

Delaware State University Women's Equestrian Team News Submitted by Jennifer Ridgley

I am proud to say that our western team competed strongly at the Varsity Equestrian National Championships in Waco, Texas in late April. This was the first time the Western team had qualified and they were seated 11th out of the top 12 schools in the country. The reining team tied Kansas State in the first round. Point earners were Junior Amanda Hotz from New Jersey and freshman McKenzie Trueba from Arizona.

We are looking forward to qualifying both disciplines for next years championship.

I am happy to release that Tayler Scuse from Smyrna, DE, Erin Engrid from New Jersey, Brittney Good from Maryland and Victoria Keen from New Jersey have all accepted a National Letter of Intent from Delaware State University's Equestrian Team. Other new members include Kelly Harper from Delaware, Delaney Maddia from New York and Brooke Mazujian from Delaware.

We successfully graduated four of our founding equestrian members: Kamerra Brown, Kayleigh Karnbach, Morgan Scuse and Christina Smith. We are very proud of them all and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

The team just completed volunteer service hours for W.B. Simpsons Elementary Family Fun Night, Paws & Claws 5K Run at Killens Pond and The Little School.

We are currently working on booking next year's competition dates. We appreciate any support at during our home competitions.

States Urged to Establish Public Registries of Animal Abusers

Legislation in California, Tennessee Would Track, Expose Abusers to Reduce Repeat Offenses
Animal Abuse Frequently Connected to Domestic Violence, Serial Killers

Contact: Lisa Franzetta, Animal Legal Defense Fund
COTATI, CALIF. – The Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) today announced an effort aimed at creating public registries in each state of anyone convicted of felony animal abuse. This could include violence (torture, mutilation, intentional killings, etc.), sexual abuse, and animal fighting as well as neglect (such as hoarding). Such registries would help protect animals, pet guardians and communities by preventing repeat offenses from anyone with an established history of abusing animals.

Through its campaign, www.ExposeAnimalAbusers.org, the animal protection organization is promoting model legislation that state legislatures could enact. Such bills have been introduced in the past by elected officials in Rhode Island, Colorado, and Tennessee, and the first-ever bill for a statewide registry in California was today announced by its sponsor, State Senator Dean Florez.

ALDF points to the following examples for why a registry is needed to help animal guardians, law enforcement and shelters protect their animals:

* Robert Rydzewski: In 2004, the then 29-year-old upstate New Yorker shot his neighbor's dog in the face twice. Two months later, he killed another neighbor's Welsh Corgi with an ax. Rydzewski was convicted of "torturing or injuring" an animal, and he has since been arrested for assaulting people and resisting arrest. His whereabouts are unknown.

* Shon Rahrig: While living in Ohio in 1999, Rahrig allegedly adopted several cats and a puppy from local shelters and tortured them sadistically. He poked out the eyes of a cat named Misty, broke her legs and jaw, cut off her paws, and left her bleeding in a laundry basket. His girlfriend turned him in, and he took a plea bargain that admitted abuse of only one animal. Rahrig was forbidden to own an animal for five years, but he was subsequently seen at an adoption event in California.

* Vikki Kittles: Since 1982, Kittles has been run out of four states for hoarding animals. Time and again, she has been caught housing dozens of sick, neglected animals in squalid conditions. An Oregon prosecutor convicted Kittles in 1993 after finding 115 sick and dying dogs crammed into a school bus, but she has gone on to hoard animals again in Oregon and other states several times since.

"Animal abuse is not only a danger to our cats, dogs, horses, and other animals, but also to people, said ALDF Executive Director Stephen Wells. "Many animal abusers have a history of domestic violence or other criminal activity, and there is a disturbing trend of animal abuse among our country's most notorious serial killers."

Jeffrey Dahmer, Ted Bundy, David Berkowitz ("The Son of Sam"), Albert DeSalvo ("The Boston Strangler") and Dennis Rader (Kansas' "BTK killer") all abused animals before their other crimes, as did many of the teenagers who went on shooting rampages at their high schools: Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris (Columbine, CO), Luke Woodham (Pearl, MS) and Kip Kinkel (Springfield, OR).

"But it's not just about how animal abusers end up also hurting or killing humans," said Wells. "It should be motivation enough to protect our animals from repeat offenders – and any abuse of any kind."

Through its campaign website, ExposeAnimalAbusers.org, ALDF allows the public to urge their state lawmakers to propose legislation for state registries.

While no state has passed a bill to date, a proposal in Tennessee is currently pending. In 2008, an earlier version of this bill passed the Tennessee Senate, but stalled in the House of Representatives. The current bill's sponsors are Rep. Janis Sontany and Senator Doug Jackson.

"We operate shelters in the hopes of giving abandoned pets a second chance at a loving home, not subjecting them to lives of continued abuse and neglect," Florez said. "A registry of abusers would help ensure animals are not being adopted out to convicted abusers, end the cycle of abuse and increase the likelihood of finding these pets the forever home they deserve."

About the Animal Legal Defense Fund
ALDF was founded in 1979 with the unique mission of protecting the lives and advancing the interests of animals through the legal system. Visit www.aldf.org.