

The Joys and Sorrows of Owning a Wildlife Refuge:

The Story of Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci

By Marsha Gravitz

Wiry and wary, Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci (pronounced approximately Bew-yewk-MUTCHA), a petite, yet commanding figure, was patrolling her *Unexpected Wildlife Refuge* in Newfield, New Jersey, for trespassing poachers. Suddenly the serenity of the clear, crisp autumn day was pierced by a gunshot.

"I got one. Don't let it get away," shouted a boy.

Racing toward the voice, which was outside the border of Hope's property, she peered through tree branches and saw one boy grab the wounded quail while his companion knifed the bird.

"The damn bitch won't die." The boy laughed as he attempted to stuff a still struggling bird into his bag.

As the boys walked on, Hope stayed hidden. She had no power to stop the hunters in their legal pursuit of game outside refuge borders. Her only recourse was enforcement of the No Trespass law, and she knew that if her patrols were open, trespassers would enter boldly whenever she had passed by.

The foregoing incident illustrates the grief and frustration of owning a wildlife refuge.

"During the five months of the year when there are hunting seasons—from goose season in October through raccoon and fox season in March—our refuge is besieged by hordes of hunters who tear down our 'No

Trespassing' signs and sometimes threaten to kill us," says Hope. "We have been shot at, our woods have been set afire, and our mailbox obliterated. All this, not because

we have interfered with anyone else's rights, but because we have tried to maintain our own rights, and the protection of the animals that live on our land. Hunters

call us 'bleeding hearts,' and torment us by hanging rabbit entrails upon our fence, stuffing butchered fawns in our mailbox, and scattering headless quail beside our driveway."

Why don't Hope and her husband, Cavit, a metallurgist, seek the help of law enforcement officials?

"We try. Sometimes legal authorities tell us we don't have enough evidence. Even when we gather sufficient evidence, such as hunting license numbers, judges frequently decline to convict trespassers," says Hope.

In spite of the grief, Hope, agile and fit at 72, claims there are many joys in owning a wildlife refuge. "Our refuge is a place of enchantment. The sight of a rabbit sitting up to wash his face on a dew-drenched morning fills me with joy," said Hope of the 351-acre refuge of swampy south New Jersey woodland and meadow she and Cavit purchased in 1961, and which became, in 1965, a nonprofit organization. "Our land harbors nearly every animal indigenous to south New Jersey. It is peopled with fascinating creatures: raccoons and possums; chipmunks and squirrels; beavers and muskrats; foxes; rabbits; and deer. Marsh birds nest along the edges of the pond and a host of other birds inhabit the woods and fields."

Hope vigorously works to make life better for the animals who live on her refuge. She



Cavit Buyukmihci tends to the beavers at the Unexpected Wildlife Refuge.

PLEASE TURN THE PAGE

Red: See your photo
with Chopin, make Mom

No need to
acknowledge

F E A T U R E



Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci with 3-month-old beavers at her Unexpected Wildlife Refuge in Newfield, New Jersey.

east west books

SPIRIT

MIND

BODY

meditation metaphysics christianity buddhism psychology astrology natural medicine spiritual teachers

philosophy children american indian yoga tantra kundalini

78 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011
212/243-5994

A Medical Alternative

The largest, most diversified
health care facility in New York City

- Allergy Testing/Treatment
- Chronic Degenerative Diseases
- Orthomolecular Psychiatry
- Lead Toxicity Screening
- Cardiovascular Disorders
- Cancer Program/AIDS
- Immune System Stimulation
- Psychotherapy/Stress Reduction
- Candida Testing/Treatment
- Premenstrual Syndrome



Holistic Medical Associates

161 Avenue of the Americas, New York City 10013
212-675-2550

Harold H. Markus, M.D. Virginia D. Joy, Ph.D.

REFLEXOLOGY

BEGINNERS, ADVANCED AND CERTIFICATE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Laura Norman and Associates



BEGINNERS SIX WEEK TRAINING PROGRAMS

Tues. mornings 9:30 am-12:30 pm
Thurs. eves. 6:30 pm-9:30 pm
One-day wkshp. 10:00 am-6:00 pm

Jan. 28

Feb. 6

Jan. 25 & Feb. 22

— Individual Sessions Available —

NYC and Brooklyn Locations
(212) 532-4404

FEATURE



Dr. Nedim Buyukmihci, the veterinarian son of Hope and Cavit Buyukmihci, with Chopper, an orphaned baby beaver. Dr. Buyukmihci is a founder-director of the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights.

CAVIT BUYUKMIHCI © 1986

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

plants poplar sprouts for beavers; provides housing for bluebirds; clears trails; and frequently uses these trails to check for trespassers and for other problems.

Where does Hope get her vigor? "I'm fueled by enthusiasm, love, and a vegan lifestyle," she explained. She abstains from meat, eggs, dairy products, leather, and all animal products.

How did she and her family become vegans? "During the early 60s, a neighbor in an adjoining field watched tolerantly as I was replacing shot-up 'No Trespassing' signs. He asked, 'You eat meat, don't you? Cows and chickens? I eat deer and quail. What's the difference?' I tried to explain, but my arguments crumbled. It was not so much that I could not convince him, but that I could not convince myself. We eventually became vegetarians, then vegans."

Love of nature and animals has been in three generations of Hope's family. Her father, Edmund J. Sawyer, a wildlife artist and naturalist, established a reputation as the "dean of American bird artists." Hope's Turkish-born husband, Cavit, in 1979, founded the New Jersey Congress for Animals, and still chairs a coalition which lobbies local and state governments for legislation to protect area fauna. By 1984, Hope and Cavit had lobbied successfully to make New Jersey one of the few states which bans the use of steel-jaw leghold traps, painful instruments designed to capture animals by clamping tightly around the leg. They are now campaigning for a similar federal law.

The Buyukmihcis' son, Nedim (whose question at age 8, "What is a bluebird?" prompted the family to purchase the refuge) became a veterinarian in 1972. He is associate professor of surgery/ophtalmology at the University of California, Davis, where he developed a first in veterinary medicine: a course on the ethics of animal use. Dr. Buyukmihci also co-founded, in 1981, and co-directs, with Dr. Neil C. Wolff, the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights.

Daughters Linda and Nermin are also active in the animal rights movement.

Although Hope champions the rights of

all animals, she is especially devoted to beavers. With the motto, "They Shall Never Be Trapped Anymore," she founded, in 1970, the Beaver Defenders, and edits the newsletter of this organization, which denounces the trapping of beavers for their fur and castoreum, a perfume fixative.

Through this newsletter and Hope's three published books (*Unexpected Treasure* (1968); *Hour of the Beaver* (1971); and *Beaversprite*, co-authored with Dorothy Richards in 1977), readers learn about beavers, as a species and as individuals.

A poignant example of a real individualist was Chopper, an orphan beaver who came to live with the Buyukmihcis in 1974.

Having long dreamed of sharing their home with a beaver, the Buyukmihcis excavated a subterranean passage from the pond into their cellar 60 feet away, then built a ramp from the cellar into their living room, which was equipped with a wading pool, so that Chopper could enjoy human comforts and companionship, occasionally gnaw furniture legs, and still come and go freely.

"Everyone loved him and he loved everyone," says Hope.

In the end, Chopper's trusting nature proved to be his tragic flaw. He took to visiting a Girl Scout camp a few miles away, performing swimming stunts for a spellbound audience. But one day, thinking a fisherman was another "friendly fellow," Chopper swam near his boat. Misunderstanding Chopper's intentions, the fisherman clubbed the little beaver to death with an oar while the horrified Girl Scouts shrieked on shore.

Just as this fisherman misunderstood Chopper, so do many others misunderstand beavers, according to Hope. That's why she uses every means possible to inform people, especially those who complain about beaver dams causing flooding and property damage, that beavers are vital to ecological balance. "Beavers encourage a high water table and the prevention of flood followed by drought. They also control soil erosion because the reservoirs created by beaver dams slow the flow of water. I have

FEATURE

observed that beavers spend much time shoring up the banks of streams by dredging mud and debris from the bottom," she explains.

Because of her special dedication to beavers, *The Philadelphia Inquirer/TODAY* (May 6, 1979) compared Hope to other women who have championed the rights of a particular species, such as the late Velma B. Johnston, more colorfully known as "Wild Horse Annie," because of her founding role in WHOA (Wild Horse Organized Assistance), the organization behind the Wild Horse Act of 1971, which prohibits the hunting of wild mustangs for meat.

Through writing, photography, and drawing, Hope helps people learn scientific knowledge about wildlife, and at the same time gain insight into the needs and feelings of animals. She awed the readers of the world's largest-selling women's magazine, *Family Circle* (Jan. 25, 1983), with her true account of a father beaver who braved frigid currents to gnaw the ice which threatened his dam and family.

Hope's trademark, the "chalk talk," is in popular demand by schools, libraries, and organizations. While describing true-life adventures of animals, Hope illustrates her words with vivid chalk drawings.

Cleveland Amory, founder and president of The Fund for Animals, Inc., refers to Hope as his "dear friend." He details her devotion to animals in *Man Kind?* (1974): "Hope found that not even thorough posting of 'No Trespassing' signs did any good. She had to thread the trails on her property. Then, even at night, she had to patrol, and when she found a thread broken, she knew she had to find the trapper or his traps

before one of her semi-tame beavers found them."

More than 36 years ago, before "women's rights" were a prominent issue, Hope began to compare exploitation of women with exploitation of animals. This comparison was magnified when Hope returned, in the 50s, to her husband's native Turkey where men considered themselves "masters" of both women and animals. "Man's mastery is, unfortunately, often based on ignorance and is frequently destructive," said Hope then and now.

Although Hope admits that animals may not gain rights during her lifetime, she is not discouraged. "Many who worked to abolish slavery did not live to reach their goal," she explained. "That goal was reached. Now other goals lead us on. How soon they will be reached depends on how many people will work toward that future where no creature will be a scapegoat for humans." ■

To Learn More

Visits to **Unexpected Wildlife Refuge** can be arranged by appointment. For educational materials and membership information, send a stamped, long envelope to:

Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci
Unexpected Wildlife Refuge
RD #1
Newfield, NJ 08344
(609) 697-3541

MARSHA GRAVITZ is a freelance journalist and associate editor of *The Animal's Agenda*.



Hope teaching children the importance of protecting wildlife.

The Natural Living Department Store



We bring you:

Great sleeping, healthy sitting, easy music, enlightening reading, friendly service, relief for your back, clothing that breathes, footwear that heals, fresh air, new ideas, comfortable convertibles, oriental decor, and now clean water, too!

The best Futons and a whole lot more. And always naturally.

dreams east



Better Health/Better Living
60 Roslyn Avenue, Sea Cliff, N.Y. 11575
Open Tues-Sun, Thurs till 8:30



THE MID-MANHATTAN CHIROPRACTIC CENTER

(212) 683-4466

FOR RELIEF OF HEADACHES, BACK PAIN, NECK PAIN, SHOULDER PAIN, SCIATICA, AND PAINFUL JOINTS.



Dr. Louis A. Kessel is the director of the center. He is a member of the American Chiropractic Association, NY State Chiropractic Association and the Council in Nutrition, Sports Injury and Roentgenology. He has been invited to lecture at various universities, organizations, and recently has been on Cable TV.

Dr. Kessel offers a *free Health Care Class* every Tuesday evening at 6:30 to 7:30 PM. Anyone attending these talks will be entitled to a *Chiropractic Spinal Analysis* at no charge after the talk. It is his way of thanking someone who has taken the time to find out about Chiropractic care.

INTRODUCTION TO CHIROPRACTIC HEALTH CARE
PATIENT EDUCATION LECTURE SERIES
TUESDAYS 6:30 PM
MID-MANHATTAN CHIROPRACTIC CENTER
DR. LOUIS A. KESSEL
481 THIRD AVE. (33rd St.)
NEW YORK, NY 10016
CHIROPRACTIC SPINAL ANALYSIS
AT NO CHARGE.
PLEASE CALL FOR SEATING (212) 683-4466

MOST
INSURANCE
PLANS
ACCEPTED.
PLEASE
BRING
THIS AD
WITH YOU.

THE DiMELE CENTER

New York City's Best Available Seminar/Lecture Space
For: Health Professionals, Workshop Leaders & Conference Organizers

The DiMele Center, located in the center of mid-town Manhattan, is a convenient and versatile facility for your workshops, seminars, lectures, meetings, receptions and social events. Occupying the entire 7th floor of 221 West 57th Street, this 5,300 square foot multi-room facility is an ideal environment.

The 1000 square foot Main Room of The DiMele Center is a solarium of plants and windows. This versatile space can be set up as a comfortable lecture room for up to 140 people...or it can be used more casually with pillows and hassocks. This room and others at the Center are



available on a 24-hour make-your-own schedule basis.

Nine soundproof break-out rooms with phones are available for planning or other small group meetings.

Attended elevators give quick service to the warm and spacious reception area.

The main room has a built-in sound system; TV monitor, VCR available. Message service, and office facilities (including typing and copying) are available.

Convenient to all transportation.

Facilities at other locations can be arranged through the DiMele Center.

Located between Central Park South and Carnegie Hall, the sense of quality of the DiMele Center sets the perfect tone for your event.

For more information, please call daytime at (212) 757-4488. Or, write to The DiMele Center, 221 West 57th Street, New York City, New York 10019.

The DiMele Center
221 West 57th Street
New York City, NY 10019
(212) 757-4488