

THEY MUST SPEAK SWAHILLI [if I can't speak it I probably can't spell it either]  
By Jim Hughes

I have just finished reading two articles which appear on the USA Breeders web site. One is a big hearted lady from Wilson Oklahoma who, at one time, worked for a Humane group in Texas. The author of the article wrote, 'there was an old lady who lives in a van—she has so many dogs, she doesn't know how her lifestyle can withstand'.

Animal rescue groups don't understand how a 71 year old lady living in a stripped out trailer can care for more than 120 dogs. She is asking for help. "But the dogs mean everything to her", says Scott Sutherland, director of Southern Oklahoma Animal Resources [SORE]. "She loves the dogs, but she has to be taking care of herself, too".

She is unemployed, her and the dogs are living off a \$700 Social Security check each month. \$500 goes to dog food and \$200 goes to her. These dogs are all strays and their offspring, so no additional funds come from the sale of pups. The dogs continue to breed and grow in numbers. She heard about SORE a few months ago, Sutherland said, and called him, seeking urgent help.

"I can't live like this anymore. I have all these dogs and I don't know what to do" the lady said. Sutherland visited her place and it was a mess. They could not even count the number of dogs that lived there.

None of the dogs, which were mostly lab mixes, had any shots, none were neutered, they had never seen a vet as she treated them herself with penicillin she occasionally administered. Even though she recognized her need for help, she would not give all of them up. She allowed Sutherland to remove 76 of them, but she has kept 40. Sutherland hopes to get the rest at a later date, dependant upon her willingness to release them. The Ardmore Animal Shelter has brought her feed on several occasions but when they try to take the dogs, she will not release them.

Only 15 of the dogs that have been removed are adoptable. The rest will "need a little more time" until they have received all the necessary medical treatments and have been properly socialized. They are not aggressive but shy from lack of human touch. She will allow some to be removed, but then want them returned. "We have to convince her all over again to allow us to keep them. The situation is not classified as simply a hoarding case but a human one as well. This woman has nothing. She lives in a filthy shell of a van that sits on flat tires. "These animals are everything to her", says Sutherland. "If you remove some dogs, then yes, you have rescued some animals, but maybe you have destroyed a human being in the process, too.

She is part Cherokee Indian and is willing to be admitted to a facility available only to people of Native American descent, but she will not go until she knows that all of her dogs are taken care of.

What is wrong with this situation? Nothing, Everything. Scott Sutherland must be a rarity in the Animal Activist world. He is actually concerned about the well being of the human in this case. I believe he should be president of The Humane Society of the United States. 98.735% [makes it sound believable] of all Humaniacs would take her dogs, charge her with animal cruelty, and ask the judge to send her to jail for the rest of her life. I would bet that the simple fact that she does not sell these pups for a profit gains her all of this sympathy. BUT, how many times have I talked to breeders with tears in their voice asking me “what can I do”, “they are taking my babies”? It breaks my heart!! I do not need to touch on the violations, from penicillin to dirty, overcrowded conditions. What has my attention is Scott Sutherland. I do not know this man, but he actually is concerned about the person in the picture.

The next article is called “Puppy Hell”, written by Mary Van de Kamp Nohl. This article appeared in the Milwaukee Magazine [www.milwaukeeemagazine.com and click on puppy hell] and featured Wallace Havens, starting with his early history, following him through to his establishing himself as “the father of the designer dogs”. His Puggles breed is his chief claim to fame, landing him in the eye of Marie Claire Magazine, The Wall Street Journal, [front page], and the New York Times Magazine plus an appearance on CBS “Sunday Morning”. He is a past board member of NAPO and an outstanding credit to the High Volume breeder community. OR, Or, as Ms Nohl would have you believe, and she has done an excellent job of presenting her list of facts to supplement her argument, Mr. Havens is the devil reincarnate. She criticizes almost everything about the man. His kennels are better than most of us but not good enough for her. His care for his animals is better than any humane shelter, but not good enough for her. He is willing to help any breeder to better their operation, even to founding the breeder club in Wisconsin, but therein lies a fault in her eyes. He is helping the kennel industry grow and is upgrading those he comes in contact with so as to better fight adverse legislation.

She is also very much annoyed with the Amish and Mennonite people who have moved into Wisconsin to escape the harsh laws handed down by Governor Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania. Do not forget that name. He is your enemy. He owns two dogs making him twice as knowledgeable as ex-Senator Rick Santorum, co-sponsor of the PAWS bill which was defeated a few years ago, but is now being re-introduced as the PUPS bill by Illinois Senator Dick Durbin. Are you not glad we have all these experts telling us how to run our business? It would seem that these Lancaster County transplants do everything wrong. It seem these gentle men of the soil, whose heritage goes back several hundreds of years of working with animals must consider the dog an animal and not a pet and therefore obviously they are not qualified to raise dogs in Wisconsin without the help of the Wisconsin State Legislature, who needs to be advised by Ms Nohl and her Humaniac friends.

And so, we now get to the crux of the story. We do not speak the same language. We speak agriculture. They speak humaniac!! Their definition of animal cruelty is based on “Where would mama’s little snookums like to sleep tonight, with mama in her bed or on the expensive feather pillow in snookums bed?” Our definition is based on adequate food, water, and shelter in a kennel with 100 to 1000 dogs. Their thoughts are that every dog

needs picked up and kissed, half the time in the mouth. Usually right after they just licked their butt or ate their pen mates poop. An animal rights judge in New York once ruled that a dog was not an animal, he was a companion.

Now, I love dogs, BUT they are not equal to my grandchildren. My dog sleeps on a pillow in the garage. Dogs are my animal of choice, but they were not superior to my cows, horses, or pigs. I felt the same conviction to care for all my animals equally. I went to Cal Poly to earn a B.S. degree in Animal Husbandry. There I was taught to produce food for Americas table, as economically as possible. I was offered a job by the Argentina Dept. of Agriculture to use that knowledge to help them to also use American technology to streamline their methods of production. The things I learned and did under the guidance of the instructors at the university would land me in jail under the new definition of “animal abuse”. I learned to rope a calf, tie it, brand it, castrate it, dehorn it, vaccinate it, delouse it, untie it and watch it run back to it’s mother in less than 5 minutes. I learned to catch pigs, stick them head down into a funnel and castrate them, notch their ears according to the formula for identification, snip their baby teeth and cut their tails, all in one smooth, fast, and economical operation. I learned to debeak chickens, butcher turkeys, break horses, etc. etc. and I used all of these skills when making my living in farming. I used various skills from my animal husbandry classes to raise dogs. To me, the dogs had it made compared to other farm animals.

So, please excuse me if I do not spend much time worrying about mama’s little baby and where it wants to sleep. A dog is a dog, that’s an animal. He is entitled to basic care of medicine, food, and shelter. Whatever other special entitlements you wish to heap upon him is your privilege, but I want you to quit trying to shove your ideas of humane care down my throat.

I have never seen a kennel where the dogs are forced to sleep in their own excrement or housed in a stack cage where their droppings fall upon their companions below them and I have been in thousands of kennels, yet in every story these sob sisters wish to write about us this is what they describe. It is a lie, but so what! Even if these charges were true, they eat the stuff. I can sleep beside a plate of bacon and eggs. I am sure the animal activist is much more concerned about it than the dog is. God made us the way we are. We do not lick our babies butts clean but dogs do. We do not eat other peoples manure [unless it comes in on tomatoes or other produce from foreign countries], but dogs do. We do not howl at the moon, unless the inspector is making our life a living hell. Dogs and people have different values, let it stay that way. They are pack animals and just like the wolves and coyotes, they do not particularly need human companionship. It is really the other way around, we seem to need canine companionship.

Right now, all people raising dogs are banding together against the common enemy, Humaniacs. The show people want to keep the right to raise mama’s little snookum’s, the high volume breeder wants to raise his dogs just like he always has, the sporting dog people do not want interference in the raising and training of their dogs, the cattle and sheep raisers need their dogs to run their business and the Humane Society of the United States and PETA and Best Friends and all the other people who live off of us really do

not want their source of income to dry up. If we disappear, some bright soul at H\$U\$ will say, “We just killed the goose that laid our golden egg”.

We will never have a meeting of the minds with the activist but we can meet with reasonable individuals, if there are any, from the other side and work on compromise. We give a little, accept some new changes and in exchange for our support on some changes, they back down on their more radical desires. We did this in Missouri some years ago and it has worked beautifully. Some breeders hate the restrictions and some activist hate the lack of more oppressive restrictions, so those of us that are more middle of the road thinkers, we think the law is working that both sides helped to write.

As I said, we do not speak the same language. So, let's hire an interpreter and get this controversy over with.