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For greyhounds: Finally, a dog's life

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The Jan. 1 closing of the Raynham-Taunton Greyhound Park represents a happy ending to the hard-fought battle to ban dog racing in the Bay State.

In November, 2008, voters gave resounding approval to a ballot question

calling for the closing of the state's last two greyhound tracks – the Wonderland Greyhound Park in Revere, which closed last September, and the track in Raynham.

Previous ballot measures seeking the ban were defeated through the efforts of dog track owners, but last year's referendum proves that good causes march on.

Approval of the ban, which also prevents the opening of other dog racing tracks, ends a cruel and ultimately financially bankrupt practice.

Data showed that the dogs were kept for as long as 20 hours a day in small, stacked cages, suffering numerous and life-threatening injuries. Since 2002, more than 800 racing dogs have suffered injuries in Massachusetts.

These numbers prove that, for racing greyhounds, there was no such thing as a dog's life.

The ban on greyhound racing is a victory for thousands of supporters of the Committee to Protect Dogs who gathered enough signatures to put the question on the ballot; it's a victory for animal lovers; and it's a victory for the gentle canines who suffered abuse at the tracks.

By the time the referendum passed, we believe the inherent cruelty of dog racing was already taking a financial toll on greyhound track owners who saw declining attendance at the races.

And for the dogs? It looks like they're headed for good homes and the dog's life they deserve.

Last week, some of the newly emancipated greyhounds arrived at the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society of Springfield where they'll stay until they find new homes.

Anyone interested in adopting a greyhound can call or visit Dakin at 171 Union St., Springfield (413) 781-4000

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neverwinter December 01, 2009 at 10:14AM
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Yes, let's not speak of the many dogs who, rather than being adopted, will be sent to race in other states without the protections they had in MA. States in which is it legal to euthanize a healthy dog for any reason, like not winning enough. Let's ignore the fact that the rate of injuries for racing dogs is significantly less than that of high school athletes. Let's ignore the fact that the thousand or so people put out of work in our currently sparkling economy Let's ignore the fact that the ban is not actually on greyhound racing, but on betting on greyhound racing. And finally, let's ignore the fact that banning greyhound racing is, ultimately, an extinction sentence for an entire breed.

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ValW December 01, 2009 at 11:04AM
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Yes, let's not speak of the nearly 500 greyhounds who were injured at Massachusetts tracks over the last several years suffering injuries such as broken legs, fractures, dislocations, cardiac arrest, spontaneous seizures, sudden collapse before or after racing, spinal cord paralysis, severed tails, bleeding toes, lacerated eyes, a puncture wound and a broken neck. Let's ignore the fact that a total of 28 greyhounds died or were reported euthanized. Let's ignore the fact that when high school athletes get injured they're not killed. Let's ignore the fact that people are selfish and put their wants before looking out for their dogs. And finally, let's ignore the fact that correlating banning greyhound racing and 'extinction' of the breed is just a scare tactic used by pro racing people to attempt to woo unsuspecting people to their side.

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fordogs December 01, 2009 at 12:37PM
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Finally a dog's life? I don't think so. The goal of the folks working to end Greyhound racing is the extinction of the Greyhound. That is not a life! If there are no more dog tracks, who will breed Greyhounds? If you own one of these lovely dogs, where will your next one come from? Oh, I forgot! These these 501(c)3 shelters are bringing them from out of state and even out of the country to sell here. Until there are no more. Extinction is not life! Why not call Dakin today to ask how much they are selling Greyhounds for?

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neverwinter

December 02, 2009 at 9:14AM

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No greyhound racing=no racing greyhounds. It's a very simple equation. The wonderful pets that people ooh and ah over are retired racers, not AKC greyhounds. Racers are bred for their athleticism and do not have the various genetic issues that the AKC dogs, which are bred simply for looks, do. Additionally, the "greyhound calm" that so many people value is a result of their upbringing - they stay with their mother and siblings for significantly longer than other purebred dogs and thus are very highly socialized with other dogs and once they start their training they spend a lot of time with people and thus are highly socialized with humans. None of this happens with non-working dog breeders. So yes, banning racing will indeed cause the extinction of the racing greyhound.

The sad thing is that so many people voted based on emotion, not knowledge. Even the sponsors of the bill admitted they they have never stepped foot at a racing kennel and indeed, declined to do so even after being invited by the dog owners. The MSPCA admits they have never had a case of animal abuse at a race track. All working animals - sheepdogs, police dogs, hunting dogs, racehorses - suffer injuries in the course of their work and some die. Where are the stats on those injuries? Shall we ban any activity that causes injury to animals?

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MikeMenlo

December 02, 2009 at 1:02PM

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The MSPCA set up the guidelines for the greyhound tracks, including the size of their cages. There are states where dogs are abused but Massachusetts is not one of them.

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neverwinter

December 02, 2009 at 6:28PM

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Quick! Check it out! We need to save the Jack Russells next!
<http://www.therealjackrussell.com/trial/racing.php>

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gottaluvgreys

December 03, 2009 at 1:58PM

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Let's be honest about the fact that the majority of dogs that raced at MA tracks were 'graded off' to lower-end tracks in other states all along, long before the ban of greyhound racing in the state, and didn't get to take advantage of 'the protections they had in MA' or get the opportunity to be adopted in MA.

Let's remind ourselves of the fact that despite 'the protections they had in MA', dogs still suffered injuries and died racing at Wonderland and Raynham.

The choice made for these dogs to 'be sent to race in other states' isn't made by GREY2K USA or the people who voted to ban dog racing in MA. That choice is made - every single day - by the breeders/owners of those dogs - people who will race those dogs as long as they can make a dollar off of them. People who knowingly send those dogs to tracks that have worse conditions, resulting in higher instances of injury and death, and lower chances of those dogs getting adopted when their so-called 'careers' are over.

Let's underline your own admission about the fact that in many states, it is 'legal to euthanize a healthy dog for any reason, like not winning enough' - all in the name of making a buck.

Let's thank goodness for the work of the Committee to Protect Dogs and the overwhelming support of banning greyhound racing in MA by the voters.

Let's remember that there are still many, many greyhounds at risk in other states that allow this cruel and inhumane sport to go on - and let's support the continuing efforts of GREY2K USA to end racing nationwide. www.GREY2KUSA.org

And let's thank the Springfield Republican Editorials for this inspiring statement - '... last year's referendum proves that good causes march on'.

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gottaluvgreys

December 05, 2009 at 10:47AM

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neverwinter

December 05, 2009 at 1:51PM

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Let's remember that Grey2K and the Committee to Save Dogs are the same organization and that both are closely aligned with PETA and HSUS, organizations which are dead set against any exploitation of animals be it meat eating, fishing, hunting, or even pet ownership. Groups which euthanize far more animals than they take into their shelters because of their belief that animals are better off dead than in a shelter waiting for a new life. Groups that are using the issue of greyhound racing as the thin edge of the wedge towards their greater goal of banning any use of animals by humans for any purpose.

Let's remember that the MSPCA never found a single instance of cruelty or animal abuse at any track or kennel. Let's remember that Carey Thiel and his wife, the people behind Grey2K and the CTSD admit they've never stepped foot at a racing kennel even after being invited to and thus have no idea of the reality of dog racing and their treatment. Let's remember that there has never been a single case of a disgruntled employee coming forward alleging cruelty or abuse at a track. That PETA, which is notorious for placing their people undercover in jobs where animal abuse is alleged and covertly filming it, never had anything on greyhound racing. Saying something is cruel and inhumane over and over doesn't make it true. Injuries in a sport doesn't make it cruel. When high school kids drop dead during football games or practices we don't ban high school football. We find ways to make it safer. That's the sensible, logical thing to do. This ballot question wasn't decided on sense or logic but on uninformed emotion from the people who initiated the question on down to voters who thought they were doing good without really knowing the reality. So, when are you going to ban the Jack Russells from racing?

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