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WORKING FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

ON LOBBYING AND ETHICS

A talk given on behalf of The Animal Defence League of Canada, by
Esther Klein,
at the Fourth Annual Social Marketing Seminar held April 30, 1992
by The American Marketing Association, at Ottawa Congress Centre,
Ottawa, Ont.

Hello everybody. I'm very pleased to be here as spokesperson on behalf of The Animal Defence League of Canada. We have been in existence since 1958 to draw attention to the oppression of animals and what can be done about it. We are volunteers working in Ottawa and supported by 3,500 members across Canada. We work for the right of animals to pursue their own wellbeing without oppression from humans. That is to say, we work for animal rights.

We try to raise public awareness of what is happening behind closed doors to laboratory animals; what is happening to animals on remote traplines; what is happening to them on factory-farms; and what happens to them when they are exploited in circuses and races, roadside exhibitions and zoos; and in the overworked euthanasia rooms of humane societies, to whom falls the tragic task of having to humanely kill healthy animals for whom no homes can be found.

How do we measure success? We measure it by seeing our letters to newspapers get published instead of ignored as they once were. We measure it by how often and by whom we are called upon to help in initiatives for animals; how often the media contacts us for our views on animal-concerned matters; how many support us with their efforts and donations; and how many join us as members. We measure success by how often school teachers, high school and university students contact us for material or interviews for class projects, and we measure it by how hard the animal-users are trying to fight back. Where once our voice as a movement was ignored, this is no longer possible, and the animal-users have organized a counterattack. But where once only the voice of the animal-users was heard, there is now a debate.

We are asked whether we see ourselves as lobbying, and which lobbying tactics are most effective.

We don't have the financial resources for hiring professional lobbyists to develop good relations with legislators. Industry and commerce are powerful forces which pressure legislators directly, from the top down, but we have to apply pressure via the general public, from the bottom up. We rely on the "social marketing" of our

ideas by providing information. An informed public then becomes both a moral and economic force to be reckoned with. It is slower, but it does work. It is an informed public which has caused the fur industry's decline, and an informed public which is already affecting the cattle industry and the vivisection industry.

We are asked whether a lobby group can exercise "undue influence". Well, if it's big and powerful it certainly can. An excellent example of that is what happened when a recent television program dealt with the issue of vivisection. David Suzuki in an October

1991 telecast of "The Nature of Things" called "Animals in Research: Breaking the Habit" interviewed both animal-using and non-animal-using scientists. After the show aired and the animal-users saw how they looked compared to the non-animal users, they apparently didn't like it. So they not only orchestrated a flood of angry letters from vivisectors, but heads of university departments, Dr. Mark Bisby of Queens University, Dr. Howard Dickson of Dalhousie University, and Dr. Bernard Bressler of University of British Columbia went as a group to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and requested that the episode not be distributed either to public television or to the school system! And it took a while before the CBC decided not to give in to that request for suppression of the program!

Both the animal-using researchers and the intensive-factory-farmers have tried to stop us from informing the public, by complaining to the Canadian Advertising Foundation about our ads. The first time, the Canadian Advertising Foundation contacted us and requested us to back up our contentions. We replied with a four-page letter and several informative flyers of substantiation. They never contacted us on the second charge, and we only found out about it indirectly. Presumably they knew we could back up our statements and there was no point in wasting their time and ours with the charges of the factory-farmers. So, yes, there **can** be undue influence -- but it does not come from us -- it comes from our powerful adversaries!

We move to ethics, and we are asked: **What is "doing the right thing"?**

We would say that doing the right thing means giving proper [equal] consideration to the claims of all parties and entities concerned -- and then doing that which nurtures life, liberty and health for all. In our view, only that is ethical which respects the interests of all affected parties and entities.

And we are asked, **"according to whom?"**

Well, to answer the concerns of The Animal Defence League of Canada, that would be according to that great humanitarian, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, for instance, who said:

"Ethics in our Western world has been largely limited to the relations of man to man. But that is a limited ethics. We need a boundless ethics which will include the animals also. Compassion, in which all ethics must take root can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to mankind. ... [By ethical conduct toward all creatures, we enter into a spiritual relationship with the universe.]"

It is also according to the great writer and humanitarian, Victor Hugo, who wrote:

"In the relations of man with the animals, with the flowers, with all the objects of creation, there is a whole great ethic scarcely seen as yet, but which will eventually break through into the light and be the corollary and the complement to human ethics."

It is according to the eminent scientist, Dr. Albert Einstein, who wrote:

"A human...is a part of the whole...Our task must be to widen our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty..."

And it is according to Chief Seattle, leader of the Suquamish tribe in the Washington territory, who in 1854 delivered a prophetic speech to mark the transfer of ancestral Indian lands to the federal government. He said:

"So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we decide to accept, I will make one condition: The white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers ... For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to man. All things are connected ... This we know. ... All things are connected -- like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected."

[We also pay attention to Robert Hunter of Greenpeace, who wrote:

"We must begin to examine our relationship to all life around us...we must seriously begin to inquire into the rights of rabbits and turnips, the rights of soil and swamp, the rights of the atmosphere, and, ultimately, the rights of the planet. For these are the containers of our future evolution. Otherwise, in our lifetime, we shall suffer the re-enactment of Genesis: our expulsion from paradise and the fall of nature itself..."]

The next ethical question which needs to be addressed, is: "How does treatment sanitize [?] ... Even when passing the [advertising] Code's standards, can one still be unethical in advertising?"

Our answer is "Yes, indeed! -- one can still be unethical in argument or advertising by intentionally manipulating and keeping the focus narrowed to a lesser or irrelevant issue; by suppressing questions of fundamental principles one can be legally within the bounds of any Code, while being obviously unethical.

This happens in the fur trade, where discussion focuses on so-called "humane" traps rather than on the basic issue of killing and causing suffering to sentient creatures in order to rob them of the fur which nature gave them.

It happens where one focuses on the cleanliness of laboratories, rather than on the fundamental issue of keeping nature's creatures confined there in cages till they either go crazy or are mutilated or poisoned in experiments which cause them great suffering and death.

It happens when we focus on voluntary codes of care for animals confined in factory "farms" of cows, pigs and poultry which are prevented almost totally from satisfying their natural behavioural needs -- rather than on the issue of why our culture ever moved so far away from the wholesome diet of fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, legumes and some eggs and dairy products.

We are asked if there is a checklist that could ensure an ethical result. We believe there is one question which can serve to head the checklist. The question is: Who are the parties and entities involved in this consideration, and have their interests been given equal respect and consideration?

Who are the parties and entities involved in this consideration, and have their interests been given equal respect and consideration?

Had this question been asked where slavery was established, the answer would have failed the checklist.

Had this question been asked where child labour was established, the answer would have failed the checklist.

next page

Had this question been asked where women were oppressed, and were it to be asked now where women are oppressed, the answer would fail the checklist.

If this question is asked now, where animals are oppressed and exploited, the answer would fail the checklist.

As for the ecological entities, the rivers, the land, the forests, the oceans and the air, if this question is asked now where they are affected, the answer would fail the checklist.

Dr. Christopher Stone who is a Professor of Law at University of Southern California, writes that throughout legal history each successive extension of rights to some new entity has been a bit unthinkable. "We are inclined to suppose the rightlessness of rightless 'things' to be a decree of nature -- instead of a legal convention acting in support of some status quo."

[This kind of thinking led to the first woman in Wisconsin who wanted to practice law being told she had no such right because it would be a departure from the order of nature.

And in 1856 the U. S. Supreme Court stated that Blacks were not free to choose between emancipation and public sale, because under the law the slave [was] not a person but a thing.]" [Paraphrased. Ed.]

Prof. Stone proposes giving legal rights to forests, oceans, rivers and other so-called "natural objects" in the environment. And in the 1972 court case between Walt Disney Enterprises which wanted to develop a wilderness area in California, and The Sierra Club, which brought suit for an injunction, claiming it would adversely affect the ecology, three justices wrote that

"...public concern for protecting nature ... **should** lead to the conferral of standing upon environmental objects to sue for their own preservation."

Jurists, legislators and journalists have all reacted favourably to the idea.

When it is no longer unthinkable for natural objects to have rights to their preservation and wellbeing, how much more unthinkable is it to deny such rights to sentient creatures?

When Pope Paul tried to shut down the animal shelter run by Mother Cecilia in the mid-1960s, she said to him, "May I remind Your Holiness that many years ago we were all travellers in the Ark together." Well, we are still travellers in the Ark together.

[and our full potential as humans will not be realized until we recognize the right of animals to freedom from oppression by humans].

I will close with the thoughts of naturalist Joseph Wood Krutch about his feelings for the little frogs known to New Englanders as the spring peepers. It is in the spring that they come to life, and their voices are heard on the "Day of the Peepers". He writes:

"This Day of the Peepers I consider as my spring festival. Surely one day a year might be set aside on which to celebrate our ancient loyalties and to remember our ancient origins.

"'Spring is come!' I say when I hear them ... But I also add something which for me at least is even more important. 'Don't forget' I whisper to the peepers, 'we are all in this together.'"

Thank you.

* * *

[Emphasis added. Ed.]
[text in square brackets was not in the talk delivered April 30/92,
which had to not take more than 12 minutes]
For Bibliography and addendum please see attached.

APPENDICES FOLLOW overleaf

Further to p. 4 of Lobbying and Ethics:

[It is also possible to be unequivocally unethical by deliberately refusing to know about or acknowledge an animal's full range of natural capabilities and capacity, in order to forestall having to answer the ethical questions this would raise about how we impose our will on such animals.

An example of this is given in Gucwa's book, "To Whom It May Concern", which tells of his experience as the trainer of Siri, a 14 year-old [in 1982] female Asian elephant, in Burnet Park Zoo, Syracuse, New York.

Gucwa discovered that of her own accord she seemed to enjoy drawing designs in the ground, by using her trunk to hold a stick or a stone.

Upon contacting Steve McCusker, curator of animals at Washington Park Zoo in Portland, Oregon, the most renowned Asian elephant facility in the world, he was told by McCusker: "...we don't think what you've got is particularly unique"...All our elephants draw." And the curator noted in passing that the zoo staffers had all witnessed the behavior, but none of them had ever given it much thought.

Gucwa's job was to feed Siri, clean her enclosure and yard, teach her tricks, put on performances and oversee rides for a paying public, not to explore her intelligence or expressive desires. Nonetheless, on his own time, he supplied Siri with [markers] and drawing paper supported by cardboard on his lap. He was so impressed with her art that he sent examples of her work to Jerome Witkin, for his comments.

Jerome Witkin taught art at Syracuse University, and Theodore F. Wolff, art critic for the Christian Science Monitor, wrote of him that he is "one of the very small handful of American painters for whom it is appropriate to challenge the Old Masters. He is a superb draftsman, an excellent painter, an artist with something important to say."

Not knowing who the artist was, but examining Siri's work, Witkin said: "These drawings are very lyrical, very, very beautiful...." "I can't get most of my students to fill a page like this." He guessed that they had been done by a female; by someone with a Far Eastern connection. When he learned the artist was an elephant, he said:

"I'm even more impressed. Our egos as humans have prevented us for too long from watching for the possibility of artistic expression in other beings." ... "The drawings are wonderful. It takes some kind of sensibility to enjoy a line. There are a lot of Asian cultures where knowing how to appreciate the

elegance of a mark, a line, is part of being cultured. I find such elegance in these marks, so much that it's hard to believe an animal did them...they're very beautiful..."

Gucwa says: "Once you understand that an animal is intelligent, it's not illogical to suspect that it might be creative. ...We're part of the biological order. ... We must remember that in our own species East does not think like West. Art does not think like science ... so to say animals think like us may be both a profound insight and a gross generalization. ... all this goes back to the Einstein quote: **"It is the theory which determines what we can observe."**

James Ehmann writes that unlike chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, capuchin monkeys and other primates which draw after a brief demonstration by humans, the elephant, like no species other than humans, has discovered drawing on its own initiative.

So what was the reaction when a wonderstruck Guéwa drew attention to Siri's activity? His delight in the elephant's talent was definitely not shared. In fact, the director of the Burnet Park Zoo did not want news of Siri's drawings to get out, and when columnist and newspaper science editor James Ehmann found out about it anyway and began preparing a story for a Syracuse newspaper, the zoo director dissociated his facility from the effort and made it clear that the Zoo did not support the graphic explorations.

When Siri was lodged at the Buffalo Zoological Gardens, Ehmann's request for an interview with the zoo's curator of mammals was refused, and he received a letter asking seven separate times that the name Buffalo Zoological Gardens not be associated in any way with Siri's work. Furthermore, the reply asked that both Guéwa and Ehmann not visit the zoo!!.

When you ask yourself why these keepers of zoos were so reluctant to have anything to do with the exploration of Siri's creativity the answer is easily discernible. Once you recognize the depth of spirit and creativity in the elephant, how can you defend kidnapping her from her family and natural habitat, keeping her confined in a zoo, and demeaning her by forcing her to dance on her hind legs or go round and round in a circle with children on her back? Exploiting this or any other creature is much easier when you refuse to recognize its capacity for creativity, joy or suffering.

Gucwa writes: "...every zoo person knows something about an animal that no one else knows. ...What hope does an animal have in a zoo if its caretaker is not encouraged to think beyond the walls? ... To this day the elephant navigates the earth with cargo unknown. ...the cognitive researchers are looking into the eye of nature itself, and I believe that what they're going to find is ...ancient wisdom -- **our connectedness, our interdependence and our kinship with life ... and that is a spiritual realm -- what Dr. Michael Fox calls "one earth, one mind."**

continued overleaf...

Here is a fundamental ethical problem as yet undealt with by either laws or codes of ethics.

In order to use animals and make money out of them we have to keep them at a psychic distance, says Dr. Christopher D. Stone. [Dict: "Psychic: 1. of the soul or mind."] Referring to vivisection of animals John Cowper Powys says that "[In] Torturing animals to prolong human life **science has separated itself from conscience -- the most important thing that life has produced.**"

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Chief Seattle's Message

An Open Letter

Nonviolence did not appear in this land with the arrival of European immigrants. Native Americans had a reverence for life, respected human dignity, and understood the interconnection of all things to an extent that has yet to be surpassed. The genocide perpetrated by the United States on the Indian tribes and cultures — a pattern which still continues today — remains one of the most thorough indictments of white civilization. In 1854, Chief Seattle, leader of the Suquamish tribe in the Washington territory, delivered this prophetic speech to mark the transferral of ancestral Indian lands to the federal government.

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land.

The Great Chief also sends us words of friendship and good will. This is kind of him, since we know he has little need of our friendship in return. But we will consider your offer. For we know that if we do not sell, the white man may come with guns and take our land.

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us.

If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

The white man's dead forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth, for it is the mother of the red man. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man — all belong to the same family.

So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us.

So, the Great Chief sends word he will reserve us a place so that we can live comfortably to ourselves. He will be our father and we will be his children.

So we will consider your offer to buy our land. But it will not be easy. For this land is sacred to us.

This shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors.

If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred, and you must teach your children that it is sacred, and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lake tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the rivers are our brothers, and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

The red man has always retreated before the advancing white man, as the mist of the mountain runs before the morning sun. But the ashes of our fathers are sacred. Their graves are holy ground, and so these hills, these trees, this portion of earth is consecrated to us. We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother, not his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He leaves his fathers' graves behind, and he does not care. He kidnaps the earth from his children. He does not care. His fathers' graves and his children's birthright are forgotten. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only a desert.

I do not know. Our ways are different from your ways. The sight of your cities pains the eyes of the red man. But perhaps it is because the red man is a savage and does not understand.

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in spring or the rustle of insects' wings. But perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand. The clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life is a man cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? I am a red man and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of a pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleansed by a midday rain, or scented with the pinon pine.

The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath — the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench. But if we sell you our land, you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh. And the wind must also give our children the spirit of life. And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where even the white man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow's flowers.

So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we decide to accept, I will make one condition: The white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers.

I am a savage and do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffaloes on the prairie, left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and I do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive.

What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected.

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground they spit on themselves.

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of man. Man did not weave the web of his life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

But we will consider your offer to go to the reservation you have for my people. We will live apart, and in peace. It matters little where we spend the rest of our days. Our children have seen their fathers humbled in defeat. Our warriors have felt shame, and after defeat they turn their days in idleness and contaminate their bodies with sweet foods and strong drink. It matters little where we pass the rest of our days. They are not many. A few more hours, a few more winters, and none of the children of the great tribes that once lived on this earth or that roam now in small bands in the woods will be left to mourn the graves of a people once as powerful and hopeful as yours. But why should I mourn the passing of my people? Tribes are made of men, nothing more. Men come and go like the waves of the sea.

Even the white man, whose God walks and talks with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all; we

shall see. One thing we know, which the white man may one day discover — our God is the same God. You may think now that you own him as you wish to own our land; but you cannot. He is the God of man, and his compassion is equal for the red man and the white. This earth is precious to him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. The white too shall pass; perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Continue to contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste.

But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the God who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and over the red man. That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires. Where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. And what is it to say goodbye to the swift pony and the hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival.

So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we agree, it will be to secure the reservation you have promised. There, perhaps, we may live out our brief days as we wish. When the last red man has vanished from this earth, and his memory is only a shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, these shores and forests will still hold the spirits of my people. For they love this earth as the newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So if we sell you our land, love it as we've loved it. Care for it as we've cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you take it. And with all your strength, with all your mind, with all your heart, preserve it for your children, and love it. . . as God loves us all.

One thing we know. Our God is the same God. This earth is precious to him. Even the white man cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We shall see.

submitted by Rod Paul Ω

FORUM

In extracts, God would support stoning rebellious sons; but overall, compassionate God dislikes abuse of animals

Ross F. Irish ("Reluctant support," Dec. 5) states that vivisectionists "have God on their side," because Genesis 9:2-3 has God saying to Noah, "the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth ... into your hand are they delivered. ... Every moving thing ... shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

Well, heaven knows we all want God on our side, so I turned to my Bible and discovered that if one does not study it as a whole, but merely relies upon isolated extracts, then God would also be on our side if we were to put to death anyone who works on the Sabbath (Exodus 31:15); stone to death any son deemed by his parents and the community elders to be gluttonous, rebellious and drinking too much (Deuteronomy 21:18); and stone to death any bride whose husband declares he has not found in her "the tokens of virginity" (Deuteronomy 22:21).

Also, although a contemporary congregation dressed in its Sunday best might be dismayed, God would nevertheless be on the side of the minister who offers up an ox as burnt offering, and follows this by throwing half the ox's blood against the altar, and the other half at the congregation (Exodus 24:8).

By the time I came to where God was on the side of those who exclude from their congregation children born out of wedlock and their descendants to the 10th generation (Deuteronomy 23:2), I confess I was less concerned about God being on my side than my being on His or Her side — but fortunately another side of God presented itself, as follows:

In the Book of Proverbs we are told that "A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast" (Proverbs 12:10); and Deuteronomy 25:4 commands that the ox that treads the grain shall not be muzzled — it shall be free to eat and not be tantalized by proximity to food it cannot have. Exodus 23:11 commands that "the seventh year you shall let your (land) lie fallow, (so) that the poor ... may eat, and what they leave the wild beasts may eat." Furthermore, whoever sees an ass lying collapsed under its burden shall help that animal up to its feet — even if it happens to belong to an enemy (Exodus 23:4), and on the sabbath "you shall rest (so) that your ox and your ass may have rest," (Exodus 23:12).

The writer of Ecclesiastes 3:19-21 ponders sadly that both humans and animals suffer, and that what becomes of their souls remains a mystery to us, and the Book of Jonah ends with God telling Jonah he will not destroy Nineveh, out of pity for its tragically simple people "who do not know their right hand from their left," "and also out of pity for its (many) cattle." "I am compassionate" says God (Exodus 22:27), — and this is the God I would want on my side, and on whose side I would want to be.

The "into thy hands are they delivered" covenant was made by God with Noah, and Noah was "a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God." (Genesis 6:9) Not from Noah could it have been expected that such an appalling abuse of power would take place as now sees millions of animals suffering agony and dying for the lucrative giant industries of ruthless commerce and pseudo "science." As for the rest of us, the terse command "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13) lists no exceptions.

Which side God is on may be debated at length with no answer being found that will satisfy everyone. Finally, it is clear to people of conscience that this question must inevitably be addressed to ourselves: which side am I on? — and we must then take responsibility for our answer and the conduct which flows from it.

Esther Klein
Gloucester

THE ANIMALS' CHAMPION

On October 4 many churches throughout the country will commemorate the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of peace and animals, with vigils, special masses, and animal blessing services. St. Francis, whose gentle, guileless nature reflected a vision in which all humans and animals would live in loving harmony, would be encouraged, were he alive today, by the progress being made on behalf of animal rights.

Born Francis Bernadone in Assisi in 1181, he was the son of a prosperous milk merchant, steeping himself in the music, poetry and romance of the troubadours of medieval times before renouncing his wealth and devoting his life to the deliverance of the downtrodden — the poor, the needy, the afflicted, and, yes, the birds, beasts and fishes of the land.

Just as the words "racism" and "sexism" are considered by reasonable people as representing dehumanizing, destructive attitudes, St. Francis, a man more of action than quixotism, similarly railed at what is now termed as "speciesism" as a bigoted and immoral concept. His memorable text, "Song of the Creatures," a paean of praise to the oneness of nature, was testament to his life's work:

*"Lord, make me an instrument
of thy peace.*

*Where there is hatred, let me
sow love;*

*where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy."*

A man before his time, St.



St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio

Francis espoused many causes that have become associated with modern-day sensibilities — environmental protection, compassion for the poverty-stricken, and animal rights, to mention several. In the defense of animals he rebuked the contention that God gave man dominion over the creatures of the earth by writing: "Animals, like men, derive the life of thought, will and love from the Creator, and, therefore, stand hand-in-hand before God."

A symbol of courage to all who fight for the rights of sentient creatures, St. Francis believed that animals feel pain, experience the emotions of joy, fear, grief, anger, and share the love and closeness of family relationships — in essence, as Professor Tom Regan has stated, that life

cannot be disassociated from form.

St. Francis, who founded the Franciscan order of Monks—now numbering over 100,000 in the United States — firmly believed also that intelligence was not the exclusive gift of humans, but that animals, too, were endowed with a special ability to reason. Stories are now legendary of his unique faculty to relate to the creatures of the earth in a rational manner. The account of the man-eating Wolf of Gubbio, perhaps, offers the most striking example.

The Wolf for many years terrorized the citizens of the Italian city of Gubbio with his predatory attacks — he was mysteriously impervious to any weaponry used to subdue him. Recognizing that the Wolf's nefarious ways had sprung from hunger, St. Francis approached the Wolf and promised that the townspeople would provide food for him as long as he lived if, in turn, he would agree not to harm human or beast. The story goes that the Wolf bowed his head in acceptance of St. Francis' offer, and for the rest of his life respected the covenant, going from house to house every day for food in the friendly way of a pet dog, until he died of old age.

There are those who scoff at this story, dismissing the Wolf of Gubbio as nothing more than a savage beast, while at the same time vigorously asserting that humans — including vivisectionists — are just and compassionate. Yet these people fail to mention the cruel and barbarous acts — murder, rape, torture — that humans perpetrate on one another.

St. Francis died at age 44, blind and in severe physical distress. However, a year before his death he left a credo for all reasonable people to follow when he wrote in his famous *Canticle of the Sun*: "Not to hurt our humble brethren (the animals) is our first duty to them, but we have a higher mission. God wishes that we should succor them whenever they require it." ■ ■



The World Is Not A Theme Park

CHINA'S FORMER LEADER MAO ZEDONG ONCE DECLARED war against sparrows, believing they were a pest and a nuisance. In response, millions of Chinese took to the streets, banging on woks and pans to terrify the birds. The idea: force them to stay aloft until they dropped dead of exhaustion. They did just that. The campaign was halted after an infestation of caterpillars, now freed of their feathered predators, devoured the crops, enveloped the trees and rained down upon pedestrians. In that same grand tradition of meddling with nature, Alaska has declared an air war against hundreds of wolves in an effort to boost already abundant populations of caribou and moose. And all to impress hunters and tourists. Never mind that when herds swell, starvation is often close by. Even as Alaska prepares to wage its war on wolves, conservationists in the lower 48 states seek to reintroduce them.

Chalk another one up to mankind's micromanagement of nature. Recklessly arrogant and myopic, Alaska's decision is rooted in special-interest economics, not biology. It's all the more distressing for what it tells us about ourselves as a species and our estrangement from nature. Alaska's folly is the product of a theme-park mentality in which nature exists for our amusement, to be enhanced by adding one species and subtracting another. An indiscriminate assault will kill off pack leaders, leaving wolves in hierarchical disarray, and harm eagles, foxes and wolverines, which dine upon the carcasses wolves leave behind. Such contempt for natural order is nothing new, though it comes at a time when many Americans belatedly question both nature's recuperative powers and the human species' claim to a divine right of subjugation.

So long as our species behaves like a spoiled only child, allowing parochial economic, political and leisure appetites to define the landscape, nature will deny us the thing we crave most—a sense of belonging. To extend Groucho Marx's line, we would not join any club that would have us. Rarely accorded a standing of its own, nature is forever cast in anthropocentric terms, reduced to a prize in the simplistic consume-or-

conserve debate. There is nature as the winsome obstacle to development, as the romanticist's favored tableau, even as the butt of ridicule by sophisticates who fault it for a lack of subtext or irony—contrivances of the human mind. What value nature has, and it is not our place to say, may be that to its dying day it will be oblivious to our attentions.

Even as we consume and alter, we erect stage sets to mask the loss. Many Americans today mistake as wilderness the ersatz version to which they have become accustomed. Where once there were forests, now there are tree farms, monocultural stands of uniform height and genetic stock. In a word, a crop. Many anglers cast into rivers and lakes devoid of native fish. Stocked European brown trout and transplanted rainbows ply America's streams, with native brook and cutthroat trout in retreat. Bighorn sheep and other game herds are shunted about for the hunter's delight.

There is no end to the effrontery of Americans. In Arizona a mutant Chinese grass carp, the sterile triploid amur, has been released into the ponds and water hazards of golf courses to keep the water free of entangling weeds lest golf balls be lost or the scenery spoiled. An African fish, the tilapia, cruises irrigation canals devouring any growth that might impede the water flow, but it endangers the Colorado River's sport fish. Coast to coast, European starlings darken the skies. A century ago, the first few were released in New York City by a reader of Shakespeare bent on sharing with the New World every species mentioned by the Bard. Today millions of starlings consume and defile America's crops and terrorize its native bluebirds. So too, we have inadvertently unleashed an invasion of plants, among them, kudzu, hydrilla and water hyacinth.

Yet the more we Americans monkey with nature, the more we seek assurance that somewhere it is beyond our tinkering. To a world idling in traffic, "Alaska" strikes a primal chord. Our longing expresses itself in catalogs full of the back-to-nature look and in the popularity of films like *Dances with Wolves*, *The Last of the Mohicans* and *A River Runs Through It*, viewed by urban audiences sitting elbow-to-elbow in the dark. Most will never know what it is to be dwarfed by an old-growth forest, spy brook trout sipping mayflies or hear a wolf howl. For many, such subtle communion has been replaced by the stridency of environmentalism, a full-blown crusade, and by dire appeals on behalf of distant rain forests and a bestiary of endangered species. In these alliances, those remote from nature draw comfort that though embattled, the wild still exists.

But that struggle will be won or lost closer to home, within human beings themselves. To progress from nature's despoiler to its custodian, we must first redefine our place in—not over—nature, accept the role of resident rather than architect and resist the temptation technology affords us to mold a world responsive to our whims alone. Alaska, which once sanctioned the shooting of polar bears from the air, now dreams of creating a second Serengeti, fulfilling the fantasy of those who begrudge nature its sparseness and exquisite balance. This is more than bad biology, and it is sadly fitting that it should befall the wolf. A majestic symbol of the wild and a victim of man's relentless efforts to eradicate what he cannot control, the wolf is the very embodiment of our conflict with nature. In the skies over Alaska, when the rifle barrels slide out the helicopter windows and take aim at the first frightened wolves below, mankind will once again demonstrate its awesome power, and yes, its ignorance as well. ■

FROGS CROAK WARNING TO MANKIND

An international task force has been set up to investigate the worldwide decline of the frog population which some environmentalists claim is the first sign of impending danger to the human race.

A Port Elizabeth researcher, Dr Bill Branch, has been invited to be the Southern African regional representative on the task force.

Dr Branch is editor of Southern African Red Data, a book on reptiles and amphibians which lists endangered species.

His role on the Declining Amphibian task force of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature is to assess the frog situation in South Africa.

"We are not frog freaks, we are concerned about the environment," he said this week.

"Frogs are the first to suffer when the environment is under stress. One reason is that they are based both in water and on land. They also have permeable skins (making them vulnerable to absorbing pollutants). Frog populations, therefore, are a good indicator of environmental health.

"If one monitors frogs, one is monitoring environmental quality. Their decline affects a host of smaller animals such as insect populations, and one short step away are human beings".

VULNERABLE

Last year Dr Branch attended a symposium in California,

where analysis reports showed that the decline in frog numbers was a global phenomenon.

Factors in the decline included pollution, human consumption of frogs and because frogs' spawn was vulnerable to ultra-violet mutation because of the hole in the ozone layer.

"Even in protected environments like national parks frogs have become extinct.

"If one surveyed the Kruger National Park I would not be surprised if frog numbers were declining. Parks are not divorced from the rest of the world," he said.

CULLING

Frogs, which eat hordes of insects, are an important means of natural pest control and as the frog population declines insect pests become much more noticeable.

"One classic case is India and Pakistan which export large numbers of frogs to the US and France. In 1985, 12 000 tons of frog legs were exported, which is equivalent to 240 million frogs. That's a lot of frogs," he said.

As a result of this drastic frog culling, India had to import large amounts of pesticide to combat insects. The poison, in turn, kills more frogs.

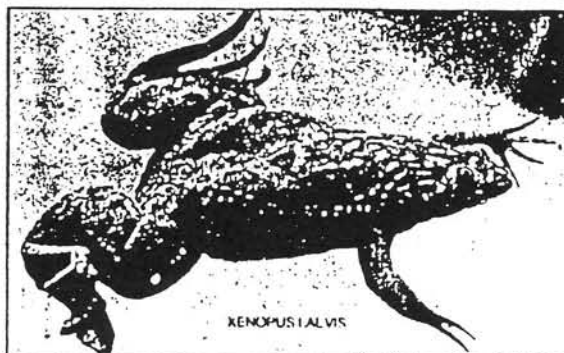
"First, we have to glean anecdotal information like reports from naturalists and wildlife groups, and we would like to make an appeal to the public and wild-life organisations to contact the Port Elizabeth Museum if they have any information on frogs," said Dr Branch



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FRIENDS OF FROGS

When 10-year-old Daniel Doerpholz and five friends from Mosier Elementary School in Massachusetts realized that the frogs in a polluted creek where they played were dying, they hopped into action. The group of fourth graders cleaned all the trash from the stream and performed very gentle first aid on frogs cut by broken glass and rusted pipes. The boys then wrote a 36-page report on the incident called "Let the Frogs Leap Again," which earned them a presidential "Award for Excellence." All frogs should be so lucky!

ANIMAL DEFENCE LEAGUE OF CANADA
P.O. BOX 3880, STATION C, OTTAWA, CANADA
K1Y 4M5

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
May 18, 1993

THE ANIMAL DEFENCE LEAGUE OF CANADA (ADLC) calls for HUMAN/ANIMAL KINSHIP WEEK to be established and observed the second week in April of each year.

The ad below appeared in The Ottawa Citizen on May 1, 1993.

Esther Klein, spokesperson for ADLC quotes the League's Patron, the great humanitarian Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who said: "[Humans] must have a boundless ethics which does not limit itself to [humans] but which includes the animals also."

HUMAN / ANIMAL KINSHIP WEEK



Photo: Voice of the Voiceless

**Our Patron
Dr. Albert Schweitzer,
and friend**

THE ANIMAL DEFENCE LEAGUE OF CANADA

joins our patron, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, in his philosophy of Reverence for Life. 1993 and annually hereafter during the second week in April, **we will encourage the public celebration of human/animal kinship. Animals' recognition of our kinship has been demonstrated since antiquity.**

At Historic Murray Premises in St. John's, Nfld. is recounted the story of **George Harvey's Newfoundland dog** which in 1832 was taken out in a skiff during a gale and sent into the raging sea to save 163 people on a sinking ship. The dog was overwhelmed, but persevered and finally grasped the rope thrown to him from the ship. He brought it back to the skiff almost dead of exhaustion, and thus were **"163 souls saved!"**

In Houston, Texas a few years ago, **the pet pig of a 12-year-old boy** drowning in a lake rushed into the water and swam to him. He grabbed her leash and **she towed him safely to shore!**

In 1991, in a Bangladesh village **a baby swept out to sea** by a tidal wave was **delivered back by a dolphin** which caught and carried the baby back in its mouth.

Is it right for us to exploit and oppress animals for commerce, sport, entertainment, and the huge biomedical research and food industries?

For more information, please contact **THE ANIMAL DEFENCE LEAGUE OF CANADA**, POB 3880, Stn C, Ottawa, Ont., K1Y 4M5. Membership: Annual \$10.00; Life \$50.00. Donations to offset the cost of this ad will be gratefully received. We are a non-profit organisation.

For further information please contact
Esther Klein, Tel: 613 233-6117

Food for Thought on "Eco-Ethics":

Extracted and paraphrased by editor, From Talk given April, 1993, at Carleton University, Ottawa, Ont., by Captain Paul Watson, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, Santa Monica, CA., U.S.A. [and p. 37, Earthforce!, 1993, Chaco Press, 5218 Donna Maria Lane, La Canada, CA 91011]

"There are five laws of ecology:

1. **All Life is Interdependent.**
Example: In 1681 the Dodo bird was hunted to extinction on the Island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. Because the seeds of the Calvaria Major tree on Mauritius must pass through the gizzard of the Dodo bird in order to germinate, this tree will go extinct too. Other species depend for food and shelter on the Calvaria Major tree, and when it dies out, so will they. Careless action perpetrated in 1681 is still having detrimental effects to this day.
2. **Biodiversity Must Be Protected.**
All life is interdependent. The strength of an ecosystem is determined by its range of diversity. The more diversity, the more damage it can withstand before crashing.
3. **The Law of Finite Resources. [finite support systems or "carrying capacity"]**
When a species exceeds the capacity of its support systems to support it, it goes extinct or severely reduces its numbers. The carrying capacity for us is being temporarily increased because of the sacrifice of all other species which we are causing to go extinct for us every day. [i.e. deforestation by cattle-raising and logging companies, causing near-extinction of animal and plant life such as forest and jungle trees, vines, plants, apes, tigers and rhinoceros; whaling, dragger fishing and oil spills wiping out sea birds, whales, turtles, cod and salmon, and on and on ...]
SPECIES EXTINCTION: The number of species we will lose in this generation is more than we have lost over the last 65 million years.
4. **The Preservation of a Species takes precedence over the interests of anyone or any other species to exploit it.**
But: For trying to protect gorillas, Diane Fossey was murdered.
For trying to protect lions, Joy Adams was murdered.
For trying to protect the Rain Forest environment, Chico Mendez was murdered.
5. **No One Has the Right to Pollute The Communal Planet.**
But: For trying to protect the environment from nuclear bomb fallout and radiation, Greenpeace ship's photographer Francisco Perrera died when French government agents deliberately sank the ship.
For trying to preserve clean land and water for Nigeria's poor population, activist Ken Saro-Wiwa was murdered by the Nigerian government.

Distributed by: Animal Defence League of Canada
POB 3880, Stn C, Ottawa, Ont, K1Y 4M5
(613)233-6117

ANIMAL DEFENCE LEAGUE OF CANADA
P.O. BOX 3880, STATION C, OTTAWA, CANADA
K1Y 4M5

Position Paper on

PET SHOPS

The ethical position of the Animal Defence League of Canada is that animals have rights, in that they are conscious beings that experience both pain and pleasure. It further recognizes that they are harmed not only by the infliction of pain but also by being deprived of their freedom and their natural way of life. This position rejects the view that animals exist as resources to be exploited for human benefit, and that as such their mistreatment does not matter. It affirms that animals have the right, equal to that of humans, not to be treated in ways that cause them pain, deprivation or death. Non-human animals fall within the sphere of moral concern of human beings.

Animals have the right to be free from interference as they pursue their own well-being and develop in the course of time as nature determines their evolution. They were not put on earth to serve human needs.

Just as humans can thrive only in favourable conditions, so it is for animals. When their habitat is not diminished, polluted or otherwise ruined, and when they are not harassed, trapped, and under overwhelming attack, their enjoyment of life is evident, as when otters play, kittens and pups play and nurse happily, families of apes relax together, dolphins and whales leap out of the ocean exuberantly, and so on. As the centuries pass, both humans and other animals evolve along the lines that nature determines for each species.

Sometimes humans and animals develop a friendship. For instance, humans may put out peanuts and squirrels may come to eat them, gradually becoming quite tame and climbing on the human or responding when called. The squirrel is free to either come or not -- as it decides, and to leave when it wishes. It is not under the control of the human, nor is it dependent upon the human.

But it is very wrong to deliberately take an animal out of its natural environment where it is taking care of itself under reasonably good and salutary conditions, to put it through the stress of being captured and transported elsewhere. Often family groups are left behind to grieve for its absence and its support is missed in that family group, such as in chimpanzee and monkey families. If the mother is captured, babies are left behind to starve and die. Apart from this many animals die in the capturing process and during transportation. Then to sell it to someone with no assurance that the buyer either knows how to look after it or will indeed continue to look after it once the novelty wears off can be a terrible misfortune for the animal.

Even if the buyer gives it the best of conditions, if these conditions require caging a once-free bird or animal, and if the animal will now be forever solitary without its natural wild companions, it has been traumatized and has suffered a great loss. To take a parrot from the jungle and deprive it of its freedom, its companions, the smells of foliage and rain, the sight of sky and breezes and the ability to swoop among the tree boughs is, we think, a sad thing.

To capture a creature knowing that it will not be as well off at its destination as it is in its natural environment is wrong. For instance, the capturing of whales and dolphins which normally swim hundreds of miles daily, and then are confined to aquarium tanks which are the equivalent of a bathtub to these mammals, is cruel beyond words. They die within a few years -- a fraction of the life span they are known to have in their natural habitat.

It is sadly true that humans have been encroaching on animal habitat, taking more and more of their land, and polluting the rest, to the point where for example gorillas are forced to retreat further and further, higher and higher up the mountains to where it is too cold for them and where some die of pneumonia; other animals die for lack of natural shelter, food and water availability.

In such situations, if we want to help these animals, then we have a choice of working for political action to protect their environment and sometimes to relocate the animals. If in some desperate circumstance the only solution is to capture the animal for a zoo, sanctuary, wildlife refuge, etc. then that should certainly be a last, very last, resort, because it is the least beneficial of the help which can be brought to these animals. (It is analogous to rescuing humans from some war-torn country, only to leave them in refugee camps where they may hope for better conditions someday, somewhere, but there is not much prospect for it.)

As for breeding animals for sale in pet shops, there are several points to consider. When cats and dogs are deliberately bred (i.e. breeders, puppy and kitten mills, etc.) and to sell them through pet shops, the consequence is that cats and dogs which might have been obtained from humane societies and shelters have to be destroyed instead, for lack of homes to take them in. Is it right to deliberately breed animals when there are already too many for the homes available? We think it is not right.

By breeding birds, turtles, snakes, cats, dogs, or other creatures to come into the world and be sold in pet shops are we providing good prospects for all these creatures? Will the turtles and goldfish mostly die miserably for lack of responsible care, the cats and dogs cause greater numbers of their kind to be destroyed in humane society shelters and pounds, the snakes and reptiles cause problems by either escaping or growing so large they have to be destroyed, or end up dying for lack of appropriate conditions and care?

Pet shops usually focus on the pleasure humans find in interacting with pets -- but it is only recently that consideration has been focussed on what the pet experiences, and whether this is a fair deal for both parties. Unfortunately, it is too often very unfair to the pet, who fares badly due to human irresponsibility and/or ignorance of care.

An animal deliberately brought into the world, bred to be someone's "pet", leaves him at the mercy of his owner. Ideally in the wild he is an independent creature, born into an environment which is natural to him and therefore provides for him, in what we recognize as nature's balance of predators and prey and vegetation. There they are nobody's "pet". They suffer the vicissitudes of fate just as humans do.

Humans and other animals raise their offspring to be independent. In some cultures women have been socialized to be dependent upon men -- fathers, husbands or brothers -- but it is evident that where women have a choice they prefer to be independent. All creatures strive for independence with all the risks and benefits which that entails.

We have a moral obligation to help an injured, weak, or homeless creature by providing it with the means of staying alive such as when we open our homes to a stray or abandoned cat or dog. Then we are dealing with a sad reality. The sad reality is that thousands of dogs and cats are homeless and will end up being put to death in animal shelters or freezing, starving or being injured or killed. It is then an act of compassion to give such an animal a decent home.

We consider it right to care for animals which are vulnerable whether this is due to injury or having been domesticated to the state where they no longer can care for themselves. Any vulnerable creature, and particularly one which has been bred and socialized by human management to be vulnerable requires our compassionate care. We have to ask ourselves whether we consider it to be right to create such a situation in the first place, and whether it is right to continue to deliberately create vulnerable creatures.

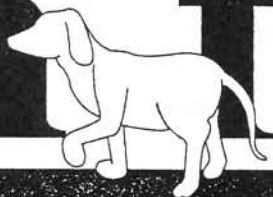
The greatest compassion for people is demonstrated by helping them to climb from their vulnerability to independence, and the same applies for animals.

For all the above considerations we would like to see pet shops move out of the commercial arena and be an outlet of a humane society or animal-concerned organization. Wild animals should not be available to the public from such an outlet. It should only offer to good homes animals which are homeless, or have been injured, or which otherwise need human help and compassion. The idea would be similar to that of an orphanage -- which cares for the needy and the helpless, but does not create them!

Animal Welfare



in focus



a publication of the canadian federation of humane societies
[102 - 30 Concourse Gate, Nepean, Ont., K2E 7V7]

Spring 1994

A NEW PET ADOPTION PARTNERSHIP

by Frances Rodenburg

Who is that friendly puppy in the window? In the Little Farm Pet Centre in downtown Ottawa, it is now a dog from the Humane Society of Ottawa-Carleton.

In an innovative partnership launched in February, 1994, Little Farm began selling only dogs and cats from the Humane Society. The program is modeled on the example set by several pet store chains in the United States which operate adoption centers for local shelters. Two traditional adversaries, humane societies and pet stores, are brought together in the hope of saving animal lives.

Humane societies adopt out tens of thousands of pets every year, but along with pounds, must also kill hundreds of thousands of unwanted animals. Pet stores, on the other hand, have never had to deal with the ugly necessity of euthanasia. With prime locations in shopping malls, and with large advertising budgets, they have many advantages over humane societies in selling their "product" to the public.

And where does this product come from? Puppies from commercial breeding establishments in the United States are a major source of animals for Canadian pet stores. The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies has worked with Agriculture Canada in the introduction of new puppy import regulations, with a view to ensuring puppies are healthy and do not come from puppy mills.

However, humane societies have long questioned why pet stores should sell U.S. puppies when there is a critical surplus pet problem in Canada. People who think they must have a purebred pet can easily purchase one from any number of reputable Canadian breeders. There is no need for pet stores to sell imported or even domestic purebreds.


Little Farm Pet Centre's staff have been trained in the Humane Society's adoption procedures, and all buyers will have to meet the same strict requirements as at the shelter, including mandatory spay or neuter.

All fees from animals sold at the pet store will be turned over to the Humane Society of Ottawa-Carleton, who carefully select the animals taken to the shop and closely monitor all aspects of the program.

Little Farm Pet Centre's prime location in a busy downtown mall attracts many visitors who might not travel to the Humane

Society. In the first three weeks of the program, all of the Humane Society's in-store animals were sold, and the location now can't keep up with demand.

Isla Turner, owner of the Little Farm Pet Centre says, "It is time for pet retail to move forward as a profession. We must work together to ensure the breeding, distributing and retailing of animals is done in an ethical and responsible way."

The Canadian Federation of Humane Societies will be watching this new program with great interest and hope. If successful, it will serve as a model for humane societies and pet stores in other communities. And rather than compounding the surplus animal problem, pet stores will assist humane societies in bringing together pets and people. 

Frances Rodenburg is CFHS executive director.



Shelagh MacDonald

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ANIMAL DEFENCE LEAGUE OF CANADA
P.O. BOX 3880, STATION C, OTTAWA, CANADA
K1Y 4M5

Excerpt from the ARIES Newsletter, Vol. 4 #10, October 1992, Rowayton, CT:

"MO: Governor John Ashcroft has just signed into law the Animal Care Facilities Act a.k.a. 'the puppy mill bill.' The law mandates the licensing and inspection of MO breeding facilities not currently licensed by the USDA -- shelters, dealers, pounds and pet stores. It also requires that dogs and cats be spayed or neutered upon adoption from shelters and pounds. National Society for the Protection of Animals Newsletter, Aug. '92."

Excerpt from Take Action, Vol. 3 No. 1, Spring 1993, Animal Alliance of Canada, Toronto, Ontario:

"From the ... B.C. government comes word of the introduction of Canada's first Pet Purchaser Protection Act. The legislation would set limits on the ages of animals which could be sold or imported as pets. It would also set penalties for pet stores or breeders if animals are sold which have health or behavioural problems. ... B.C. Premier Mike Harcourt and B.C. Minister of Labour and Consumer Services, Hon. Moe Siota, ... Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C., V8V 1X4."

The Animal Defence League of Canada urges that similar legislation be enacted in other provinces and territories. Contact your MPP to encourage him or her to work on it.

An Interview With Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, Ph.D.

Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, Ph.D., author (*When Elephants Weep* and *Dogs Never Lie About Love*), former psychoanalyst and professor of Buddhism and Sanskrit language and culture at the University of Toronto and University of California, Berkeley, is the co-chair of In Defense of Animals' (IDA) "They Are Not Our Property, We Are Not Their Owners" campaign. Along with co-chair, author Kristin von Kreisler (*The Compassion of Animals*), Dr. Masson is determined to elevate the status of animals beyond that of mere property. IDA spoke with Dr. Masson about how the property status of animals affects how they are viewed, and thus treated, by humans and on ways to achieve the goals of this revolutionary campaign.

IDA: *What first appealed to you about the "They Are Not Our Property, We Are Not Their Owners" campaign?*

JMM: I feel strongly that any campaign I am part of, as this campaign, starts with the right view, and the right view is "they," meaning any animal, are not our property. The inclusiveness of this campaign appeals to me; it's philosophically correct as opposed to politically smart, which often includes compromising one's own ethical position. Raising the societal status of animals beyond that of property is the next logical step in the evolution of our social ethic.

Although this is a campaign that does not require a lot of physical action by individuals, it has tremendous repercussions on the way individuals think and, thus, act. The "They Are Not Our Property" campaign requires people to rethink their individual philosophies and actions. It is akin to past social movements — like the Civil Rights and abolition movements — that called for a change in the way our society thinks. And, like these past social movements, the first step in eliminating oppression is raising awareness.

IDA: *When did you first realize that it is ethically wrong to "own" or sell animals?*

JMM: I think the sense that we should not "own" animals came to me when I would visit zoos. Because, I always had the feeling, "What gives us the right to take these animals and incarcerate them. Why do we have the right to do this?" And then people would say, "Well, we own them."

What do we mean we own them? How can we own someone? We don't own our children. Of course, there have been, and probably still are, men who feel that they own their children or they own their wives. It was legal; they were considered property, exactly as is the case with animals today. Now it's astonishing. How could people ever think that a child is their property, or a wife is property, or any other human being? But

people did believe that, and we've evolved beyond that. The same logic should now be applied to animals.

IDA: *What does it matter if people refer to themselves as "owners?"*

JMM: The goals of the "They Are Not Our Property" campaign go way beyond semantics to legally changing the property status of animals. However, the way people talk about animals truly matters. Language is no trivial matter, how we use it so often affects how we think and then how we act.

One of the goals of the campaign is to show people how we dishonor and harm animals with our language and actions. When people refer to themselves as the "owner" or "master" of an animal instead of as a "guardian," "friend," or "caretaker," they reinforce the institutionalized exploitation of animals.

Being a guardian implies care and compassion, whereas being an "owner" implies dominance and possession. When people think and act as guardians, they are less likely to abuse and abandon their companion animals. Their quality of care and sense of responsibility immediately increases to a point where companion animals are now truly members of the family. And, how can you "own" a member of your family?

When people evolve beyond the concepts of animal "ownership" and embrace the concepts of guardianship, it forces them, by definition alone, to act more responsibly. It's the concepts behind the language that truly matter. However, it is language that leads us to think and then act on these concepts.

There is another aspect besides the implications behind a change in language that I have not mentioned, and that is calling some people the "owner" of an animal is technically wrong. Through hard-hitting education campaigns, people have learned the benefits of adopting animals from humane societies and shelters. How can someone who adopts an animal be considered an "owner?" They can't. This doesn't happen when humans adopt children. Why then should it be the case with another life form? It can't. It is time, for the sake of the animals, that we rightfully use such terms as "guardians," "caregivers" or "family members."

IDA: *How will animals truly be helped if their status as property is elevated? Wouldn't their lives be the same no matter what they are called?*

JMM: Right now, because animals are the property of humans, their usefulness or benefit to society or their "owners" primarily determines their value. As a result, just as it once was with slaves, who were also considered legal chattel; animals can be used and abused at an "owner's" whim. This means that animals can legally be unmercifully forced to breed in puppy mills and on fur farms, confined to concrete jails in zoos and forced to "perform" unnatural acts in circuses.

Unfortunately, examples of how animals are affected by their property status occur daily. One such egregious incident, the killing of 17 cats at the Noah's Ark Animal Shelter, dramatically illustrates the critical necessity of elevating the legal status of animals.

Three teenage boys broke into the Noah's Ark Shelter and used baseball bats to brutally beat to death 17 cats. They were caught and, in fact, confessed to their crime. Oddly, the attitude in rural Fairfield, IA was "boys will be boys." The defense attorney used the strategy that the cats were unwanted strays; therefore, because no one had purchased or "owned" the cats, they were of no value to anyone. Our legal system basically only recognizes animals as having value as property. Since Noah's Ark couldn't prove the cats had value beyond what it would have been if they were bought or sold; the court ruled in favor of the three perpetrators and gave them extremely lenient sentences.

This terribly tragic and all too common incident sheds some very interesting light on how our society views, and thus, treats animals. It seems very clear to me that these cats had more value than their monetary worth. The three boys illegally broke into the shelter and killed 17 living, breathing, feeling beings. Why didn't our society and legal system see it this way? Quite simply, it is because our society still views animals as property. Such atrocities will continue unabated until society grants animals a status beyond that of human property.

Currently, property rights, that is, the rights of the "owners," will always win out over the needs and interests of animals. This was seen in the past with slavery and other practices that our society now views with shame, and we will continue to see it in our relationship with animals unless we elevate their status. We have repeatedly seen how these past injustices have affected society; it is long overdue for humans to recognize the same inherent cruelty associated with the property status of animals.

IDA: *How would a humane society, SPCA or shelter benefit from endorsing the "They Are Not Our Property, We Are Not Their Owners" campaign?*

JMM: The animal protection community has done a wonderful job in promoting spay/neuter campaigns and is starting to spread the word about the evils of puppy mills and breeders. These campaigns have been successful in reducing the numbers of animals killed, but they do not go far enough. It is imperative, if we are ever to stem the seemingly continuous tide of homeless animals, to advocate the other half of the equation — encourage people only to adopt or rescue animals, never to buy them.

Besides the pragmatic reasons of reducing the number of animals in shelters and increasing the criminal penalties for animal abuse, there are philosophical reasons for rescue shelters to rid themselves of the language and actions of animal "ownership." As I said before, each time we, either individuals or especially humane organizations refer to animals as property, we are supporting the current oppressive system that allows for the wanton abuse, enslavement and oppression of animals. Our society must break out of this system if we are ever to see an end to the current exploitation of animals. This will not happen unless the animal protection community stops endorsing the current view that animals are the property of humans.

Even if humane societies and shelters have what they foresee as legal problems when referring to "owners" as adopters or legal guardians, the least they can do is put the word "owner" in quotation marks, or put "owner/guardian" on their forms and in their

literature. Once again, there are people who do not wish to be classified as an "owner" when they have adopted or rescued an animal. Most of the people I have come into contact with who live with companion animals, including me, view the animals as being part of their family. How can we "own" a member of our family? Obviously, we cannot.

IDA: *How can people help promote this campaign and elevate the status of non-human animals beyond that of human property?*

JMM: The success of every social movement relies on the actions of individuals. The first and most important step people can take is to rid themselves of the language and accompanying actions of animal "ownership." People must pledge only to adopt or rescue animals, never to buy or sell them, and always to refer to themselves as guardian, friend, caregiver or advocate, never as an "owner" or "master."

What's more, it is important that, once people have vowed to rid themselves of oppressive language and actions, they educate others. This goes beyond just telling your friends, family and colleagues, to urging veterinarians and shelters to rid their practices and literature of the words "owner" and "master," and replace them with advocate, family member, caregiver or guardian. Or, at least, to put "owner" or "master" in quotation marks, or "owner"/guardian. These seemingly minor quotation marks will serve to point out to people that there is something wrong with using such a word in reference to living beings.