

Tables turned on Humane Society

Jim Matthews, Outdoors

Posted: 07/26/2012 08:32:04 PM PDT

The Humane Society of the United States, an organization that does next to nothing for animal shelters but sues, badgers and lobbies politicians and businesses into adopting its radical animals rights agenda, is getting a taste of its own medicine.

In a little-reported ruling by a judge in the District of Columbia earlier this month, the HSUS is facing allegations under RICO statues on racketeering, obstruction of justice, malicious prosecution and other claims for a lawsuit it brought and lost against Ringling Brothers Circus' parent company Feld Entertainment, Inc.

After winning the case alleging mistreatment of elephants in its circuses brought by Friends of Animals (later merged into HSUS), the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), lawyers at Feld filed a countersuit with a litany of claims ranging from bribery to money laundering to racketeering. The attorneys for the animal rights groups asked the judge to dismiss all of the claims, but most survived. So in early August, HSUS will be facing the music in a case that should attract the attention of hunters, ranchers, farmers and anyone impacted by HSUS' radical animal rights agenda.

District judge Emmet G. Sullivan did dismiss allegations of mail and wire fraud, but he did so only because Feld didn't have standing to file this charge. His ruling all but set the stage for a class-action RICO lawsuit against HSUS for misrepresenting.

itself in its fundraising campaigns across the nation. This lawsuit easily could bankrupt HSUS, put it out of business and send some of its top executives to prison.

For the first time, a group has fought back against the animal rights and environmental extremists who have been setting policy in this country for the past 20 years or more. Now, instead of getting rich off their lawsuits and fundraising schemes that misrepresent their efforts and accomplishments, they could be driven out of business. These groups have cost the farming and ranching industry jobs and raised the price of products we buy every day. They are behind the efforts to ban sport hunting across the nation. They have forced state wildlife and fishery agencies to waste countless millions of dollars on lawsuits and have spearheaded policies and legislation like the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), which has ruined livelihoods in recreational and commercial fishing without helping marine resources.

These groups operate with surly arrogance and believe they are above the law. Thankfully, that is not the case. Stay tuned.

Over 25 years ago, I did a newspaper story about a local, young taxidermist who created incredible, museum-quality mounts of gamebirds. Web Parton was an avid bird hunter and even then was training his own bird dogs. He stuck with it.

Parton is coming back to California, not permanently, but to give a series of rattlesnake training sessions for hunting dogs. His sessions are unusual because he doesn't use caged or mouth-taped snakes but rattlesnakes that have been defanged. The lessons take up to an hour for each dog because he makes sure the dog knows how the snake looks, sounds and smells, and he involves the owner so they can learn their dog's reactions.

The sessions will be held Aug. 17, 19, and 20 at Mike Raahauge Shooting Enterprises in Corona, and Aug. 23, 24, and 26 at Bass Pro Shops in Rancho Cucamonga. For more information or to reserve a spot, you can contact Web Parton at 520-465-3460 or via e-mail at web_parton@live.com. His web site is www.snakesafe.com.

CLARIFICATION: This column has been updated to clarify the fact that the federal court ruling referenced above in an action involving the Humane Society of the United States alleging racketeering, obstruction of justice, abuse of process and other claims, pertained to a civil action brought by Feld Entertainment Inc. against the Humane Society, not a criminal prosecution. A motion by the Humane Society to dismiss the claims was denied in part and granted in part. A copy of the court's order can be found [here](#).
