

Soring of Tennessee Walking Horses Featured in Animal Passion Podcast Premier Launch This Week

Series Highlights Abusive Practice of Soring During Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration Occurring this Week in Shelbyville

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, USA, September 1, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Alaqua Animal Refuge announced the launch of the Animal Passion video podcast series. Hosted by Alaqua Founder Laurie Hood, Animal Passion spotlights the work of advocates from all around the globe—the "difference makers" who have dedicated their lives to animal protection and safety.



Marty Irby, Animal Passion Podcast

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Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action

In Hood's quest to advance the interests of animals, Animal Passion spotlights amazing individuals, and shares their stories and videos of their work in an effort to rally all animal lovers to create much needed and lasting change. The podcast offers insight and inspiration through conversations with extraordinary animal advocates working across a broad spectrum of fields.

One of the first three inaugural episodes features the life work of [Marty Irby](#), executive director at Animal Wellness Action in Washington, D.C., who was honored in 2020 by [Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, II](#) for his dedication to

protect horses. Irby's discusses his background as an 8-time World Champion equestrian, past president of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association, and his testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives. He also touches on his personal cost to end the abusive practice of soring – the intentional infliction of pain to horses' feet to achieve an artificial high-step known as the “Big Lick” that's prized at the Tennessee Walking Horse National

Celebration and is occurring this week in Shelbyville, Tennessee.

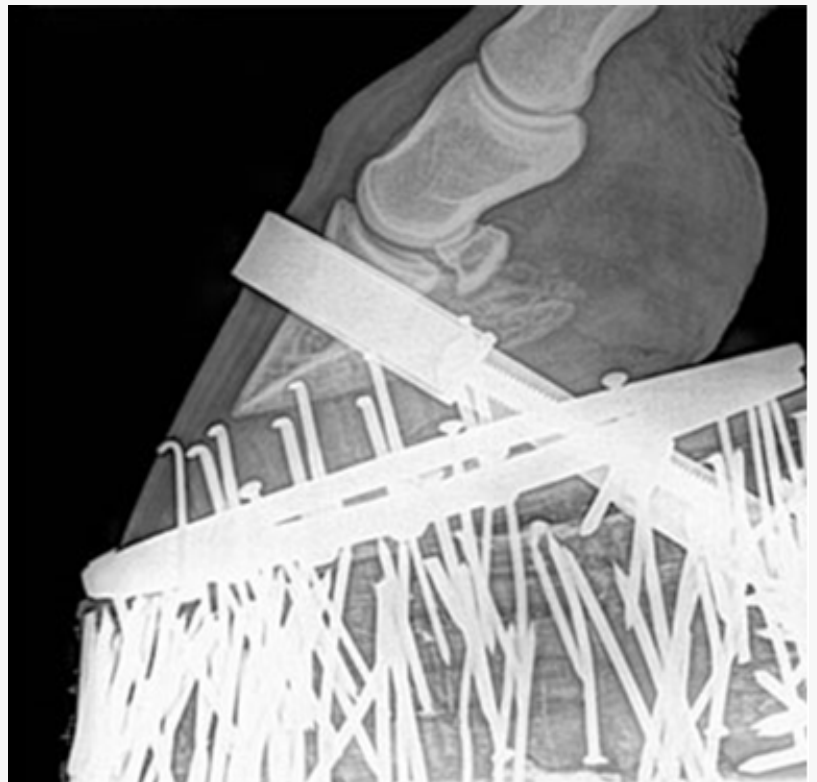
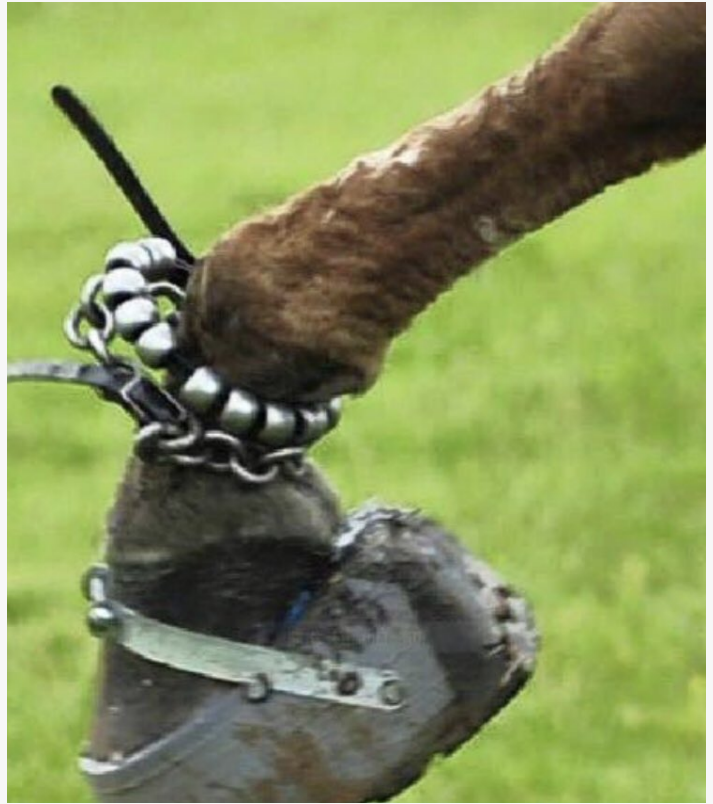
The episode can be watched now on the Animal Passion Podcast YouTube Channel here or listened to on every major podcast site.

“This is some of the most important work I have done for animals so far. These are amazing guests at the top of the animal welfare world who work tirelessly for the animals they love, in their own way,” said Laurie Hood, host of the Animal Passion Podcast. “These podcast episodes get you up close and personal with wild horses, wolves, bears, and other animals who are under siege around world. My hope is that every viewer will be moved to join with us and help us be their voice.”

“I am deeply honored to be included in the new Animal Passion Podcast series and am so grateful for the tremendous work of Laurie Hood, and everyone at Alaqua Animal Refuge,” said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action. “It is my greatest hope that this podcast will help us see the end of soring and restoration of the Tennessee Walking Horse breed to its rightful place as America’s horse, the horse on which Roy Rogers, John Wayne, and Dale Evans rode to glory.”

Other inaugural episodes include:

- Buck Wilde and Esther Gossweiler (documentarians focusing on Alaskan sea wolves and grizzly bears)
- Ellie Phipps Price (American Wild Horse Campaign President)



In the following weeks, additional podcasts will be uploaded and will feature:

- Monty Roberts (Author of *The Man Who Listens to Horses*)
- Odessa Gunn (Animal Wellness Center Northern California Director)
- Sonya Spaziani, A.K.A "Mustang Meg" (Founder of Mustang Wild)
- Emma Clifford (Animal Balance Founder and Director)

Through education and awareness, the goal of the podcast series is to dramatically reduce the need for rescue and refuge, as well as be an avenue to entertain, inform, inspire, and encourage support for this important work of making the world a better place for all animals.

Background on soring:

Leaders at Animal Wellness Action have worked to enact the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act since 2012 when it was first introduced in the U.S. House by Reps. Ed Whitfield, R-Ky., and Steve Cohen, D-Tenn. The original measure would ban the use of large, stacked shoes and ankle chains in the showring, eliminate the industry's failed self-policing program, and would increase penalties for those caught soring horses.

The PAST Act only achieved passage of the measure through the House in 2019 as result of changing the bill's name to the U.S. Senator Joseph D. Tydings Memorial PAST Act to honor the late Joe Tydings, a Democrat for Maryland, who authored the HPA in 1970 and passed away in 2018. The measure cleared the U.S. House by a vote of 333 to 96, but with opposition from Senators who hailed from Tennessee and Kentucky and 93 House Republicans opposing the measure, the bill was dead on arrival in the Upper Chamber. In light of that circumstance AWA pulled together representatives still involved in the breed to form revisions to the PAST Act that would help get the measure through the Senate.



"Big Lick" Stacked Shoes and Ankle Chains Utilized on Tennessee Walking Horses



1992 Tennessee Walking Horse 2-Year-Old World Grand Champion JFK | Photo Credit: David Pruett

And after eighteen grueling months and hundreds of hours on the phone with the industry insiders, coalition partners issued a draft of the compromise bill to the Senators and several equine and animal protection groups that would have insured 2021 to be the last TWHNC with the use of large stacked shoes and ankle chains on the horses' feet. Like the original PAST Act, the revised PAST Act still banned the chains but allowed for a much smaller and removable shoe (about sixty percent less in size than those used today), and it still increased the penalties, eliminated the self-policing scheme, and even went further than the original PAST Act to ban the use of treacherous devices known as tail braces that hold the horses tail in a U-shaped position after the ligaments in the tail have been severed – all for a certain look. Had it been enacted at the end of 2020, it would be law this November, forbidding a wide range of cruelty practices long endemic to the industry.

The effort garnered support for the revised PAST Act from Monty Roberts, “the Man Who Listens to Horses;” Mark Miller – the lead singer of the band Sawyer Brown who used to own walking horses; the Citizens’ Campaign Against Big Lick Animal Cruelty; the family of Joe Tydings; SPCA International; NYCLASS; and many other horse and animal related groups. And the effort was building steam until it saw opposition from some other organizations. The PAST Act, despite strong leadership by Senators Mike Crapo, R-Ida., and Mark Warner, D-Va., has never come up for a vote in the Senate since it was introduced in 2012. Opposition from lawmakers from Kentucky and Tennessee has long stalled the measure in the Senate.

While the sabotaging of the solid compromise legislation in 2020 is regrettable stakeholders are encouraged to come together to achieve a consensus.

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Alaqua Animal Refuge is a no-kill animal shelter and sanctuary, located in the panhandle of Florida. As the Southeast’s premier 501(c)3 refuge, Alaqua believes that every abused, neglected, and homeless animal deserves a second chance. Committed to providing protection, shelter, and care to animals in need, this private, non-profit Refuge also offers a full-service adoption center, educational outreach, and community programs that extend far beyond their geographic location. Since its inception in 2007, Alaqua, led by Founder Laurie Hood, has become a recognized leader in animal rescue, welfare, cruelty prevention, and advocacy. Alaqua is currently in the midst of a relocation and expansion capital campaign to build a one-of-a-kind facility—the first in the United States—on 100 acres. The new facility and sanctuary will allow Alaqua to continue to do the important work of animal rescue and rehabilitation, as well as be an educational and training center for animal welfare advocates as a place that will inspire, empower, and educate others to make change in our society and recreate the model worldwide. To learn more, visit <http://www.alaqua.org/>

Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that

alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies, and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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