.
- The lack of basic care at these breeding facilities is inhumane and can contribute to poor health of the puppies and kittens that are transported and sold to pet shops. If these animals survive the transport (some do not), they often arrive suffering from contagious parasites and transmittable diseases, as well as behavioral disorders. A pet shop in Scarborough closed after two occasions of a state quarantine and the death of three puppies.



What is a large scale commercial breeding facility (aka puppy/kitten mill)?

- Large scale commercial breeding facilities mass produce puppies/kittens for the sole purpose of selling to pet shops and online buyers. These facilities operate to maximize profits at the expense of the health of the breeding animals and resultant litters.
- In most of these facilities, there is little regard for the physical health or mental well being of the animals. Dogs are often forced to live in filthy living conditions in wire-floored cages, causing injury to toes and feet; little or no medical care; exposure to the elements; lack of nutritious food or potable water; and without access to exercise or social interaction with humans.

- Female dogs are routinely bred at every heat cycle, about twice a year. Due to over breeding, the breeding "stock" generally stops producing at age 5–6, at which point they are deemed useless and are discarded - often relinquished to animal shelters, shot or sold to research laboratories.

- Puppy mill operators are in business solely for money. The animals are a commodity. Pet shops want to obtain product at the lowest possible price to maximize profit. To accomplish this, the puppy mill operators skimp on housing, food and veterinary care to keep overhead down. It is also cheaper to let an animal die than provide proper medical care.

Are there laws already in place to protect these companion animals?

- Wholesale dog/cat breeding and the shipment of live animals are regulated federally by the USDA under the 1970 Animal Welfare Act. However, the law is poorly enforced due to lack of funding and staffing. Inspectors find many USDA facilities are in violation of even their minimal standards.

- Facilities are inspected as little as once a year. If a violation is found, the USDA often grants the offenders multiple opportunities to correct the situation. Legal action is rare.

- Although the Animal Legal Defense Fund ranks Maine #2 in the nation for strong animal protection laws, Maine cannot oversee the large scale breeding industry in other states. What Maine can do is to enact legislation to ban those animals from being sold in this state.

Will a ban on the sale of dogs and cats through pet shops make it difficult to find a purebred pet in Maine?

- No - there are many humane and safe options in Maine offering purebred dogs and cats to loving families: local animal shelters, local reputable breeders, and breed specific rescue groups. More than 25% of the dogs received by animal shelters are purebred.

How will this ban impact local Maine breeders?

- If anything, this ban would have a positive impact on Maine breeders, creating a larger demand for their puppies and kittens and balancing the competitive playing field. It is hard for local breeders who abide by the more stringent Maine breeding kennel regulations to compete with the pricing of animals from out-of-state commercial breeding facilities.

- By definition of a 'Pet Shop' in the Maine animal welfare laws, this legislation would not affect local breeders. Maine breeding kennels and hobby breeders fall under different licensing definitions from pet shops.

(continued on page 6)

MFOA Pet Club Concept Catching On!

MFOA's history of taking on controversial issues such as coyote snaring; circus elephants; bear baiting, hounding and trapping; canned hunting; and horse slaughter often puts us against established and vested political and commercial interests. Moreover, we often face a cultural divide due to longstanding generational beliefs and values that are hard to change. If these adults are insensitive to issues of animal suffering, then it is even more important to teach our children different and more caring ways of viewing other sentient beings.

As a result, we are excited and encouraged by our Pet Club program which encourages young school children to better understand and care for companion animals. Two years ago, we developed an informational packet for elementary and middle schools in Maine. It includes an introduction, club structure, issues, activities, benefits, and an engaging PowerPoint presentation. We have spoken to different community groups and



schools to promote the concept which has been very well-received.

However, the actual implementation of the program in schools has proven more difficult, given the program comes from outside the school, the demands on the time of school officials and educators, and securing the right lead teacher to implement a new club. But as the old saying goes, "persistence and determination are omnipotent" and through multiple attempts, we have connected with several schools. We are

pleased to announce to MFOA members that in 2015 we hope to have a half dozen Pet Clubs established in various elementary and middle schools, mostly in York and Cumberland counties. Our goal is to develop Pet Clubs statewide.

The response from the children has been terrific; once the Pet Club is established, they quickly engage the issues and activities with a fun and collaborative involvement. The students embrace the care, protection and respect for companion animals, and share their sense of pride in being "super heroes for pets." Our objective is for our Pet Clubs to help build emotional and cognitive bonds between children and other creatures in ways that will benefit the entire community, as well as create a more compassionate, caring and understanding group of young individuals.

Please contact us if you know any teachers, school curriculum directors or administrators you think may want to start a Pet Club in their school.

Keeping an Eye Open for "OUTSIDE" Dogs This Winter

It is that time of year again - the time of year when you really start noticing and worrying about dogs that are chained or penned outside for long periods of time. Here is what you can do (in order):

1. Know the Law

Please know what the law is in Maine regarding these dogs, what the requirements are for shelter, bedding, etc. Print it out and keep a copy with you in the car.
www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/7/title7sec4015.html

2. Animal Control Officer

Report! Start the process. If you see a dog outside in distress due to extreme cold or other factors - please contact your local animal control officer. Follow up after you call to make sure the officer checked on the dog in question. Here is the new and improved state list of animal control officers...A very helpful link to bookmark: www.maine.gov/dacf/ahw/animal_welfare/animal_control_officers.shtml

3. Maine Animal Welfare Program

If you have contacted the animal control officer, but still feel that the situation is not being addressed or is becoming worse - contact the Maine Animal Welfare Program, 207-287-3846. You may remain anonymous when reporting, but you MUST

be a firsthand witness to the neglect/abuse to report. No action will be taken on second hand reporting or hearsay.

4. Maine Friends of Animals

MFOA has a long history of fighting to help 'dogs chained for life.' Please follow the procedures outlined above, but if you need further assistance and ideas on how to help a 24/7 outside dog, contact us at info@mfoa.net.

These animals cannot speak for themselves; they need you to speak for them.





Time for Legislators to Examine the Cascade Fund!

Following legislation passed in 2003, 39% of slot machine revenue from Maine casinos is allocated to the state in a distribution framework often referred to as the "Cascade Fund." From 2005-2011, Hollywood Slots distributed \$103.2 million of its profits, some to the Fund for a

Healthy Maine, the University and community college system and even to the general fund, but over two-thirds of those profits went to the harness racing industry in various forms of support, despite the sport's precipitous decline in popularity and revenue.

It's not as if the harness racing industry struggles are anything new. In the early 1990s, the industry was in full panic. Business as measured by the live handle (the total amount wagered on harness racing) was down more than 30% from \$45.2 million in 1987 to \$29.8 million in 1991.

The solution to this free-fall? Off-track betting ("OTB") parlors, neighborhood pubs for fans to gamble on races by live TV. According to news articles at the time, OTB's were the salvation of the harness racing industry. But 25 years later, both harness racing and OTB's are withering, with revenues down now to just a scant \$4 million.

Then slot machine revenue allocation was implemented to "rescue" the industry yet again. Since it opened in 2005, Hollywood Slots has distributed over \$70 million in slot machine profits to the harness racing industry, directly and indirectly. In 2013, the Cascade Fund gave \$10.6 million to the industry. The infusion of revenue has boosted purses and encouraged horse owners to invest in faster horses, but attendance and money wagered on harness racing has continued to decline.

In such times of limited financial resources, should a moribund industry that has faded in popularity continue to be subsidized by the state? It is time for the legislature to re-examine why the state continues to shore up a long time dying industry and determine how these funds could be more prudently allocated.

Moreover, harness and thoroughbred racing has a well-documented checkered history. Whipping, kicking and beating

that cause visible injuries to the horse are common in harness racing and the penalties are too lax to deter the abuse; fines are routine and part of the cost of doing business.

In addition, doping and the use of powerful anti-inflammatory drugs to enhance performance or allow an injured animal to race is all too common, but sufficient oversight to stop it is lacking. Drugging has a long and shady past in the horse racing business; it's all about the money.

Breeders continue to over breed horses in the hope of making even more money, with no consequences for their role in contributing to excess population. Horses are useful only if they win. After a short life of racing, particularly if strong performance is lacking, many racers are shipped to auction and sent to horrific horse slaughter plants in Quebec. The industry needs an outlet to rid itself of animals that are deemed unproductive; an animal that has served mankind so long, so well and so nobly is made a disposable commodity.

Thousands of horses die on American race tracks each year. Just a month ago, the New York Racing Association reported the death of 12 horses in 22 days of racing at Aqueduct. Even though that is thoroughbred racing, the standardbred horses used in harness racing suffer from the same issues of cruelty, doping and slaughter.



The time is long overdue for our Maine legislators to examine the merits (or lack thereof) of the state funneling millions of taxpayers' dollars into an outdated, inhumane, discredited and dying industry that has shown a precipitous decline for decades, despite the

state's significant financial attempts to revitalize it. These monies could certainly be better utilized if they were directed toward economic development, education, infrastructure, or other worthy services, many of which have been significantly reduced or eliminated during recent budget revisions.

(continued from page 4)

Is the intent of this bill to put Maine pet shops out of business?

- Absolutely not. We have no desire for these shops to go out of business. Research shows that over the past few years, a number of pet shops in Maine selling dogs and cats have closed due to lack of sales/profitability. Pet shops have found other profitable uses for the cage space while gaining favorable public relations.
- The pet shops in cities that have a ban such as Chicago,

Phoenix and Los Angeles, are now showcasing adoptable shelter animals and focusing sales efforts on expanded products and services instead of on sales of puppies and kittens raised in terribly in humane conditions.

- Maine has 76 registered pet shops and only four still sell dogs and cats. Unlike other states, there are just four and only one of them sells a significant amount of animals. The sale of animals is only one source of income and can be replaced. Therefore, this legislation has no negative economic impact on Maine businesses.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

We want to thank those who have donated financially to Maine Friends of Animals. We could not list all our donors in the space allowed, but all donations large and small are most appreciated, and are used entirely to make the life of Maine's animals a better one. All donations are tax deductible.

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Membership Renewal Appeal

Dear MFOA Members and Supporters,

We wish to thank all who have given so generously over the last 17 years supporting our mission to be Maine's voice for animals.

In the past, we have found that often our fundraising appeals have been most successful when they are related to specific issues, e.g., bear hunting, horse slaughter, 'dogs chained for life', etc. that we support with a legislative campaign.

This year we ask that you renew your annual membership in conjunction with supporting a program, not a specific issue. Our 2015 focus is an exciting new MFOA program called Pet Club, which is providing a vehicle for elementary and middle school students to better understand and care for companion animals.

I encourage you to read the Pet Club update on page 5 of this newsletter. The acceptance of the program has been encouraging and our presentations are beginning to connect with schools. We have

learned much during this process as each new school engages and incorporates its Pet Club, with model guidelines developed by MFOA.

Our sites for the Pet Club model are unlimited in that there are a lot of elementary and middle schools in Maine. Bringing Pet Clubs statewide is our goal, but it is here at its initial foothold that we need your support the most. Please help us by being a partner in teaching and creating environments where children at a young age will learn to become more compassionate, caring and understanding of animal life.

Please renew your membership today and support our 2015 Pet Club initiative by donating whatever you can, either by returning the enclosed remittance envelope or on-line at www.mfoa.net/membership_donations.html.

For the animals,

Robert Fisk, Jr
President & Director



Become a Volunteer for Maine's Leading Animal Protection Organization!

If you would like to be an MFOA volunteer, particularly in event tabling or to help in the office in Falmouth, please contact MFOA at info@mfoa.net or 207-781-2187. You can

also contact Volunteer Coordinator, Patti Richards, pattimfoa@oxfordnetworks.net, if you would like to organize a tabling opportunity at an established community event in your area.

EVENTS

Bark for Life Hosted by the American Cancer Society

Celebration of Adoptable Pets Another Chance Animal Rescue (North Berwick)

The Common Ground Country Fair Hosted by MOFGA (Unity)

Community Pet Day Hosted by the Bridgton Veterinary Hospital (Bridgton)

The Hope Festival Hosted by the Peace and Justice Center (Orono)

Maine Democratic State Convention/ Maine Republican State Convention

Maine Vegetarian Food Festival

Hosted by the Maine Animal Coalition (Portland)

Humane Lobby Day (Augusta) Hosted by HSUS and MFOA

Maine Federation of Humane Societies Annual Conference

Paws in the Park Hosted by the Animal Refuge League (Westbrook)

Other events not listed

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Coordinator:

Patti Richards (Canton)

Jean Adamson (Hampden)

Gary Aldridge (Brunswick)

Heather Balzano (Gorham)

Betty Boynton (Windham)

Deb Brooks (Orono)

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