

September 30, 2013

Oct. 1, 2013: WasteZero apology; greyhound injuries; health care

An apology from the WasteZero team

Editor:

Earlier this month, our company began distributing vouchers and trash bags in support of Charleston's program to provide trash bags for all residents. We deeply appreciate the opportunity to work with the city on this initiative.

Unfortunately, we have had challenges getting -- and keeping -- enough bags in stock at local retailers. I realize that this has inconvenienced the residents of Charleston. I understand, and I apologize on behalf of the entire WasteZero team.

Over 20 years, we have managed hundreds of programs with trash bag distribution to retail stores, but in Charleston the bags have sold more quickly than we have ever seen before.

That is no excuse. Nothing bothers me more than when people don't deliver as promised, and we failed to deliver to our standards.

We have learned from this experience, and we have changed the way we manage inventories to ensure that this month's problems will not happen again. We'll be ready when the next distribution happens in February.

I hope that the people of Charleston will accept my apology, and our commitment to make things right. Thanks for your patience as we prepare for a much smoother road ahead.

Mark Dancy

President

WasteZero

Raleigh, N.C.

Greyhounds injured in great numbers

Editor:

A recent letter by National Greyhound Association spokesman Gary Guccione included loose claims and inaccurate information intended to distract readers from the facts about greyhound racing in the state.

Guccione claimed that "the vast majority" of greyhound injuries are minor. This is refuted by data from the West Virginia Racing Commission. According to Commission records, 4,796 injuries were reported in the state between 2008 and June 2013. Roughly half of these were broken legs, broken bones, or lacerations. During the same period 289 greyhounds died or were euthanized.

Similarly, Guccione opined that the greyhound injury rate is low based on racing "starts." The figures he cited, however, are not from West Virginia. In fact, this data is not publicly reported for Mardi Gras at all. At Wheeling, according to its own records, the number of injuries per start was higher than Guccione's claim for each of the past three years.

Next, Guccione claimed that "95 percent" of greyhounds are adopted or returned to breeding farms when they stop racing. He offers no citation for this number and has previously admitted that "no cumulative annual records are

available" on the ultimate fate of racing greyhounds.

What the record does show is that greyhounds regularly suffer serious injuries in West Virginia, and thousands of dogs endure lives of terrible confinement. As I write this letter, thousands of West Virginia dogs are being kept for long hours each day in stacked cages barely large enough for them to stand up or turn around. Additionally, since 2009, there have been seven documented cases of greyhound cruelty and neglect in the state involving failure to feed dogs, hitting dogs and failure to provide pain relief and basic veterinary care. This is just no way to treat a dog.

Finally, as reported in this paper, gambling on live dog races in West Virginia has dropped sharply, yet breeders continue to be subsidized with tens of millions of dollars annually. These funds come from slot machine and other unrelated gambling profits, and could instead be used for state programs.

These are facts. Now, it is up to West Virginians to decide how to address this issue.

Christine A. Dorchak

President and General Counsel

GREY2K USA

Boston

Health-care act needs time to work

Editor:

The Republicans are, as usual, lying about the president and the Affordable Care Act. It may not be perfect, but it is the first step on the way to universal health coverage for all.

We are the richest country the world has ever seen, yet millions of people go to bed hungry each night or cannot see a doctor. If the Republicans have an alternate plan, why don't they put it forward instead of trying to derail Obamacare? Anything this president puts forward they try to tear it down. Why is that? I have my own idea but I'll just let that go.

The health-care act starts today. Let us give it a chance and see if it is going to work. If it needs tweaking, as many laws passed in this country do, then we can tweak it. Don't tear it down before it is even fully implemented.

Curtis F. Lanham

Charleston