

PRIDE- part 2

By Jim Hughes

Are you ashamed of the business you are in? Do you actually believe any or all of that garbage the Humane Society of the United States is putting out about you? Do you think YOU fit that bill and that they are actually describing your kennel? If you answer *yes* to these questions, then get out of my business. If you do not want to get out of my business, then clean up, shape up, and stand up so you can be proud of what you do.

When you read the articles the reporters write when a kennel is busted and the dogs are stolen, look to see if any of the charges might be labeled on you someday. If you feel there is the slightest chance of your kennel falling under any of these charges, then clean it up, fix it, get into compliance!

GET A LICENSE!!! Ask for one whether you need it or not! Get your state license if you can and if your state does not have a bill requiring one, then start working on one to present to your state legislature. If you help write it, then chances are, you can live with it when it comes. It will come, I assure you. The H\$U\$ knows that they have more money and more people to push these bills into law than we have to fight them. Over the years we have been pretty successful in controlling outrageous demands at the federal level because we were able to marshal our forces into one huge effort to defeat our enemy. But can we fight on 50 different fronts? Do we have the soldiers in this war to post a defense on 50 different fronts? NO. We must get ahead of the game. We have to start thinking “out of the box”. We need to have a state law to prevent the 36,757 city, county, and townships electoral entities from passing laws that will force you to move your kennels or quit doing business. We do not have enough soldiers to fight effectively on 50 fronts, much less 36 thousand fronts.

Go to the PIJAC website and see how many bills we are facing that are anti-pet industry. Over 800 are listed at present. See where your state stands. Go to the AKC website to see the bills that will be catastrophic to the dog business. Then ask your dog food supplier, your grooming equipment supplier, your pharmaceutical supplier, your registries and above all, your state breeder organizations. Ask what they are doing to help you fight these laws that are designed to cripple you or put you out of business. Ask the beef, pork, dairy, horse, and poultry people if you can help them fight their fight so they will be willing to help you fight your fight. This fight belongs to all animal entities and we must band together or we will surely die alone.

The future depends on you, the breeder. The Kennel Spotlight is not under attack and threatened with oblivion. The registries are not being prosecuted for animal abuse. No one is going to put PIJAC or the breed clubs in jail. But we all recognize that our future rests on YOUR shoulders, not the other way around. As a group, the vast majority of you has, in the past and still do today, expected someone else to fight your battles for you. An all too common excuse is “I do not have the time or the money to go to the state house and stand up for my rights”. Well, if the Animal Rights people have their way, you will

have a lot less money but you will have all the time you will ever need. I have been banging my head against this brick wall for 50 years and it is still standing. I am looking back on things we could have done 20 years ago to avoid some of our problems of today. It saddens me greatly to see our missed opportunities, mostly from lack of finances.

When the time comes for you, the breeder, to stand up and tell it like it is, what do you plan to say? Which of you will point to your accomplishments with pride and which of you will hang your heads and say "I did nothing"?

The first thing you must do is be willing to stand tall and say with pride, "I am a breeder of dogs, I sell family pets to America's citizens through internet sales, pet shops, newspaper ads, referrals from past customers, etc. etc. and I am darn proud of it!" Then you can tell them you are federally and state licensed and inspected by these agencies more often than child care centers, assisted living and nursing home centers and *you can and will* show them these inspection reports.

You must then be willing to represent your industry at town meetings, appear on television and radio to tell what you do and answer questions about the public's misconception of your industry due to outright lies and misconstrued ideas of what defines 'animal abuse'. You can take dogs to the PTA meetings or to play day at the nursing homes. You can enter your town parades with as many dogs as you can get kids to lead them. You can quit hiding. If the homosexuals can do it, why can't you?

You must join your state breeder's clubs, run for office and then insist that the group do something to perpetuate this industry. This club should become a member of NAPO and/or PIJAC. This club should join MO-FED or another lobbying group like them or start one or hire one to promote this industry and fight these bills introduced by the AR,s. We have got to turn this negative image around.

I attended the APPMA show in Orlando, Florida in February. As we walked thru the show booths and stopped to talk to the people in the booths, we were asked what our magazine was about and who were our readers? When we tried to explain that we wrote for the High-Volume breeder who sold many of his puppies through the pet shops we were constantly hearing, "Oh, you write for the puppy mills"? There was no malice nor hatred nor condemnation in the question. These people were professional sales people for the supply companies that sold inventory to the pet shops. The term "puppy mill" immediately jumped into their heads as the accepted term to identify us. We found that we were spending more time explaining that the term was offensive to us and not politically correct than we were in trying to convince them that it would behoove them to advertise with us.

So many of you now sell over the internet at retail prices and cut the wholesale level out, that you are in *essence* operating a retail store. If so, then you should act like one. We talked to a fellow that manufactured dog bowls. Stainless steel dog bowls. Heavy, expensive dog bowls at \$125 each. Now how am I going to even attempt to convince this man that my readers might just order 50 or so? But there were dog bowls much more attractive that what we see in our every day kennels. Could you possibly see your way

clear to purchase some of these high end, more expensive bowls for 'appearance sake' only? How about pens and beds and toys and all of the things you see that cost more but look so nice? How much will you spend on your image when the investment will not make you one extra dime? You cannot continue to operate your kennel with old equipment. If it looks like a puppy mill, if it smells like a puppy mill, if it feels like a puppy mill, then I bet it is a puppy mill. **THE KENNEL SPOTLIGHT CONDEMNS SUB-STANDARD KENNELS!** MPBA condemns substandard kennels. All of the respectable state breed clubs and their members and affiliates condemn substandard kennels. Shape up, grow up and act like the professional you are.

Be proud of who you are and what you do!