

TLC Initiative Battles Leghold Traps

Group reaffirms commitment to get its bill passed.

BY SUSAN BELFORD
THE ALMANAC

On Christmas Day, 2001, a kitten was thrown away — dropped into oncoming traffic on Route 107 in front of Poolesville Elementary School. Taylor Higley, Lynn and Craig Dietz, and Ellie Trueman heard the kitten's terrified meows. They followed the horrific cries to the storm drain. Courageous yet frightened, Trueman crawled down into the storm drain to rescue the trembling kitten. She adopted her and named her TLC, in honor of Taylor, Lynn and Craig. Unfortunately, TLC disappeared in 2005. Soon after her disappearance, while running her dogs, Trueman discovered that leg-hold traps for animals were being installed just a few feet from her fence at the farm next door to her Dickenson residence.

Leg-hold and body gripping traps consist of two jaws, springs and a trigger in the middle of a round pan. The lure attracts the animal and the jaws tightly close around the legs or the body of the animal, holding the animal in place, causing crippling, damage to the soft tissue, broken bones and cut tendons and ligaments. The wiggling animal may further aggravate their injuries and, in their effort to escape, may even chew off a limb caught in a trap. When the trapper finds his prey, he often kills the animal with a club in order to keep from being bitten and to take his pelt or the meat.

In honor and memory of the kitten TLC, the TLC Initiative (Trapping Legalizes Cruelty) was formed to get legislation passed to end the use of leg-hold and body-grip-



From left to right: Anne Davies - The TLC Initiative, Del. Craig Rice, Del. Brian Feldman, Sen. Mike Lenett, Ellie Trueman - The TLC Initiative, Del. Tom Hucker, Megan Draheim - Project Coyote, Tami Santelli - The Humane Society of the United States, and Cindy Eeg - for Peter Eeg D.V.M. Not shown: Sen. Jamie Raskin and Michael Tabor.

ping traps in Montgomery County. Founded by Trueman and Laura Van Etten of Dickenson and Anne Davies of Boyds, the TLC Initiative members spent at least two days a week in Annapolis lobbying the Maryland General Assembly to pass their bill - MC 922-09 - Steel Jaw Leg-hold or Body-Gripping Traps - Prohibition.

"The traps are indiscriminate and many times they catch stray animals, family pets and endangered species," Trueman said. "This practice is absolutely counterpoint to Maryland's Cruelty to Animals Laws." Trappers claim these animals are released unharmed and that new types of traps do not harm these animals. Many county farmers feel that the traps are necessary to protect their livestock from foxes and coyotes. According to the Humane Society of the

United States, more than 90 countries have banned the use of these traps as well as the states of Florida, New Jersey and Rhode Island. Voters in Arizona, California, Colorado, Massachusetts and Washington have approved statewide ballot measures to severely restrict leg-hold traps and all body-gripping traps.

Trueman, Davies and Van Etten thought that the bill would pass easily. However, the three northern Montgomery County residents were shocked that the NRA and Farm Bureau would not support their initiative. These groups wielded their influence over a few MC legislators to vote against the bill. The bill did pass the Montgomery County House Delegation by 21-3. The House mem-

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TLC Honorees

The first annual TLC Initiative Awards were presented to nine Honorees at the Potomac Community Center on Dec. 7. The 2009 TLC Initiative Leadership Award was given to Del. Brian J. Feldman who not only sponsored House Bill 831 to ban trapping in Montgomery County, but championed it through committees, hearing and debates. The other 2009 TLC Initiative Award Recipients were Megan Draheim, Peter H Eeg, DVM, Delegate Tom Hucker, Sen. Michael Lenett, Sen. Jamie Raskin, Del. Craig L. Rice, Tami Santelli and Michael Tabor. At the award ceremony, The TLC Initiative reconfirmed its commitment to get this legislation passed whether it takes two years or 20 years.

Retired World Champion Takes Another Swing

Marco Sies writes personal story of success.

BY ANSLEY LABARRE
THE ALMANAC

Marco "Babyface" Sies remembers the first time he heard an American crowd cheering his name. It was his first fight in the country — long before he won seven world kickboxing championships — and the boy from Santiago had been set up to lose. Although Sies only made it through three rounds that night, he says it is one that helped distinguish his career.

To the man who later retired from kickboxing because he ran out of willing opponents, Sies believes losing is critical to winning. The North Potomac resident begins his recently published book with this inverted story of triumph, and goes on to share his personal climb to glory in "The

Master Method: 4 Steps to Success, Prosperity and Inner Peace."

Sies left the world of professional kickboxing in 2005 and conducted seminars in motivational speaking. He says he wanted to share his philosophy with the world.

"Every experience that comes your way — good or bad — serves a purpose," said Sies.

His book alludes to the experiences that drove Sies to become the best kickboxer in the world. He began martial arts training at the age of five, and came from a long line of competitors. But Sies also had his share of hardships. He says the stories of poverty and homelessness are ones he hasn't chosen to share before, believing it would tarnish his image as a champion.

AT 21, Sies left his home in Chile for the dream of a better life in the U.S. He knew he couldn't reach the highest level

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Marco Sies signs his new book, "The Master Method," at his Kicks Karate venue on Travilah Road. The former seven-time world champion kickboxer says he wants to share his formula for success with others, having overcome poverty and homelessness.

Fighting Leghold Traps

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bers who voted against it were Ben Kramer, Karen Montgomery and Ann Kaiser. The bill failed in the Montgomery County Senate Delegation by one vote. Senators Rob Garagiola, Nancy King and Rhona Kramer voted against the bill.

Out of their TLC Initiative, The Watchdog Constituency and the Animal Friendly Report Card were created. The Watchdog Constituency (www.WatchdogMC.org) will be an effort to register pet, horse and animal owners in Montgom-

ery County to serve as a constituency to gain the respect and attention of elected officials. Registration will be free. The Animal Friendly Report Card (www.AFRCCMC.org) is a Web site-based program which will be administered by the Watchdog Constituency Council, a bi-partisan, geographically diverse group of 50 residents. This group will vote on whether elected officials are in favor of animal friendly legislation and publish it on their Web site. Both Web sites are not up and running yet. For more information, e-mail bantrapping@aol.com



A table commemorates Sies' accomplishments, hosting his equipment and champion belts as symbols of success after struggling to land his first fight in America.

His Story of Triumph

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of professionalism in his career if he remained in South America, but his expectations went awry. Sies found himself on Virginia streets with no money. But he kept dreaming and training, running in the cold with plastic bags taped around his ankles to keep his sneakers from soaking in the snow.

"I never lost sight of my vision," said Sies while explaining the obstacles he faced.

Sies says he now realizes it is these stories that did not keep him from being a champion, but rather turned him into one. Since his retirement from the professional world of fighting, Sies manages

Kicks Karate on Travilah Road. He hopes to share his recipe for success with generations young and old, and sees his book as another form of outreach.

Infused with quotes from Buddha to Socrates, Sies says his "Master Method" differs from other self-help books because it not only gives the reader the tools to become successful, but also those to sustain success. After claiming the world kickboxing title on seven different occasions, Sies is confident his personal story and derived methods for happiness will benefit others.

"Teaching people how to be successful is my passion," he said.

BULLETIN BOARD

To submit an item for the Civic Calendar, e-mail almanac@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday at noon two weeks prior to the event. For questions, call 703-778-9412.

MONDAY/DEC. 21

Lower Your Pain Level. 1-2:30 p.m. Learn how to lower your pain level using various biofeedback techniques in this Biofeedback class. At 7920 Norfolk Ave., Suite 200D, Bethesda. Call Michael Sitar, Ph.D., 301-718-3588 and/or Pain Connection, 301-231-0008, or visit www.painconnection.org.

ONGOING

CANTER-Mid Atlantic to open a **racehorse rehabilitation** program with donations from Delaware Park and the Delaware Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association earmarked to serve Delaware Park trainers and owners. To find an ex-race horse, volunteer, or to make a donation, visit www.canterusa.org/midatlantic.

To become a volunteer Bike Patrol on the C & O Canal, send an e-mail to Norman Liebow at Liebow@comcast.net or 301-714-2218.



'Tear Down This Wall'

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the German School Washington, D.C. used a rebuilt wall – given to the school by the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. and completely divided the school building into an eastern and a western part, recreating the feeling of separation and the lack of freedom. The morning was spent with video and documentary presentations about the wall, the border fences with their minefields and watch towers, and concluded with personal recollections from people who lived in Eastern Germany at the time.

EagleBank Opens in Park Potomac

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of Rockville and Montgomery College to provide scholarships for Montgomery County college students. This is the first year for the EagleBank Bowl, which will donate proceeds to the Wounded Warrior Foundation. There is a real sense of community first."

EagleBank is one of the first businesses to open in Park Potomac. Harris Teeter expects to open within the next two months along with restaurants, a dry cleaner and clothing stores. Park Potomac is located just west of the Montrose exit of I-270 off of Seven Locks Road.



EagleBank opened a new branch in Park Potomac last month.

Police Report Daytime Burglaries

Detectives from the Montgomery County Police 1st District Investigative Section are investigating eight recent daytime residential burglaries that occurred in the Potomac area.

Since Nov. 18 of this year, there have been eight residential burglaries in several Potomac neighborhoods. Most of the burglaries have occurred on weekdays between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. In all of the burglaries, force was used to gain entry into the house either through a window or a door. In each burglary, high-value jewelry was taken. In several of the burglaries, cash was also taken. In three of the burglaries,

a white male suspect described as being between 30 and 48 years of age, with short brown hair, was seen leaving the area in an unknown type of vehicle.

Residents are reminded to lock their doors and windows and make sure that their garage doors are secure when they are not at home. Residents are also asked to notify their neighbors, and encouraged to have a caretaker stop by the house when they are away for extended periods of time. In addition, residents are encouraged to use timers on their lights, radios, and televisions, and to hold their mail and news subscriptions while they are away.

Residents should report suspicious activity, vehicles, and individuals to the police by calling the non-emergency number at 301-279-8000. A detailed description of the suspicious person or vehicle is helpful to the responding officers. Descriptors may include race, gender, clothing-type, and hair color. Obtaining the vehicle's color, make, model, and tag number will also assist responding officers.

Anyone who may have information about these residential burglaries and/or the involved suspect(s) is asked to call the 1st District Investigative Section at 240-773-6084.