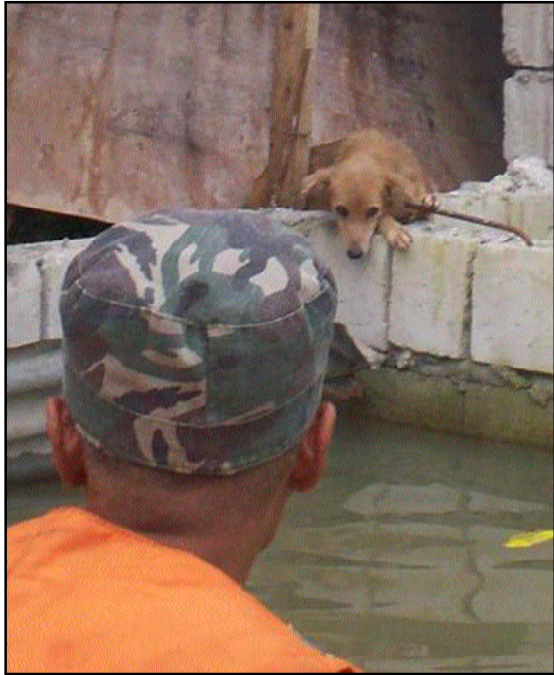


## Dogs & cats off the job—rats storm flooded Manila

**MANILA**—Rats may leave a sinking ship, but not a flooded city.

Humans, the pets they could carry, work animals, and many street dogs fled Manila, Rizal, and their suburbs by the thousands after tropical storm Ketsana dumped a



*Julia, a Manila dog about to be rescued. (Philippine Animal Welfare Society)*

typical month's worth of rain in only nine hours on September 26, 2009.

Cats and dogs who were not evacuated and found no escape routes climbed to high places, if they could, above the torrents, but water spilling over 80% of the Manila metropolitan area kept most of them wherever they ended up for at least the next four days, when the flood began receding. Some were stranded for weeks. Much of the metropolis was left to the rats and mice—and the Philippines are known for rat and mouse biodiversity, with 62 native mouse and rat species. Many are found in the greater Manila area, along with non-native but ubiquitous Norway rats and at least three problematic species who were accidentally imported from mainland Asia.

Norway rats, the Asian rats, and some of the native rats are strong swimmers and fast breeders, bold about invading human habitat, and quick to exploit food sources. And almost anything can be food to a rat, from abandoned groceries to moldy grain, garbage, and the drowned carcasses of other animals.

Rat population explosions often follow floods. So does leptospirosis, a flu-like illness which may be carried by  
(continued on page 10)

## No home on the range for wild horses

**WASHINGTON D.C.**—If

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar imagined his plan for wild horses would please anyone for long, he guessed wrong. Few wild horse advocates have had praise for any it, fiscal conservatives have slammed the projected cost of it, and almost nobody imagines that the Salazar plan will lastingly solve the problem of the Bureau of Land Management holding almost as many “surplus” wild horses in captivity as remain on the western range.

Salazar on October 7, 2009 proposed to U.S. Senate majority leader Harry Reid (D-Nevada) that the BLM should establish new federally owned facilities in the East and Midwest, at cost of \$92 million, to keep even more impounded horses.



*Polaris & Jet trot in the Pryor Mountains. (Makendra Silverman/Cloud Foundation)*

The two new facilities would complement five others on leased land in the west. The seven sites would together hold about 25,000 horses. About 7,000 would remain in BLM corrals, including those just captured and those up for adoption.

The Salazar plan also “includes ‘aggressive’ use of contraceptives, changing the sex ratio of wild herds, and possibly having gelding herds,” summarized Diane Tennant of the *Virginian-Pilot*. “The goal is to have 17,500 breeding wild horses on public lands,” among about 27,000 wild horses in all, Tennant added. “They would produce about 3,500 foals a year,” wrote Tennant, “which is about the number adopted each year,” at least recently. Before reforms were instituted to prevent bogus “adopters” from selling wild horses to slaughter, about 5,000 horses per year were adopted.

The ten westernmost states of the continental 48 presently have about 37,000 wild horses and burros on about 34.3 million acres of BLM land, down from 53.5 million acres that wild equines roamed when the 1971 Wild Free-Ranging Horse and Burro Protection Act made the BLM the often reluctant custodians of U.S. wild horses.

(continued on page 11)

# ANIMAL PEOPLE

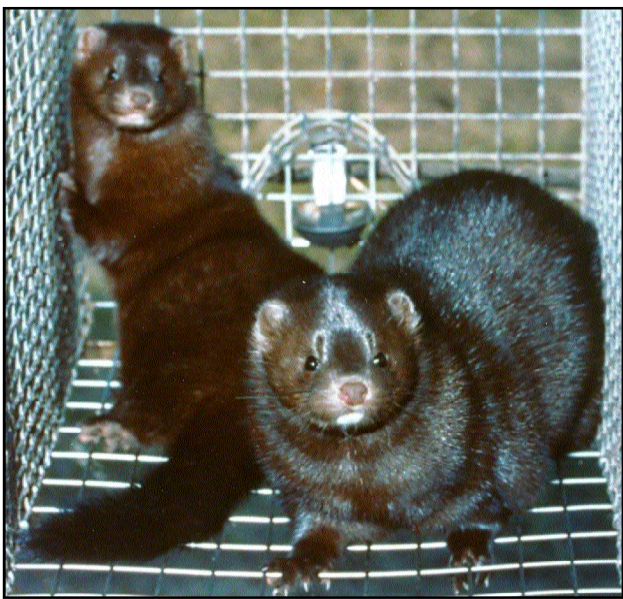
*News For People Who Care About Animals*

**October 2009**  
**Volume XIX, #8**



## Eyebrows raised over mink trade claims

**HALIFAX**—Photographers who have tried to focus on caged mink know they are in constant motion, even within a wire box barely bigger than they are. Anyone who ever handled a mink knows they are slippery as a mammal can be, likely to wriggle in any direction and inflict a deep bite to any exposed flesh. Fur farmers usually handle live mink only to kill them, and wear heavy gloves when they do.



*Mink at fur farm. (Anti Bont Comite)*

Thus Brian Medel of the Yarmouth Bureau of the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* raised an eyebrow when he read on the Aria Cosmetics Signature Mink Eyelashes web site that their products “are made of individually selected mink fur hairs that have been harvested by gently brushing live farm animals.”

Medel called People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals director of media relations Michael McGraw for a second opinion.

Understated McGraw, when he stopped laughing, “It’s very difficult to believe that mink are gently brushed to source this fur.” But even if they were, mink eyelashes sold at \$100 to \$250 a set—10% of the price of a typical mink coat—wouldn’t save fur farm profits, going into a second consecutive winter of anticipated restrained consumer spending.

The bad news about world mink production, for people who care about animals, is that about 43 million mink pelts will be marketed during the 2009-2010 “fur season,” three million more than 20 years ago.

(continued on page 9)



*Moon bears rescued from bile farms enjoy a dip in 2000 at the former IFAW sanctuary in Pan Yu, China. (Kim Bartlett)*

## Animal charities cut back programs in response to global recession

Downsizing to close a reported \$32 million income shortfall in fiscal 2009, the International Fund for Animal Welfare on October 18, 2009 closed the IFAW bear rescue center in Pan Yu, China. The last five resident bears were trucked 1,260 miles from southern Guangdong province to the Animals Asia Foundation bear sanctuary at Chengdu, in central Sichuan.

“We agreed that IFAW would pay for the transfer, and that we would then take over all expenses related to the care of the bears,” Animals Asia Foundation founder Jill Robinson told **ANIMAL PEOPLE**. “I have no idea what is becoming of the vacated Pan Yu sanctuary,” Robinson added.

Robinson was an IFAW consultant when she first saw the Pan Yu bears, in 1993, at a hospital-owned facility that tapped their gall bladders to extract bile, for processing into traditional medicines. Now believed to be in decline in China, the bear bile industry was

then still growing, after the basic methods were developed in North Korea—but commercialization had made keeping bears economically unviable for the hospital.

“Originally there were nine bears,” Robinson remembered. IFAW founder Brian Davies agreed to rescue them, to publicize and promote an IFAW campaign against bile farming. The Pan Yu property was leased, the rescue center was built, and the bears arrived in 1996—just before Davies retired.

Four years later Robinson spun off the Animals Asia Foundation as an independent charity, in order to build the much larger Chengdu sanctuary and extend campaigning against the bile industry to Vietnam.

“IFAW agreed to take sole charge of the Pan Yu bears,” Robinson said.

Since then the Chengdu sanctuary has “welcomed 265 bears into our little place of peace and love,” including the five bears  
(continued on page 8)

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A photograph of a man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a light green and white striped shirt, lying on a bed with a green pillow. A large, brown and white Boxer dog is lying next to him, its head resting on the man's face. The dog is wearing a green collar with yellow and red patterns. The scene is intimate and peaceful, set in a dimly lit room with a patterned rug visible in the foreground.

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Editorial feature

Dealing with deer—and appreciating them

At this writing hunting seasons are open on Virginia whitetailed deer in every state that has any. Whether the season is “rifle” or “archery,” “buck” or “antlerless,” open or limited to a specific locale, there is no state that has Virginia whitetailed deer in which reducing and limiting the growth of the deer herd is not a stated management goal, even where the management plan is still likely to accelerate herd growth.

This happens whenever and wherever so many bucks are killed that each adult doe has food enough over the winter to produce twin fawns.

Virginia whitetailed deer have been killed by hunters in unprecedented and usually rising numbers throughout most of their range for the past 30 years, even though the number of hunters has fallen by more than half over the same time. Despite the hunting toll, the Virginia whitetailed deer population probably remains higher than at any time in their existence as a species. Thus wildlife agencies resort increasingly often to culling deer. Sometimes sharpshooters are hired to bait and dispatch deer. Sometimes whole herds are baited, ensnared in nets that are dropped over them by rockets, and are then killed by captive bolt guns.

Virginia whitetailed deer culls are currently underway, planned, or have recently been conducted in at least 17 states. Deer were culled in another several states in 2007 and 2006. Few states that have Virginia whitetailed deer are not culling them somewhere, including many of the states with the most active hunters: Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Virginia whitetailed deer are native to the eastern two-thirds of the U.S. From the Rocky Mountains west, mule deer are the predominant species. There are parts of the west where mule deer are in decline, mostly due to climatic change, but in most densely populated areas, the issues involving mule deer are much the same. Mule deer are rarely culled, but talk about culling has begun, much as it began in reference to Virginia whitetailed deer proliferation in the 1980s, about a decade before culling became common.

East or west, culled deer populations are usually not the same deer who are hunted. Rather, they are urbanized deer, whose forebears migrated into suburbs and even large cities years ago, in part to escape being hunted. Sometimes suburbs expand into deer habitat so rapidly as to maroon deer in islands of undeveloped woodland, but more often deer establish themselves in a suburb anywhere from five to 20 years after subdivisions and shopping centers are built, when ornamental shrubbery and tree canopies have matured enough to provide deer with cover and food.

By now most communities within the continental U.S. have homegrown deer herds. Like most deer, urbanized deer seldom roam more than a mile from where they were born—but they were born among human dwellings and busy roads, and often have less fear of humans and human activity than the typical feral cat. Urbanized deer find adequate browse to support themselves—and ever more fawns—in greenbelts, parks, protected watersheds, the divider and buffer strips of transportation corridors, and often in wooded yards. Apart from culling, cars are their major predator. Coyotes prey to some extent on fawns, and kill deer who have been injured by cars, but tend to scavenge urban deer more than hunt them.

Pumas quietly hunt mule deer in the outer suburbs of most major cities from Denver west. Having discovered Virginia whitetailed deer, pumas of Rocky Mountains ancestry appear to be expanding their range across the upper midwest, according to DNA studies of specimens recently shot in several Midwestern states. With deer abundant, and since pumas are remarkably good at colonizing habitat without being seen, a continental puma recovery may be inevitable. There seems to be little opposition to the recovery of pumas in remote habitat, but pumas in urban and suburban habitat tend to cause alarm. Though pumas rarely harm humans, people are occasionally on the puma menu, and accordingly, pumas who are seen in proximity to human dwellings are almost always killed by public safety officials.

Stereotypically, pressure on wildlife agencies and municipal governments to cull deer begins with gardeners complaining about deer nibbling their flowers.

Certainly this happens, and certainly some gardeners take their fury to extremes, like Dorothy Richardson, 75, of Euclid, Ohio, who on June 15, 2009 beat a fawn to death with a shovel for having the misfortune to be born in Richardson’s flower beds. Pleading “no

contest” to a cruelty charge, Richardson on October 2, 2009 was fined \$500 and sentenced to do 80 hours of community service.

More often, though, governments believe there are serious human health and safety issues involved when they invest tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands of dollars in a deer cull, including in maintaining heavy security to keep away potential witnesses, protesters, and accidental victims of either sharpshooters or panic-stricken wounded deer.

Traffic safety is often a first consideration. Twenty years ago deer/car collisions killed about 100 Americans per year. Now, with even more deer at large and more cars on the road, the annual toll typically exceeds 200. Each death tends to turn whole grieving families into activists against perceived deer overpopulation.

There is also concern about the role of deer in spreading Lyme disease, erlichiosis, and many other tick-borne diseases. So-called deer ticks are actually carried mostly by mice and other small rodents, but deer tend to translocate the ticks into new habitat.

The average January temperature in the northern U.S. is now five degrees higher than it was 40 years ago. That predicts much more tick trouble ahead. As global warming moves the snowbelt north, and shortens the snow season, the range in which deer ticks survive the winter is expanding—and warmer springs exponentially increase the numbers of ticks who hatch successfully. Since tick-borne diseases are often debilitating and can be fatal, already killing thousands of people per year in the former Soviet Union and satellite states, controlling ticks may come to rival controlling mosquito-borne diseases as an epidemiological priority.

Finally, increasing deer numbers are a genuine songbird conservation concern. “Managing deer to suit hunters may be the major cause of vanishing songbirds,” **ANIMAL PEOPLE** pointed out in a March 1997 cover feature, examining the role of expanding deer herds in destroying the forest understory that many songbird species require as nesting habitat. This trend has accelerated in the dozen years since.

Also during the past 40 years, coinciding with both global warming and the increase of the Virginia whitetailed deer population, the estimated numbers of migratory songbirds in the U.S. northeast are down by as much as half.

Forest cover in Virginia whitetailed deer range has increased by about 33% over the same time, between the growth of suburban tree canopies and the reversion of marginal farmland to woodlots, but that is just the problem: the songbirds who are in trouble don’t nest in the treetops. They prefer shrubbery just a little bit higher than deer normally browse. When hungry deer stand on hind legs to browse higher, the birds lose their homes. There is still plenty of rural habitat with fewer deer for some bird species, but others rarely venture far beyond traditional migratory corridors, which have now been built over. If urbanized deer are heavily using the patches of potential nesting habitat that remain, the birds are doomed.

Contraception helps but isn’t magic

Unfortunately, from a humane perspective, there are as yet no attractive ways to control a deer population once it becomes problematic. Deer contraception by chemical means is now feasible, but will only gradually reduce a population that has grown enough to produce demands for culling. Further, the cost of administering contraception to deer is still prohibitive. This could change with the development of orally administered deer contraceptive vaccines—but that technology, though apparently not far away, is not quite here yet. Surgically sterilizing deer is far too difficult to do in a cost-effective manner.

Yet acknowledging these miserable facts scarcely constitutes an endorsement or even grudging acceptance of hunting and culling. Deer are problematic in part because management to please hunters long encouraged the present abundance. Neither hunting nor culling offers any lasting solution at all, since the habitat now occupied by deer will continue to provide food and cover enough for the survivors of any hunt or cull, no matter how intensive, to quickly breed back up to the carrying capacity of the habitat. If there are no survivors, most hunting and culling locations can be reoccupied by immigrants from less than a mile away.

Critical to realize is that the issue is not “deer overpopulation,” at least not from a biological perspective. If the situation was truly “overpopulation,” tens of thousands of deer would starve every winter, as occasionally occurred decades ago, when the winters were more severe and browse was less abundant, especially urban and suburban habitats. Under conditions of true overpopulation, deer would no longer be twinning. Within less than a year, with or without human intervention, deer numbers would drop back to carrying capacity.

Normal deer carrying capacity in favorable habitat tends to be from 15 to 25 per square mile. Densities of up to 70 deer per square mile are often counted in suburban parks. This could not occur if the deer were not finding food enough to sustain population growth.

So what can be done?

Quite a lot, if activism takes a long view of the situation. Activism in opposition to urban and suburban deer hunting and culling has historically been almost entirely reactive, beginning after efforts to lethally reduce deer numbers are already in advanced planning. Often licenses for “special” deer hunts have already been sold, or contracts have already been signed to hire deer culling agencies. At this point, intervention has small chance of success, not least because the hunting or culling is occurring in response to political mobilization by people who feel there are too many deer, and some may have compelling grievances.

The time for activism against urban and suburban deer hunts and culls is actually before grievances against the deer mount—or after the deer population has been temporarily reduced by a hunt or cull, when the aggrieved parties are temporarily satisfied, public officials are paying the bills for the killing, and there may be opportunity to introduce contraception, in particular, as a way to keep the excessive deer abundance from recurring.

Only deer can prevent forest fires

Better educating communities about the ecological roles and behavior of deer can avert considerable deer/human conflict, and buy time for contraception to work.

For example, more than half of all deer/car collisions can be avoided—some researchers say 70%—if drivers are taught to always slow down if they see a deer leave the roadway, and look for a second deer about to enter. This is because younger deer tend to follow their mothers for a year or more, even after reaching adult size, while mature bucks often live in small bachelor herds until mating season. If the elder lead deer crosses a road safely, the deer following behind will take that, not the absence of traffic, as the cue to step out.

Probably the least appreciated aspect of urban and suburban deer populations is their role in fire prevention. With due respect to Smokey Bear, Bambi is the animal champion of fire defense. It is no mere coincidence that the wildfires burning out of control in southern California in August and September occurred where drought had depleted mule deer, while the warming and drying trend in the Northeast and Midwest has yet to produce many big fires.

The difference is that where deer are abundant, forest understory is consumed by deer, instead of drying out to be consumed by flames. The browse lines created by deer, alarming as they are to birders, are natural firebreaks. Without understory to serve as kindling, helping flames to leap into tree canopies, grassfires reach the moisture-holding humus layer beneath the trees and die. Even when the humus layer is dried by prolonged drought, there is rarely enough fuel in it to ignite bark and wood.

There is conservationist concern that deer in some habitats are stripping out understory so much as to prevent forest regeneration, as well as songbird nesting—but forest fires do much the same damage. If the deer population is within the normal range, browsing activity merely ensures a forest of diversified age.

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# LETTERS

## Sacrifice in Nepal

The largest open air animal sacrifice in the world will start on November 24, 2009. Can you picture 7,000 young buffalo being rounded up and killed by a thousand drunk men carrying large knives? A festival where 200,000 animals are killed to please a goddess?

This will happen, if nothing is done to prevent it, at the Gadimai Festival in Bariyarpur, Bara District, Nepal. The festival is held every five years. The mass sacrifice turns the entire area into a bloody marsh.

Animal Welfare Network Nepal wants to end this practice. We are trying to raise awareness about the animal cruelty aspects, and to point out the health risks.

(Gadimai in 1994 introduced the goat plague called *peste des petits ruminants* to Nepal.)

A growing number of Nepalese religious groups also oppose the sacrifice. The young religious leader Palden Dorje plans to bless the animals.

The majority of devotees who attend the sacrifice come from Bihar, India. According to Nepali campaigner Avantika Regmi, many Biharis bring animals to be sacrificed because they live near the Bodhagaya temple, where killing animals is now prohibited.

—Lucia de Vries

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We invite readers to submit letters and original unpublished commentary—please, nothing already posted to a web site—via e-mail to <anmlpepl@whidbey.com> or via postal mail to: **ANIMAL PEOPLE**, P.O. Box 960, Clinton, WA 98236 USA.

## Dog attacks

Thank you for publishing the common sense commentary “Dog attack deaths & risk of lightning,” by Alan M. Beck, in the September 2009 edition of **ANIMAL PEOPLE**.

I get so sick and tired of people putting dogs ahead of children and others who are badly hurt and disfigured by dog attacks. Many humane organizations adopt out dogs knowing full well that they are very apt to bite, attack, or severely hurt someone in the community if circumstances are not just perfect. I will *never* understand that philosophy, and no one loves dogs more than I. Thanks to Alan Beck for stating what should be the obvious.

—Nicky Ratliff

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## Alan M. Beck replies:

Thank you for your kind note. The humane community seems not to acknowledge that the same types of dogs who attack children also attack other dogs.

## Jakarta carriage horses

Since the beginning of 2009, the Jakarta Animal Aid Network has asked the municipal government to establish better standards for carriage horses. With **ANIMAL PEOPLE** help we have also educated drivers about horse care, trained ten former drivers to become farriers, and provided free medical treatment to the horses. Twenty horses from Kemanggisan area, where the horses were kept under pitiful conditions, were relocated to new facilities we built on land loaned to us by a private person.

Effective on October 29, 2009 the use of carriage horses in central Jakarta has been banned. Now the owners may sell their horses, or may continue to use their horses elsewhere. We estimate that about 60 horses will be sold for slaughter. We hope to step in and provide these horses with sanctuary for life, while continuing to help the horses who remain in service.

—Femke den Haas

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## Activist research project

I am currently working on my HBA from Brock University. I am a sociology major and am enrolled in a course entitled Critical Animal Studies, facilitated by longtime **ANIMAL PEOPLE** reader John Sorenson, Ph.D. For this class I am conducting a research project entitled “How to Identify and Resolve Problems When Attempting to Start an Animal Rights Group.” I am asking participants in my study to identify and describe any problems they encountered, and to explain how they resolved these problems. I am asking volunteer participants to please respond before November 11, 2009 for a formal invitation.

—Todd Charles Ceccekin

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## Spring Farm Cares project eight years later

The October 2002 **ANIMAL PEOPLE** article “Street dog & feral cat sterilization and vaccination efforts must get 70% or flunk” mentioned that “In Clinton, an upstate New York town of just 6,000 people, the sanctuary Spring Farm Cares financially assisted 25,000 dog and cat sterilizations between September 1999 and July 2002, working with private practice veterinarians scattered throughout a six-county rural area.”

“What was the result?” recently asked Animal Rescue System Fund founder Hiro Yamasaki, of Kobe, Japan.

Spring Farm Cares cofounder Bonnie Reynolds offers an update:

Our Happy Hearth Spay/Neuter Program program has sterilized 55,000 dogs and cats since 1999, mostly cats.

When we started, very foolishly, we sent vouchers anywhere in the country. Realizing that this approach was a total waste, could never show any results, and would not ease our local problem, we began to serve only a local six-county area.

We then became aware of a project done in the capital district of Albany, New York. They found, if I recall correctly, that it took about nine years of intensive high-volume sterilization to bring their feral/stray/pet population under control. We therefore began focusing exclusively on Oneida County, where we are. This includes the cities of Utica and Rome, many villages, and an extensive rural area. We began our focused approach in June 2004, so we have a way to go before we expect to see definite signs of stabilization. In 2008 we thought we were

beginning to see a difference, as “kitten season” started later than the previous year, but we ended up taking in almost as many orphans and nursing or pregnant strays. (If a cat comes in heavily pregnant, we do not abort the kittens.) However, our two local humane societies saw large drops in the numbers of stray cats they took in.

Unfortunately, the economic downturn—and resultant staggering number of pets being dumped or turned in by people who can no longer afford to keep them—is skewing all observation. Kitten season started even later in 2009 than in 2008, but we have taken in twice as many cats and kittens, with no real way to know how many are due to the economy.

In addition to the Happy Hearth program, six volunteer veterinarians and about 30 volunteers help us conduct monthly neuter/return clinics for feral, stray, and barn cats in spring, summer, and fall. This program treats an average of 500 cats a year. We also sterilize about 30 pet rabbits a year. Altogether, we spend about \$200,000 a year on spay neuter.

Are we making a difference? We have no definitive answer. But we wonder what our local situation would be like if we had not managed to get tens of thousands of animals fixed!

—Bonnie Reynolds

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CARS is a commercial fundraiser; required notice of solicitation on file at the State of Washington office of Secretary of State; potential donors can obtain financial disclosure information on CARS via Secretary of State 1-800-332-4483.

## Tunisian work animals

I was recently in Tunisia and was disgusted by how many Tunisians treat their working animals, especially horses and camels. Every day I saw horses who were skinnier than I am, pulling carts all day in the dreadful heat. I also witnessed a few deprived camels while I was on the Sahara desert. I could not see any source of water or food for these poor creatures, and noticed one camel's nose was bleeding from his ring. I do not agree with animals being used as an income source, but if one must, at least look after them and provide for them properly!

I carried apples and oranges with me everywhere I went, so I could feed the poor animals on the streets, as their owners didn't seem to care. I spoke to a horse rider one day and when I told him it was cruel to use horses for entertainment, he said that he is just making a living. If he doesn't get paid, the horse doesn't get fed. I was appalled to hear that.

—Sheila Bolger

County Tipperary, Ireland  
<sbolger81@hotmail.com>



## Editor's note:

The plight of Indonesian and Tunisian work animals is similar to the plight of working animals everywhere. Students of the transition from use of animal power to mechanical power noticed in the U.S. and England a century ago, and now observe abroad, that the most successful animal users, whose animals get the best care, tend to exchange animals for motor vehicles first—chiefly because they can afford to buy motor vehicles first. As the transition proceeds, the quality of animal care tends to diminish among the remaining animal users.

Tunisia is among the African nations where the price of fodder reportedly soared due to competition from makers of biofuels in 2008, just as the global economy collapsed.

The British-based Society for Protecting Animals Abroad, working in Tunisia since 1925, operates three veterinary centers and three mobile clinics there. They treat about 12,000 animals per year. However, says the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization, Tunisia has 57,000 horses, 230,000 donkeys, and 231,000 camels in need of care.



## Please Help Me Heal

### My name is Sage.

I'm about 3 years old, and I'm a Mutt-i-grec<sup>TM</sup> - a Greyhound mix. By nature, Greyhounds are contoured, sleek and built for speed. But regardless of how fast I may be, I had nowhere to run to, nor the strength to even try. As you can see, I have been starved, neglected and abused. My gentle, trusting nature made it easy for someone to mistreat me. I weigh only 33 lbs., when I should weigh about 60 lbs. I have burns in different areas all over my body. These burns are from sitting in my own urine for an extended period of time. Urine is highly acidic and left me with terribly painful burns.

Right now I'm being treated in the Animal League's Help Me Heal Program. I'm being seen by doctors who are running many tests to help bring me back to health. They are giving me hydration, food, antibiotics and more love than I ever thought possible. I never knew life could be so filled with love and comfort.



To help continue the care for Sage and help other animals in our Help Me Heal Program, visit [www.AnimalLeague.org/help-me-heal](http://www.AnimalLeague.org/help-me-heal)

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# What to call cats, & why their name matters *Commentary by Merritt Clifton*

In the beginning of the mass media era was just the word "cat." Cats were on the land and over the land, but cat-related controversies were as seldom seen as cats themselves, in an urban ecology then dominated by ubiquitous street dogs. From the debut of rotary-printed newspapers in the mid-19th century, cats by any name were not a visible problem for more than 60 years. The sum of reportage and editorial attention to cats in the entire 19th century was slight: just 192 items published in U.S. newspapers mentioned "stray cats," according to NewspaperArchive.com, which makes accessible the newspaper holdings of the Library of Congress. "Alley cats" were mentioned 32 times. The term "feral cat" was not used at all.

1910, however, was perhaps the worst year for the image of cats in more than two centuries, since cats were last commonly condemned as alleged "familiars" of "witches." In 1910 the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that outbreaks of rabies, diphtheria, tuberculosis, and smallpox had been traced to "alley cats" consorting with free-roaming pets.. "As much danger lurks in a cat as in a rat," the USDA warned.

Controlling disease by tracing vectors and trying to eliminate them was already an old idea. This had been a primary pretext for the medieval purges of alleged witches and familiars, which actually had the net effect of purging whole regions of traditional healers, and of extirpating one of the first lines of community defense against disease-carrying rodents. Dogs consumed as many rats and mice as ever, but they could not go everywhere a cat can. Millions of people died because cats were persecuted.

The USDA in 1910 was trying to be scientific, but despite having gained a basic understanding of the roles of microbes and viruses, the USDA scientists still understood disease transmission only slightly better than the judges at witch trials. Among the then-common epidemic diseases that the USDA attributed to cats, only rabies is actually easily transmissible by cats, and then only if the cats have had exposure to other rabid species. As cats are not the host species for any rabies strain, they are not a primary rabies vector.

"The stray cat therefore not having the proper atten-

tion should be exterminated," recommended the *Washington Post* in 1913. "Some physicians are in favor not only of exterminating the stray cat but of isolating the pet cat when there is disease present."

Then as now, people concerned about cat proliferation scared themselves and others with exaggerated estimates of feline fecundity. "One stray cat will bring from ten to 50 kittens into the world," projected a syndicated article published by many Midwestern newspapers in 1912. The tendency to exaggerate continued even after John Marbanks conducted exhaustive research to put the U.S. population of stray cats at circa 10 million in 1927, 20 million in 1937, and 30 million in 1950. The gist of Marbanks' findings was that cats were occupying habitat left by a declining population of street dogs, at the rate of about three cats moving in to replace each dog who could no longer make a living after refuse was mostly buried or burned, sewers were enclosed, and automobiles replaced animal-powered transport, resulting in an urban environment much less congenial to dogs.

Birders decrying cat depredation and hunters clamoring for an open season on cats responded to Marbanks by insisting that the cat population at large was closer to 80 million.

"It is our duty to eliminate the vagrant or feral cat," editorialized the *Indiana Progress*, of Indiana, Pennsylvania, on May 5, 1920. This appears to have been the first use of the term "feral cat" in U.S. public discourse. The second use was no more cat-friendly: "There can be but one solution to the feral cat problem: shoot the cat wherever you find him," recommended the *Connellsville Daily Courier*, also of Pennsylvania, in 1931.

"Feral cat" did not catch on. "Stray cats" turned up in 8,602 articles published between 1900 and 1991; "alley cats" appeared in 17,662 articles; "feral cats" were mentioned only nine times before 1950, and just 74 times more in the next 40 years.

The *Fremont Argus*, of Fremont, California, published the apparent first mainstream definition of "feral cat" on August 21, 1971: "A feral cat is any domestic pussy that has

been neglected or abandoned by its owner and returned to a state of nature. It hunts to live. Mice make up a large portion of its diet."

The presumption that most feral cats once had a home, now known to be false, was a carryover from common perception of "strays." The term "stray" is derived from the words "astray" and "estray." The former means "out of place," while the latter is the legal definition of an animal found at large. "Stray," accordingly, connotes an animal who should be somewhere else, under human care.

Consigning cats to an alley, humble though the habitat is, suggests that the alley is their natural place.

Though "stray cat" and "alley cat" have always been used more-or-less interchangeably, to describe the same animals, "strays" have never gotten good press.

Conversely, "alley" cats have often been mentioned in favorable and even admiring contexts, even when "strays" were least accepted. A Mrs. Freeman, for instance, defended alley cats against the USDA denunciation in 1910 by contending that she had been "just a plain scrawny little alley cat herself in a past life," according to the *Logansport Reporter*, of Logansport, Indiana. Alley cat exhibitions meant to improve the image of homeless cats were held as early as 1928, apparently beginning in Massillon, Ohio.

Paradoxically, animal advocates of the mid-20th century campaigned for the use of "stray." This appears to have begun with efforts to get people to take responsibility for cats they fed and tolerated in their yards and under their porches. A "stray" cat was a waif who should be adopted, according to humane literature of the era. An "alley cat" was believed to be much less likely to find a home—or to remain in one.

There was also an aesthetic aspect to the argument. Contended a Miss Miller of Chicago to various media in 1941, "The term 'alley cat' is not a nice way to designate cats."

Unfortunately for many millions of cats, the gradual ascendance of "stray" over "alley" coincided with intensified efforts to kill them. "Alley" cats were largely left alone by

(continued on page 6)

## MORE LETTERS

### Surgical mutilations

Thanks for a great editorial in your September 2009 edition, "Time to stop declawing, ear-cropping, & tail-docking." Sadly, as you point out, many people who love animals do not realize how these procedures hurt the animals. They do not see the connection between the behavior problem that develops and the cosmetic or convenience surgery.



—Bonney Brown  
Executive director  
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### Jere Alexander

In response to your allegations regarding Jere Alexander (*ANIMAL PEOPLE*, September 2009, "Barking over Animals and Society fellowship,"), the Human-Animal Studies Summer Fellowship is part of a larger project to increase the presence of HAS in academia and develop present and future scholars as a resource for the reexamination of animal issues. Selection criteria for the fellowship are limited to academic qualifications. It is beyond the scope of the program to vet for nonacademic activities. The pool of 4-5 applications for each of the seven positions is evaluated by a committee of seven HAS scholars.



—Kenneth Shapiro, P.h.D.  
Executive Director  
Animals & Society Institute  
Ann Arbor, Michigan  
<ken.shapiro@animalsandsociety.org>

### Editor's note:

The associations of Alexander with dogfighters were extensively exposed in multiple articles in fall 2008 by the Atlanta Journal Constitution, readership 2.2 million.

### MBE winners

The July/August 2009 *ANIMAL PEOPLE* article "Kenya SPCA director awarded MBE" listed eight animal advocates who have been named to the Order of the British Empire since 1998, but omitted Jenny MacGregor, chair of the Society for the Welfare of Horses & Ponies in Monmouth, U.K., who received MBE recognition in 2005.

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# What to call cats, & why their name matters *(from page 5)*

“dogcatchers” in the first half of the 20th century, despite the antipathy of birders, hunters, and the USDA. Available records indicate, however, that more “stray” cats were purged by animal control agencies and humane societies in the 33 years between 1950 and 1983 than in the whole 331 years that cats were actively persecuted in medieval Europe, from the Great Plague of 1334 through the London Plague of 1665.

## Maverick Cats

The next big change in public perception of cats—and public policy toward cats—began with the 1982 publication of *Maverick Cats*, by Vermont architect Ellen Perry Berkeley. In original definition, a “maverick” is a heifer gone “estrays.” Looking critically at the concept of “stray” as applied to cats, Berkeley argued that cats are by nature less a domesticated species than easily tamed wildlife.

Berkeley described three states of being of cats: true ferals, who have never lived with humans; cats who are dependent upon humans; and actual strays, who once depended on humans but were abandoned or lost. Many cats move back and forth among the categories, Berkeley acknowledged. However, she established that the most resilient outdoor cats, most resistant to extermination, are the true ferals. Their numbers are regulated by the abundance of prey and extremes of climate, as are the numbers of other wild predators.

Like coyotes, feral cats respond to persecution by raising larger litters, more often. Because cats have evolved the fecundity of a prey species, they can usually reoccupy a habitat from which they have been extirpated faster than rival predators can arrive and breed up to the vacated carrying capacity. Lastingly reducing the feral cat population can accordingly be done only by either eliminating their food sources or by inhibiting their fecundity.

Feral cats live mostly on mice. Humans have sought to exterminate mice since the dawn of civilization, without success sufficient to deplete the cat population through lack of food. Thus further reducing the feral cat food supply is unlikely in most of the places where feral cats persist. Neuter/return, however, is an effective brake on fecundity.

To what extent *Maverick Cats* influenced the first large-scale practitioners of neuter/return in the U.S. is difficult to say, since hundreds of individuals had already quietly sterilized thousands of cats in quiet private projects, some of them underway as of 1982 for as long as 25 years. What can be said

is that *Maverick Cats* gave neuter/return a theoretical foundation and an oft-cited scientific canon.

The first well-documented feral cat neuter/return project in the U.S. appears to have begun at Stanford University in California in 1988, led by Nathan Winograd, then a Stanford undergraduate, now director of the No Kill Advocacy Center. But it was not immediately influential, and for the first several years of the project Winograd described the cats as “stray” rather than “feral,” a term then still rarely applied to cats.

On October 16, 1991 Louise Holton and Becky Robinson formed the national advocacy group Alley Cat Allies, after working together to sterilize a cat colony inhabiting an alley in Washington D.C., and after extensive discussion of the ideas in *Maverick Cats* with Kim Bartlett, then editor of the *Animals’ Agenda* magazine, and myself, then the *Animals’ Agenda* news editor.

Soon afterward Bartlett initiated a neuter/return project that handled 330 cats in seven months from eight colony habitats in northern Fairfield County, Connecticut. This project, closely monitored and extensively publicized, in May 1992 became the first activity of **ANIMAL PEOPLE**.

As Holton and Robinson mostly used the term “alley cat” at first, the Connecticut feral cat project appears to have introduced prominent use of the term “feral” cats. Alley Cat Allies was quick to recognize that “feral” was gaining acceptance. When Alley Cat Allies began organizing an annual day of cat awareness activity to mark their formation, it was called “National Feral Cat Day.” This day now attracts more media notice than many “days” declared by humane organizations that are decades older.

From 1920 through 1991, according to Newspaper-Archive, “feral cats” had been mentioned in U.S. daily newspapers just 134 times. From 1992 to October 2009, “feral cats” have been mentioned 11,615 times—2,000 mentions fewer than “stray cats,” but 3,000 mentions more than “alley cats,” the prevailing term before 1990.

About 70% of the cats killed in U.S. shelters are now said to be “feral.” Nonetheless, the advent of high-volume neuter/return has held the toll of cats killed in shelters during the past decade to about two million per year. This was approximately 25% of the toll in 1990 and less than 10% of the peak reached in the early 1970s.

Neuter/return was and remains the tool used to effect this dramatic drop in shelter killing. The concept encouraging

the humane community to accept neuter/return was that a substantial part of the “stray” cat population are in truth ferals, as capable of looking out for themselves as any other wildlife. Animal advocates may not want them to be at large, for a reasons including preventing predation on wildlife and avoiding the risk that the cats will be cruelly treated. Yet feral cats are now widely appreciated as anything but the miserable helpless waifs depicted in earlier humane literature, who must be killed for their own good because they cannot survive outside of a kind human home without unnatural suffering.

## What dogs have to do with it

While this transition in perception of feral cats was underway, the rest of the world was approaching through a process of parallel evolution a whole new approach to rabies control and coping with street dogs.

Historically, street dogs have usually been tolerated as a constant if occasionally problematic presence, between rabies outbreaks. In response to rabies outbreaks, dogs were and often still are killed in great numbers, but street dog populations inevitably rebound from massacres within a matter of months—like feral cats—and have usually been ignored after rebounding until the next rabies episode.

Three developments are gradually changing the paradigm for street dogs, decades after each was introduced.

First, longtime Blue Cross of India chief executive Chinny Krishna in 1966 began demonstrating neuter/return of street dogs. Krishna was so far ahead of his time that even the U.S. then had only one low-cost dog and cat sterilization program. Thirty years elapsed before Krishna’s approach became the official policy of the city of Chennai, but within another year his Animal Birth Control program became the national policy of India. Krishna’s original ABC program, augmented by others, had by 2006 eradicated rabies from Chennai. Parallel programs eradicated rabies from Jaipur and Visakhapatnam. Federally subsidized ABC projects are now underway throughout India. ABC meanwhile became national policy in Costa Rica in 2001, and in Turkey in 2003. Similar programs are underway in many other parts of the world.

Before sterilizing and vaccinating street dogs could become accepted, animal control officials had to learn—and accept—that traditional high-volume killing had never really quelled rabies outbreaks, and that a new method was neces-

*(continued on page 7)*

## Gangetic dolphins in zoo?

**NEW DELHI, PATNA**—Created to protect the Ganga River and tributaries, the Ganga River Basin Authority debuted on October 5, 2009 by declaring Gangetic dolphins the Indian national aquatic animal, on a motion by Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar. The action gives Gangetic dolphins status equivalent to tigers, the national animal, and peacocks, the national bird. As few as 1,500 Gangetic dolphins remain in the Ganga basin.

“Gangetic dolphins represent the health of the rivers, particularly the Ganga,” explained national environment and forest minister Jairam Ramesh. Only in office since August 2009, Ramesh has rapidly developed an animal-friendly reputation—but he stepped into hot water at a Wildlife Week function just a day later by pledging to “ensure that the Gangetic dolphin is kept in the Delhi Zoo, for creating awareness among visitors about the importance of the species.”

The Delhi Zoo has no dolphinarium, Delhi Zoo animal care has often been controversial, and People for Animals founder Maneka Gandhi, who twice held Ramesh’s portfolio in the 1980s and 1990s, has for more than 30 years fought efforts to introduce dolphinariums to India.

Citing the Ganga River Basin Authority motion, Nitish Kumar on October 8, 2009 ordered the Bihar state police to stop dolphin hunting and captures.

## SeaWorld theme parks pass from brewery to entertainment group

**SAN DIEGO**—The private equity firm Blackstone Group and Anheuser-Busch InBev jointly announced on October 7, 2009 that Blackstone will buy the 10 theme parks belonging to the Busch Entertainment Corporation for \$2.7 billion—including the SeaWorld marine mammal parks in San Diego, San Antonio, and Atlanta, the Discovery Cove swim-with-dolphins attraction in Orlando, and the Busch Gardens zoos in Florida and Virginia.

“Blackstone owns half of Universal Orlando and all of Merlin Entertainment, a British company that runs theme parks in Europe, Legoland in the United States, the London Eye Wheel, and Madame Tussaud’s wax museums,” reported *St. Petersburg Times* staff writer Mark Albright. “Blackstone pledged minimal changes, no consolidation among its diverse parks for now, and retained management at all 10 Busch parks.”

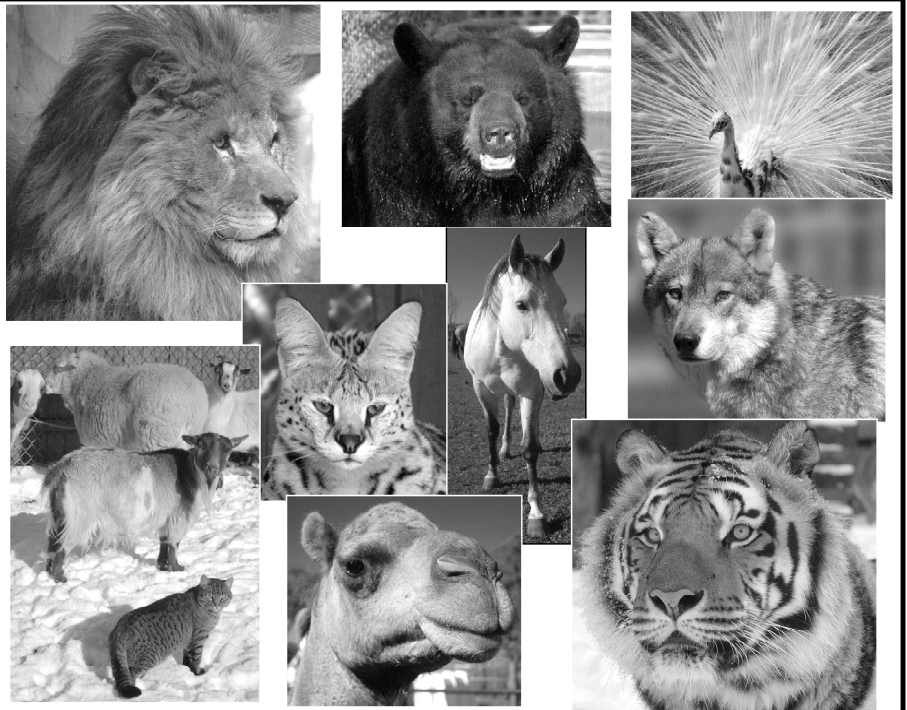
Busch Entertainment had 2008 income of \$1.4 billion. Blackstone borrowed \$1.3 billion to complete the deal. Unknown is whether Blackstone will continue SeaWorld support of the Hubbs-Sea-World Research Institute and marine mammal stranding rescue beyond present com-

mitments, and whether SeaWorld might sell parks or animals to help pay down the debt.

“We have been watching this for some time. It’s too early to know if it’s going to be business as usual for these marine mammals with jobs,” marine mammal captivity opponent Ric O’Barry told **ANIMAL PEOPLE**.

“So far it’s business as usual,” said SeaWorld senior scientist Daniel Odell.

The Busch Entertainment empire began with a petting zoo begun by Auggie Busch as a gathering point for people beginning tours of the Tampa brewery he built in 1959. His son August Busch bought SeaWorld in 1989. Founded in 1965, the SeaWorld chain then included four marine mammal parks. The former SeaWorld Ohio was sold to Six Flags Entertainment in 2001, and was closed in 2004.



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## ANIMAL PEOPLE Holiday Nut Roast

### Mix together:

2 pounds of firm tofu, mashed well  
2 cups of coarsely chopped walnuts  
(Other nuts may be substituted, such as sunflower seeds or pecans.)

### Thoroughly blend in:

1/4 cup of soy sauce  
2 teaspoons thyme leaves  
1 teaspoon basil leaves  
2 tablespoons of dried parsley or 1/2 cup of chopped fresh parsley  
1 finely chopped onion  
1 teaspoon minced garlic

(Seasonings may be altered to suit preferences. For example, a teaspoon of sage may be added, or you may add more garlic)

### Finally, add:

1 cup of dried breadcrumbs  
1/2 cup of whole wheat flour

Mix all ingredients well. Turn into oiled pan(s) and form into a 1-inch thick loaf. Rub the top of the loaf with a very thin coating of olive or other vegetable oil. Cover the

pan(s) with foil, and bake for one hour at 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Take the foil off the pan and cook about 10 minutes longer, until the top of the loaf is browned. The loaf tastes best when crispy.

Serve with cranberry sauce, apple - sauce, or apple butter. Good with vegetarian gravy and cornbread dressing (you can adapt any traditional recipe by simply substituting vegetable broth or water for the customary meat broth).

### Vegan cornbread

#### Mix dry ingredients:

1 cup white flour  
3 Tablespoons sugar  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 cup corn meal

#### Mix wet ingredients:

1 cup of soy milk  
1/4 cup vegetable oil

Stir the two mixtures together until fully moistened. Turn batter into oiled square or round cake pan. Bake 20-25 minutes, until just brown, at 350 degrees.





# What to call cats, & why their name matters (from page 6)

sary. As animal control agencies worldwide mostly work under public health departments, the impetus to change directions had to come from public health directors.

A breakthrough came in 1983 from William G. Winkler M.D., of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Wrote Winkler in the National Academy of Sciences' handbook *Control of Rabies*:

"Persistent trapping or poisoning campaigns as a means to rabies control should be abolished. There is no evidence that these costly and politically attractive programs reduce either wildlife reservoirs or rabies incidence."

Winkler referred to botched efforts to control the mid-Atlantic states raccoon rabies pandemic of 1976-1996. Triggered by trappers and coonhunters who translocated several thousand raccoons from a rabies area in Florida to the Great Smokey Mountains of West Virginia, the pandemic advanced for 15 years at the rate of about 50 miles per year, while wildlife agencies in state after state tried to stop it by urging trappers and coonhunters to kill more raccoons.

The pandemic was at last stopped by deploying oral rabies vaccine pellets, bio-engineered to attract raccoons and be activated only by raccoons' digestive systems.

A decade of controversy after Winkler wrote, the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians conceded in the 1994 edition of their annual *Compendium of Animal Rabies Control* that "Continuous and persistent government-funded programs for trapping or poisoning wildlife are not cost effective in reducing wildlife rabies reservoirs on a statewide basis." Similar passages have appeared in each subsequent update of the *Compendium of Animal Rabies Control*.

The conceptual leap to recognizing street dogs as wildlife was accomplished in the mid-1980s by Oscar Pedro Larghi, M.D., of Argentina. First Larghi eradicated rabies in the cities of Buenos Aires, Lima, and Sao Paolo by vaccinating from 60% to 80% of their estimated dog populations during a series of three-month neighborhood blitzes. Then his vaccination teams eradicated canine rabies entirely from Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay by vaccinating more than a million dogs. As the Larghi project was not followed up, and not accompanied by a vigorous dog sterilization program, all three nations again have vulnerable dog populations. Canine rabies has reappeared in two remote corners of Argentina.

In addition, since routine animal control dog-killing continued where Larghi worked, his results are not unequivocal proof of the efficacy of mass vaccination in lieu of killing. Nonetheless, Larghi showed that vaccinating street dogs under developing world conditions can be done with great success.

## "Community" animals

Among the first to notice were Calum N.L. MacPherson, Francois X. Meslin, and Alexander I. Wandeler, who in 1990 co-authored *Dogs, Zoonoses, & Public Health*. Updated several times, this is still a much-used standard reference.

Before writing the book, recalls Meslin, who heads the rabies control division of the World Health Organization, "We defined through a WHO consultation held in the late 1980s the terms and categories of animals, mostly dogs, in relation to rabies control or elimination, along a continuum from 'fully owned' to 'strictly feral,' acknowledging that all states in between might exist under certain circumstances."

The purpose of the consultation was twofold. One purpose was to establish priorities for response. The other was to harmonize the terminology that might be used by anyone working to control any disease carried by street animals—dogs, cats, monkeys, pigs, whatever.

The animals of most concern to the public health sector are those who both have frequent contact with humans and roam at large, able to contract and spread disease from a variety of sources. Strictly feral animals are of concern if they have contact with animals who associate with people, but are considered to represent a much lower order of risk than animals who themselves seek—or accept—human contact.

The WHO Steering Committee for Rabies Control in Asia in 2003 did not even mention feral dogs in defining the three categories of dog who are of most concern:

*Community dog: A dog without a single owner and cared for by the community.*

*Pet dog: A dog owned by a household.*

*Stray dog: An ownerless dog, free roaming and not cared for by any household in a community.*

The main distinction between a "community" dog and a "stray" is that the "community" dog is fed by people who do not otherwise take responsibility for the dog's well-being.

A pet dog might be vaccinated, de-wormed, and kept away from contact with diseased animals. A stray dog may welcome human contact, but not receive much.

The "community" dog represents the top priority of concern because this dog is neither protected from disease as much as a pet might be, nor likely to avoid humans if ill.

Since 2003, "community" animals, primarily dogs, have been the subject of nearly four times more international public health alerts and peer-reviewed papers about zoonotic disease control than "feral" animals.

But the humane sector and the public health sector communicate surprisingly little, even though both are integrally involved in both animal control and disease control. Except in India, where Meslin coordinates activity with the Animal Welfare Board of India, WHO works chiefly in nations with underdeveloped humane networks—or none.

On October 16, 2009 the Best Friends Animal Society marked National Feral Cat Day by announcing a campaign to rename yet again the animals who have been variously recognized as feral cats, stray cats, and alley cats.

"Best Friends believes that the needs of free-roaming cats and the issues surrounding them—which exist in every community—are best encapsulated in the term 'community cats,'" asserted Best Friends "Focus on Felines" campaign specialist Shelly Kotter. "These homeless cats are the result of a failure in the community—unneutered housecats who wandered away from home, cats abandoned when the family moved, or cats who have never been socialized to people," continued Kotter. "None would be on the streets if people had spayed or neutered their pets and kept their cats safe."

Best Friends turned out to be unaware that their argument paralleled the arguments made against "alley cat" and in favor of "stray cat" more than half a century earlier.

## Public health concerns

Of more serious concern, Best Friends also turned out to be oblivious to the established meaning of "community" as applied to animals by the public health sector—a sector with frequent influential input into every hospital, most medical doctors' offices, and political decision-making processes.

The USDA, when it recommended feral cat extermination in 1910, had a mere fraction of the reach and credibility that public health policy makers enjoy today. Indeed, the 2008 *USA Today*/Gallup poll rating the honesty and ethics of workers in 21 different professions found that nurses, pharmacists, and medical doctors rated first, second, and fourth.

Fortunately for feral cats, the U.S. public health sector has in recent decades mostly not joined wildlife conservation agencies and advocacy groups in seeking cat extirpation from outdoor habitat, and has mostly been sympathetic toward efforts to ensure that feral cats are vaccinated and sterilized.

The sympathetic neutrality of the public health sector is no small consideration for neuter/return practitioners, since just one anti-cat organization, The Nature Conservancy, by itself receives annual donated income amounting to about half of the total income of the entire U.S. humane sector.

The U.S. public health sector is concerned about many diseases, besides rabies, which have recently been associated with feral cats and have killed people, especially the immune compromised. Among these diseases are Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome, bubonic plague, the H5N1 avian flu, bartonella, caliciviruses, distemper, hantaviruses, toxoplasmosis, and a variety of nasty ailments carried by ticks.

Most of the human fatalities linked to contact with feral cats have occurred abroad, but U.S. public health policy makers are aware that the U.S. has far more cats per capita than most of the rest of the world, and there is some misapprehension—chiefly due to exaggerated activist claims—that the U.S. feral cat population is six to ten times larger than it really is. Inherent in using the term "community cats" is the risk that some of the public health sector will understand the introduction of "community" in place of "feral" to mean that the formerly small, isolated, and scattered feral cat population has become a larger and more dangerous reservoir of potential disease vectors, like the "community" animals abroad.

"You make good and probably historically accurate points," conceded Best Friends cofounder Francis Battista, "but we have transited the point where public policy operates independently of public opinion, and unless cats start flying into jet engines like Canada geese, your nightmare scenario is about as likely as a return to population control by mass drowning. In the U.S.," Battista claimed, "animal control agencies no longer operate outside the scrutiny of public watchdogs and pets

enjoy significantly higher status than in countries where culling and poisoning are accepted."

Yet, though the U.S. now kills only about a sixth as many homeless cats and dogs per year as 40 years ago, the U.S. still kills more than the whole of Europe, and more than India did at peak.

"Community cats" is an appropriate term," Battista continued, "for precisely the reason that the cats do belong where they are, not because we say so, but because the residents of the communities concerned say so. In Jacksonville, Florida, for example, free-roaming cats are trapped, neutered, vaccinated, microchipped and returned to their colonies by animal control officers, not just feral cat caregivers. If they come back into the shelter system, they are returned to the colony identified on their chip. Community satisfaction surveys run at 90% positive. Rather than cause deaths," Battista said, "the 'community cat' solution in Jacksonville has seen a 50% reduction in shelter cat deaths, simply because neuter/return has been owned at a community level."

Added Best Friends chief executive and fellow cofounder Gregory Castle, "Why do you think it is that epidemiologists, who apparently use scientific methods, continue to buy into and promote anachronistic, fear-based ideas about zoonotic diseases being spread by cats? If there is any statistical evidence of this, it pales into insignificance compared to other, real public health threats. It would be better if they looked at facts rather than derive facts from terminology."

## Epidemiologists comment

Hoped F.X. Meslin of WHO, "If a human community accepts and partially even indirectly supports a population of feral spayed/neutered 'wild' cats, then those may be considered 'community owned,' rather than pests, as an integral part of that community's environment, as are red foxes in many suburban areas of western Europe."

But Centers for Disease Control Prevention rabies control chief Charles Rupprecht agreed "in large measure" that introducing the term "community cats" may increase apprehension that cats at large are a disease vector.

"In practical terms 'feral' and 'community' are opposite ends of a length of string," said Louisiana State University epidemiology professor emeritus Martin Hugh Jones.

"I had no idea that Best Friends was so misguided," said Texas A&M University professor Tam Garland, who advises the Department of Homeland Security about agricultural defense. "I completely agree with you," Garland said, "regarding the problem this is going to bring down on all of us. It will change the dynamics of populations and result in a flurry of euthanasia, trapping and killing and a lot more panic about some diseases, such as rabies," Garland predicted.

"I completely agree with you on this one," echoed medical transcriptionist and cat rescuer Judith Webster, of Vancouver, British Columbia, who has a foot in both the epidemiological and animal advocacy worlds. "If 'feral' cats become 'community' cats," Webster said, "this would have serious implications for disease control, given the many viral diseases cats harbor, or have been found to catch and potentially spread. The term 'community' positions feral cats in a high-profile role in relation to likelihood of interaction with domestic animals and people."

"Community cat" is terminology conducive to lumping abandoned pet cats and feral cats in the same category," Webster added, "which is probably the single biggest problem in negative perceptions of feral cats among normal people, not including conservation biologists. The term 'feral cat' needs to be rigorously used, not be confused with abandoned pets."

In particular, Webster worried, to people outside the public health sector, "'community cats' sounds so positive. Therefore, it might encourage dumping and abandonment. If the community is supposed to care about 'community cats,' why worry if your cat is outside at night, or gets lost? Why even look? Your cat will at worst join other community cats, indeed be free at last, and the community will take care of her. Also, calling them 'community cats' to me seems as if they are being presented as a positive and welcome addition to a city or environment. It seems to me that this is losing sight of the goal of feral cat management, to eradicate the population by attrition in the most humane way possible."

Alley Cat Allies chief executive Becky Robinson apparently learned that feral cats were to become "community cats" from **ANIMAL PEOPLE**. Robinson acknowledged the success of the Jacksonville program, but wondered whether the use of "community" would obscure the distinctions among true feral cats, outdoor pets, and strays.

"Some established national groups, from the beginning of neuter/return in the U.S.," Robinson recalled, "wanted people to be forever responsible for colonies. Eventually caregiver and colony registration were advocated, requiring feeders and caregivers to be nothing less than owners, as if the cats were in their homes. We demonstrated and wrote about how some cats just live in an area, sometimes with a caregiver, but often not. Feral cats survive usually from our dumpsters and hunting small rodents."

What will become of the term "community cats" and what actual influence it may have remains to be seen. Putnam County, Florida cat rescuer Bonnie Carolin has suggested to Best Friends and **ANIMAL PEOPLE** that all of the positive connotations of "community" could be obtained, without running afoul of any history, by using the term "neighborhood cats" instead. Those who believe changing the names of cats might help could give it a try.

But as virologist Charles H. Calisher told **ANIMAL PEOPLE**, "Redefining doesn't change anything in the real world. If cats are on the loose they are a community problem," the dimensions of which may be debated but not denied.



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### **Animal charities cut back programs in response to global recession** (from page 1)

from IFAW, "and we're hopeful that the Chinese government will keep its promise of more to be rescued before the end of the year," Robinson said.

#### **Feeling the pinch**

While economists project that the world economy has begun improvement, after two years of recession, animal charities of every size are still feeling the pinch, and can expect to feel it until toward the end of 2010. This is because charitable giving tends to be a "lagging indicator," increasing mostly after donors enjoy improvement in their own financial affairs.

Small animal charities are coping with more animals who need help at the same time donation amounts are down. Large animal charities, have these same problems, in addition to diminished fundraising capacity, because they have often lost substantial cash reserves that formerly generated the interest and dividends. Ironically, state laws passed decades ago to protect charities from losing their assets through bad investments have kept some of the wealthiest animal charities in the world from spending down their reserves to maintain program services, leaving smaller charities to pick up the slack.

The Massachusetts SPCA, struggling with a \$15 million shortfall in anticipated revenue and a loss of \$11.5 million from reserves, responded by closing three shelters in 2009. All three were soon reopened by other entities. The former MSPCA shelter in Springfield was sold to the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society for \$1.2 million in April. The former Martha's Vineyard shelter was leased to a new charity called Animal Shelter of Martha's Vineyard. The former Metro South adoption center was on September 15, 2009 leased at no charge to a coalition called the Animal Protection Center of Southeastern Massachusetts.

The MSPCA still operates shelters in Boston, Centerville, Methuen and Nantucket, with hospitals in Boston and Nantucket.

#### **California crisis**

The San Francisco SPCA, also among the world's wealthiest humane societies on paper, but also pinched by revenue shortfalls, in October 2009 quit opening on Mondays. The SF/SPCA had operated seven days a week for 141 years.

The economy is having an impact on all animal welfare and rescue organizations

#### **Injunction vs. SPCA Intl.**

**MONTREAL**—A Quebec Superior Court judge on October 12, 2009 allowed former Canadian SPCA executive director Pierre Barnoti to continue using the "SPCA.com" web address, pending the outcome of a lawsuit brought against him by the Canadian SPCA, but required that donations received through the site by Barnoti's new venture, SPCA International, be deposited into a trust fund.

"Another \$50,000 will be held in trust," reported Jason Magder of the *Montreal Gazette*. "Another trial will be held to decide who owns the rights to the domain name."

The "SPCA.com" domain name originally belonged to the Canadian SPCA, also known as the Montreal SPCA, but Barnoti transferred it to SPCA International, which he incorporated in Delaware in 2006. Barnoti was suspended in March 2008 by the Canadian SPCA board, and was fired in July 2008, after the Canadian SPCA was unexpectedly found to be \$4 million in debt.

right now," SF/SPCA president Jan McHugh-Smith told *San Francisco Chronicle* staff writer Justin Berton. "We're all dealing with an increased need for service, and we're all seeing a reduction in donations."

The SF/SPCA continues to offer free or low-cost veterinary care to low-income pet keepers—with requests for free or low-cost help running 37% ahead of 2008, McHugh-Smith told Berton.

The SF/SPCA budget crunch, bad as it is, is mild compared to the \$26 billion deficit for the state of California. For nearly half of 2009 an impasse between Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the state legislature left California without a budget.

The compromise that ended the standoff "included a provision that reduces the mandatory holding period for stray animals from six days to three days," noted *San Francisco Chronicle* staff writer Peter Fimrite. Supporters of the change contend that it will merely allow shelters to euthanize animals with poor adoption prospects sooner, enabling the shelters to hold for longer the animals whose adoption prospects are good. Critics believe the shorter holding period will send the California shelter death toll back from about 400,000 a year now to circa 600,000, where it was when the six-day holding period was instituted in 1998.

#### **U.K. shelter intake**

U.S. shelter intake and killing have barely changed in more than a decade, according to the annual **ANIMAL PEOPLE** compilations of shelter data, begun in 1993. The United Kingdom, however, in the twelve months ending in March 2009 experienced an 11% increase in shelter dog intake, according to the Dogs Trust 2009 Stray Dog Survey.

"This is the largest annual increase since our records began in 1997," said Dogs Trust chief executive Clarissa Baldwin. "Previously we saw a steady decline, but the latest statistics show a huge jump in the number of stray dogs both handled and put to sleep by local authorities. Some dog wardens said the recession could have been a contributing factor to the increase, while others cited the change in the stray dog law last April."

Explained Joachim Moxon of *The Independent*, "A 2008 change in the law means that statutory responsibility for stray dogs in England and Wales has passed from police to local councils," who "often lack the funding to round up the animals, while limited working hours mean that people who rescue strays often must keep them overnight."

Though these factors might explain why more dogs are at large, they would not explain why more dogs were taken in.

By U.S. standards, the U.K. numbers are not alarming: just 107,228 dogs impounded nationwide, about 2.5% of the U.S. total in a nation with about 20% of the U.S. human population. More than 90% of the U.K. dogs were rehomed, compared to about 50% in the U.S.; only about 9,300 were killed, fewer than in some U.S. cities. U.K. shelters killed barely 1.5 dogs per 1,000 human residents, less than half the U.S. toll of pit bull terriers alone, and less than 25% of the total U.S. rate of shelter dog killing.

Dogs Trust does not track shelter cat data. The Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, of London, reported a 20% increase in dog adoptions in fiscal 2009, but a 10% decrease in adoptions of cats. At the same time, BBC News reported, Battersea has received more calls from people wanting to surrender kittens,

and had begun to put people wanting to surrender cats and kittens on a waiting list.

Dogs Trust called for the introduction of compulsory microchipping, to try to increase the animal rehoming rate. "Thirty-one percent of stray dogs who were returned to their owners in the last year were returned with the help of microchips," said Baldwin.

While the U.S. numbers have not yet jumped nationwide, over an entire year, there is concern that they might, as occurred in 2002-2003 after funding for low-cost sterilization programs faltered. Shelter killing increased nationally by 700,000 over those two years. The current crunch is again hitting low-cost sterilization programs.

New York state, for example, has had a state-subsidized sterilization voucher program since 1996. On August 20, 2009 the New York Department of Agriculture and Markets suspended the program because it ran out of money. "The vouchers, for either \$20 or \$30, are available to people who adopt pets from shelters and meet financial guidelines," explained *White Plains Journal News* reporter Laura Incalcaterra. The program was suspend-

ed with 8,869 vouchers still unused, which had to be used by October 1.

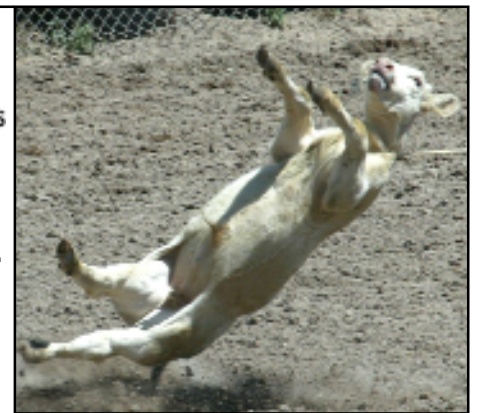
"Once those vouchers have been paid, the state will reinstate the program in counties that have surplus [unissued] vouchers," Incalcaterra continued. "In counties without surplus vouchers, New York will reinstate the program once enough money accumulates from funding sources. Those sources include the \$3.00 surcharge on dog licenses for dogs who are not spayed or neutered; unclaimed deposits left with shelters; \$20.00 of the \$25.00 annual charge for custom 'Love Your Pet' license plates; and private donations."

An ominous hint of what might be ahead came from Nashville, Tennessee—one of the most affluent cities in one of the poorest U.S. states, with the seventh highest state rate of shelter killing in the U.S. over the past 10 years. The Nashville Humane Association in August 2009 reported a 20% increase in animal surrenders, with a 15% drop in adoptions. Happy Endings Animal Rescue, also in Nashville, saw a 70% drop in adoptions, founder Cindy Gosselin told Claudia Pinto of the Gannett Tennessee news service.



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## Eyebrows raised over mink trade claims—and messes (from page 1)

The good news is that this will be down about 15% from the 49 million mink pelts offered on the world market in 2008-2009, when oversupply caused U.S. fur farm receipts to fall 38%. Also of note is that mink pelt sales were in free fall 20 years ago, after doubling from 24 million ten years before.

Twenty years ago mink industry pundits predicted that soon U.S. and European retail fur sales would soar again, and that the newly affluent populations of post-Soviet Russia, China post-Mao tse Tung, and the booming Pacific Rim nations would send fur demand to unprecedented heights.

The arrival of the new Russian and Asian markets has coincided with the global center of the fur trade shifting eastward. China has led the world in mink production for several years now—but total global production and demand has remained flat, even as the number of people in the usual fur-buying age and income bracket has approximately doubled.

More bad news for North American mink farmers is that the mink industry is increasingly becoming identified as a pollution source and potential disease vector. Clean-up requirements and fines for noncompliance are cutting further into profits, accelerating the

shift of the industry to the less regulated hinterlands of China.

"The Fuhrmann Mink Farm in Wisconsin, for example, closed after testing the well water near their operation revealed a high concentration of nitrates," summarized Fur-Bearer Defenders, of Vancouver, British Columbia. "The cost to clean it up, according to one source, would run into seven figures."

On September 15, 2009, according to a press release from the Wisconsin Attorney General's office, Fuhrmann Mink Farm Inc. agreed to pay a fine of \$15,000 and "replace or offer to replace seven neighboring wells that produced water with high nitrate levels."

Said the *Fond du Lac Reporter*, "Thus far, five wells have been replaced. Fuhrmann has offered to replace a sixth, and if it replaces a seventh well, it will pay \$10,000 in forfeitures, fees and costs. People expecting or caring for infants are advised to have their wells tested for nitrate," the *Fond du Lac Reporter* continued, because exposure can cause blue-baby syndrome.

Founded in 1956 by Eugene "Butch" Fuhrmann, who died in April 2008, the Fuhrmann Mink Farm was among the oldest still operating.

U.S. pollution law enforcement may have encouraged the rapid growth of mink farming in Newfoundland and Labrador during the past decade, from under 1,000 breeding mink in 2001 to 60,000 in 2007, but a May 2008 investigation by researchers from the Dalhousie University School for Resource and Environmental Studies warned that "Due to the overall lack of enforcement of waste management practices, mink farming has become what some consider a non-controlled industry." The report was commissioned by the provincial Department of Natural Resources "after neighbors of some farms complained about odours and flies," said CBC News.

The susceptibility of mink to influenza, however, is more likely to inhibit continued mink industry growth in China—the nation from which all major global flu pandemics have emerged, and the nation hardest hit by all of them. As many as a million Chinese died from the most recent major pandemic, erupting in June 1968. This was the first identified emergence of the H3N2 strain, most recently seen in an outbreak discovered on September 28, 2009 at a mink farm in Holstebro North, Denmark. Eighty mink died. "H3N2 infections in mink have been

known since at least the mid-1980s," summarized a four-member panel of experts on the ProMed electronic bulletin board of the International Society for Infectious Diseases.

Mink are hardly the only animal vector, the panel explained: "Swine in Europe have been infected for decades with an H3N2, and an H3N2 swine strain became a prominent virus in the North American swine population in 1998. H3N2 has been isolated from turkeys in the U.S."

The U.S. human population is believed to be relatively safe from H3N2, as this is "part of the current 2009-2010 vaccine for seasonal flu in humans," the panel continued, but "a new H3N2 variant not included in the vaccine emerged at about the same time as the novel pandemic H1N1 [swine flu variant occurring mainly in humans] last spring.

"As is the case with H1N1," the ISID panel concluded, "it is critically important to do surveillance...The key to this is comprehensive, integrated outbreak investigations in geographically co-located animal and human subpopulations."

In other words, watch out for flu viruses escaping from mink farms, including via their effluents.

### Events

**Home 4 the Holidays:** Oct. 6, 2009 to Jan. 5, 2010. Info: 858-756-4117 x-379 or <www.home4theholidays.org>.

**November 14: Tri-State Animal Emergency Response Conf.,** Chattanooga. Info: <info@humaneassociationofgeorgia.org>; <www.HumaneAssociationof-Georgia.org>.

**November 21: Thankful Turkeys banquet,** Animal Acres, Acton, CA. Info: 661-269-5404; <info@animalacres.org>; <www.animalacres.org/events.html>.

**November 21: Farm Sanctuary benefit dinners** in Orland, Calif. and Hector, N.Y.. Farm Sanctuary will also host a benefit brunch in New York City on **Nov. 22**. Info: 607-2225, x221.

**November 22: Touched by An Animal** benefit, Skokie, Ill. Info: 773-728-6336; <m.galanti@comcast.net>.

**Nov. 22:** Animal Rights Fndtn. of Florida Compassionate Thanksgiving Dinner, Winter Park. Info: 407-968-2400; <ArffCentral@arff.org>.

**Dec. 4: Mercy for Animals** gala, Chicago; Dec. 5, Columbus; Jan. 23, New York City. Info: 847-917-3660.

**Dec. 12:** Holiday Dinner for the Animals, Orlando. Info: 407-968-2400.

**Dec. 30:** United Poultry Concerns founder Karen Davis speaks in New York City. Info: <www.upc-online.org>.

### 2010

**Jan. 15-18: Asia for Animals** conf., Singapore. Info: <www.asia-foranimals.org>.

**Feb. 27-28: Alternatives to Experiments on Animals** seminar, Cairo. Info: <asherbiny@infinity.com.eg>.

**March 1-3: Middle East Network for Animal Welfare** conference, Cairo. Info: <info@menaw.net>.

**March 21-22: Pan-African Conf. on Working Equines,** Bakau, Gambia. Info: <suzanne@learningaboutanimals.co.uk>.

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Rats storm flooded Manila (from page 1)

bacteria in the urine of any infected mammal, but is most often spread by rats and mice.

Where rat urine contaminates sun-warmed flood water, the water becomes a medium for transmitting leptospirosis—unless it is salt water, which kills the bacterium. New Orleans experienced a rat population explosion after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, but not leptospirosis, because Katrina flooded New Orleans with sea water. Ketsana inundated Manila with fresh water. Officials frantically tried to prevent leptospirosis by hosing salt water into the stagnating pools



Rescued from a rooftop. (PAWS)

covering much of the city, but to little apparent avail.

Humans can contract leptospirosis by drinking contaminated water, eating contaminated food, or merely wading through contaminated water with open cuts and abrasions, as flood victims often do, trying to escape, help others, or salvage possessions.

Ketsana, called Ondoy in the Philippines, proved to be just the start of

the crisis. Typhoon Parma, called Pepeng in the Philippines, hit two weeks later. Typhoon Miranae hit on October 31, two weeks after Parma.

“Nearly 860 people were killed in flooding and landslides,” Time magazine reported. “Four weeks later, sections of Manila and some surrounding provinces are still underwater. The rainfall was exceptional,” assessed Time, “but the severity of the flooding was intensified by the city’s garbage-clogged drainage system, partly from the shanties of informal settlers living along waterways and decades of skewed urban planning.”

Orders were issued for local governments to make refuse removal a post-flood priority, but rats were already out of control.

The Philippines had 769 reported cases of leptospirosis in 2008 and had just 177 cases in 2009 before the post-Ketsana outbreaks were first tallied on October 12, but by October 15 had more than 1,000. Philippine Department of Health program manager for emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases Lyndon Lee Suy attributed 2,158 human leptospirosis cases to the flooding on October 26, including 167 fatalities. “We project that the number of leptospirosis cases will continue to rise,” Lee Suy said, “but not as high as before, where we report a rise of 400 cases per day.”

Philippine health secretary Francisco Duque III told the Philippine Star that as many as 1.7 million residents of areas still underwater were still at risk. “We expect 3,800 people to get the infection,” Duque said. “Of this number, 3,040



Philippine Animal Welfare Society field clinic at work. will suffer uncomplicated symptoms, while the rest will manifest complicated symptoms that would require them to undergo dialysis or face eventual death.”

More than half of the hospitals and medical clinics in the greater Manila area were reportedly inaccessible due to the flooding and water damage, or were short of supplies.

The Philippine Animal Welfare Society also struggled to stay above the crisis, with help from rescuers sent by the Humane Society International division of the Humane

Society of the U.S. and the World Society for the Protection of Animals.

“The PAWS shelter has not been affected by the flood,” e-mailed program director Anna Nieves Cabrera on September 28. Her home and that of PAWS founder Nita Hontiveros Lichauco were also safe, Cabrera said, but PAWS directors Heidi Guzon and Gwen Protasio were trapped on the second floor of Guzon’s home with about 50 rescued cats, eight dogs, and no food.

“They and their animals are okay,” PAWS volunteer Rich Illustre updated later. “The only casualties are their chickens, whom they weren’t able to save from the fast-rising flood.”

Added Cabrera, “The head of our disaster relief team, May Felix, lost one of her dogs when her house was hit by flash flooding.”

Only three animals were brought to PAWS during the first 48 hours after Ketsana hit, Cabrera said, because “no one can even get in or out of the flooded areas,” but the next two weeks became hectic. “All PAWS volunteers have been out on rescue and relief operations,” Cabrera reported. “We have fed 2,994 animals, including dogs, cats, and a few cows, pigs and chickens, provided veterinary care and treatment for 154 and rescued 26,” who joined 25 pets left at the shelter by people who “lost their houses and are looking for a place to stay.”

Despite the leptospirosis risk, “Anna goes out to rescue animals in flooded areas,” said Nita Hontiveros Lichauco. “Hundreds of dogs and cats have been left to fare for themselves. Our shelter is filled to the rafters.”



Anna Nieves Cabrera. (John Peaveler, Animal Friends League of Kuwait.)



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Maddie's Fund, The Pet Rescue Foundation, ([www.maddiesfund.org](http://www.maddiesfund.org)) is a family foundation funded by Workday and PeopleSoft Founder Dave Duffield and his wife, Cheryl. Maddie's Fund is helping to create a no-kill nation where all healthy and treatable shelter dogs and cats are guaranteed a loving home.

To achieve this goal, Maddie's Fund is investing its resources in building community collaborations where animal welfare organizations come together to develop successful models of lifesaving; in veterinary colleges to help shelter medicine become part of the veterinary curriculum; in private practice veterinarians to encourage greater participation in the animal welfare cause; and in the implementation of national strategies to collect and report shelter statistics. Maddie's Fund is named after the family's beloved Miniature Schnauzer who passed away in 1997.





## No home on the range for wild horses (from page 1)

The BLM was already mandated to manage public lands for cattle grazing, oil and gas production, mining, and recreation. The original BLM mission was grazing management, and the BLM has historically shared the view of many ranchers that wild horses hurt the livestock industry by competing with cattle and sheep for grass and water. But numbers suggest that wild horses have only a minor influence. About 2.5 to three million cattle and sheep now graze on BLM land in the west—not even 10% of the 20 million cattle and 25 million sheep who were on the range circa 1900, when ranchers hoped that the west could support even more weight in livestock than it once supported in bison. There were about 10 times more horses on the range then, too, most of them working steeds.

“Any proposal to improve horse and burro management in the West should include removing domestic livestock from public lands,” Mark Salvo of WildEarth Guardians told Associated Press writer Martin Griffith.

Added Nevada wildlife ecologist Craig Downer, “Both the Forest Service and the BLM have the right to remove livestock to ensure viable, healthy populations of wild horses. But their master is primarily the traditional ranching interests.”

The BLM wild horse program cost \$36 million in 2008, \$50 million in 2009, and could cost \$85 million by 2012, Salazar projected. But Salazar rejected the idea, proposed during the George W. Bush presidential administration, that surplus horses should be sold to slaughter—which would require amendments to two federal laws—or should simply be killed. “The American public has shown that it does not want to have slaughtering of these animals,” Salazar said.

House Natural Resources Committee chair Nick Rahall (D-West Virginia) praised the Salazar plan, but echoed criticisms voiced by wild horse advocates. “Years of attempts by BLM to shoehorn these magnificent animals into ever-shrinking territory has manufactured an overcrowding problem,” said Rahall. “Restoring horses and burros to the acreage from which they have been needlessly removed is critical.”

American Horse Defense Fund president Shelley

Sawhook told *Washington Post* staff writers Lyndsey Layton and Juliet Eilperin that the 19 million acres of BLM land from which wild horses are now excluded “needs to be returned to the horses. If that 19 million acres were still there,” she said, “there would be no need for holding pens. There would be no need for relocation.”

Charged Animal Law Coalition executive director Laura Allen, “It’s time for a Congressional hearing and investigation. With no statutory authority,” Allen contended, “BLM has limited wild horses and burros’ access to thousands of acres that were historically their herd areas. The BLM then removes wild horses and burros from artificially created ‘herd management areas’ on the basis there is insufficient forage, water or habitat. BLM also targets them for removal if they cross the artificial boundaries into their original herd areas.”

“They’re managing wild horses to extinction,” charged filmmaker and Cloud Foundation founder Ginger Kathrens. Kathrens has produced a Public Broadcasting Service trilogy following the life of a Pryor Range palomino named Cloud from foaling to band leadership. His herd was in August and September 2009 thinned from 190 horses down to 70 by one of the most controversial BLM roundups in years.

The Salazar plan “subverts the will of the American public and the intent of Congress,” alleged In Defense of Animals. In Defense of Animals outlined an alternative plan that would “Place a moratorium on roundups, at least until accurate and independent assessments of population numbers and roundup conditions are available and a long-term solution is finalized; return as many horses as possible from government holding to the range; and facilitate the creation of sanctuaries for those horses who cannot be repatriated.”

In Defense of Animals urged wild horse advocates to



Trigger band roundup, September 2009. (Ann Evans/Cloud Foundation)

“Support Senate Bill 1579,” also known as the Restore Our American Mustangs Act. The ROAM Act, “passed by the House of Representatives in July 2009, would update existing laws that protect wild horses, encouraging the reopening of certain public lands to the mustangs,” summarized the In Defense of Animals statement. “It also restores a crucial protection to keep wild horses from going to slaughter, which was stripped away several years ago, and would facilitate the creation of sanctuaries to house the 33,000 wild horses currently languishing in government holding facilities.”

In Defense of Animals also urged support of federal grazing permit retirement. “The Government Accountability Office found that the federal government spends at least \$144 million annually to manage private livestock grazing operations on publicly-owned land,” In Defense of Animals recalled, “but collects only \$21 million in grazing fees.”

Salazar offered his wild horse management plan in response to another pending wild horse management bill, introduced by Senator Mary Landrieu (D-Louisiana) and passed by the Senate in September 2009. The Landrieu bill, if ratified by the House of Representatives, and signed by President Barack Obama, would mandate that the BLM must adopt a new wild horse management plan by September 30, 2010.

Some wild horses have already been relocated from BLM holding facilities to privately owned rangeland, but new relocations tend to become controversial. For example, the BLM reportedly hopes to place up to 1,500 horses on the 15,000-acre Spanish Q Ranch near Ennis, Montana, about 100 miles north of Yellowstone National Park, but the plan is opposed by neighboring ranchers.

The largest relocation scheme was offered on November 17, 2008 by Madeleine Pickens, wife of oil billionaire T. Boone Pickens. Hearing that the BLM had proposed to kill several thousand older “surplus” horses, Madeleine Pickens pledged to buy a ranch large enough to hold the entire BLM “surplus” horse inventory. “She created a nonprofit foundation and a web site, and signed a letter of intent to buy land in northeast Nevada,” recalled Layton and Eilperin of the *Washington Post*. “But her negotiations with the government have sputtered over her request for annual federal stipends to care for the horses and the use of some federal lands for grazing.”

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## Feds to investigate horse slaughter & welfare

WASHINGTON D.C.—Who wants or needs horse slaughter? The Government Accountability Office is to spend the next few months finding out.

Signed by U.S. President Barack Obama on October 21, 2009, the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010 included a clause continuing the three-year-old prohibition of USDA inspection of horsemeat, which brought the closure of the last three U.S. horse slaughterhouses.

At the urging of the commercial horse breeding industry, however, the appropriations act also includes funding for a formal investigation of the impact of the prohibition.

“One of the primary arguments of the pro-slaughter movement,” summarized The Horse Channel news web site, “is that the closure of horse slaughter plants in the U.S. has directly contributed toward increased neglect and abandonment of American horses. A Senate report accompanying [the appropriations act] directs the GAO to conduct a study on the state of horse welfare in America as it relates to the end of the domestic slaughter industry. The study will specifically examine how horse welfare, horse rescue organizations, farm industry income, and overall horse sales, imports and exports have been affected by the slaughterhouse closures. Results of this study are expected by March of 2010.”

The difference between the cost of killing and burying a horse and the gain from selling the horse to slaughter is between \$250

and \$500, depending on the weight and health of the horse.

Inability to sell horses to slaughter within the U.S. does not appear to have inhibited the slaughter traffic. Indeed, the 2008 total numbers of horses sold to slaughter were the highest since 2005, according to USDA data. U.S. brokers sent 56,731 horses to Mexico to be killed, and sent 77,073 to Canada. The number of U.S. horses killed in Mexico alone in 2008 exceeded the total killed in the U.S. during the whole of 2004. The number of U.S. horses killed in Canada in 2008 soared above the toll of 60,736 U.S. horses killed in Canada in 1986, and exceeded by more than 10,000 the sum of 66,562 U.S. horses killed in Canada from 2004 through 2006.

Anxiety that horses exported from the U.S. for slaughter may have been treated with drugs that may harm human consumers in August 2009 prompted the European Union and Canadian Food Inspection Agency to jointly announce that horse slaughterhouses must begin taking new precautions, effective in April 2010. Each horse must now be accompanied by complete health records showing that the horse has not been given any drug dangerous to humans, or must be quarantined for six months prior to slaughter.

Drugs of concern “range from toxic wormers to phenylbutazone (PBZ), the “aspirin” of the horse world, and even include fertility drugs that can cause miscarriages,” summarized the Equine Welfare Alliance.

The quarantine requirement is

expected to steeply reduce the profitability of horse slaughter in Canada. The Mexican horse slaughter industry is meanwhile trying to develop markets for horsemeat outside the European Union, and will soon begin exporting horsemeat to Russia, National Agricultural Products Health Service of Mexico director Sanchez Cruz told *Meat International*.

About 50% of the meat consumed in Russia is imported, but Russia has for nearly 20 years been an exporter of horsemeat and horses for slaughter, as result of increasing mechanization of Russian farms.

Horse impoundments in neglect cases have increased in 2009, according to data logs compiled by **ANIMAL PEOPLE** from news accounts, but not by very much. At Halloween 2009, 1,435 horses had been impounded in neglect cases, up from about 1,345 in three of the four preceding years, but the 2009 total appears unlikely to approach the 1,890 neglected horses who were impounded in 2007. The highest total since **ANIMAL PEOPLE** began tracking horse impoundments was 2,375 in 1998.

The Nevins Farm Equine & Farm Animal Adoption Center in Methuen, Massachusetts, operated by the Massachusetts SPCA, in August 2009 reported receiving a record number of surrendered horses, for the second year in a row: 48, up from 35.

In Maine, where hay prices have more than quadrupled in two years, state animal welfare program director Norma Worley told Sharon Kiley Mack of the *Bangor Daily*



News that impoundments had increased from 32 in 2008 to 50 by mid-September 2009.

Other horse rescue facilities have reported increasing numbers of calls from people trying to place horses. But for many the problem appears to be mostly that economic stress has reduced horse adoptions, leaving the rescues with few openings for new arrivals.

Often horses are not be impounded if rescue placements are unavailable.

“The Animal Humane Society of Golden Valley, Minnesota, investigated cases involving 1,636 horses in 2008—a fourfold increase since 2003,” reported Bob Shaw of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. Few of these horses were actually taken into physical custody.

“We are all wrestling with how to reduce the number of unwanted horses,”

Minnesota Horse Coalition spokesperson Cherie McKenzie told Shaw. Toward that end, the coalition in September 2009 presented a clinic that castrated horses for free at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Baytown Township.

Promoting horse sterilization—rare until recently—has become a national trend.

“The Kentucky Horse Council has become the latest group to launch an education campaign” against horse overpopulation, Associated Press writer Jeffrey McMurray reported in late October 2009. “Owners who show financial need can be reimbursed up to \$100 to have their horse gelded. Similar campaigns have popped up from California to North Carolina,” McMurray said.

Commercial horse breeding has declined, whether because of race-track closures, the high cost of hay, or the decreased profitability of selling surplus horses to slaughter. Jockey Club registry data released on October 22, 2009 showed a drop of 2,258 mares bred by Kentucky stallions, reported Janet Patton of the *Lexington Herald Leader*. “Nationally, the number of mares bred fell 13.5%,” Patton wrote. The 2009 drop in mares bred was about 7,000, following a drop of 4,000 in 2008.

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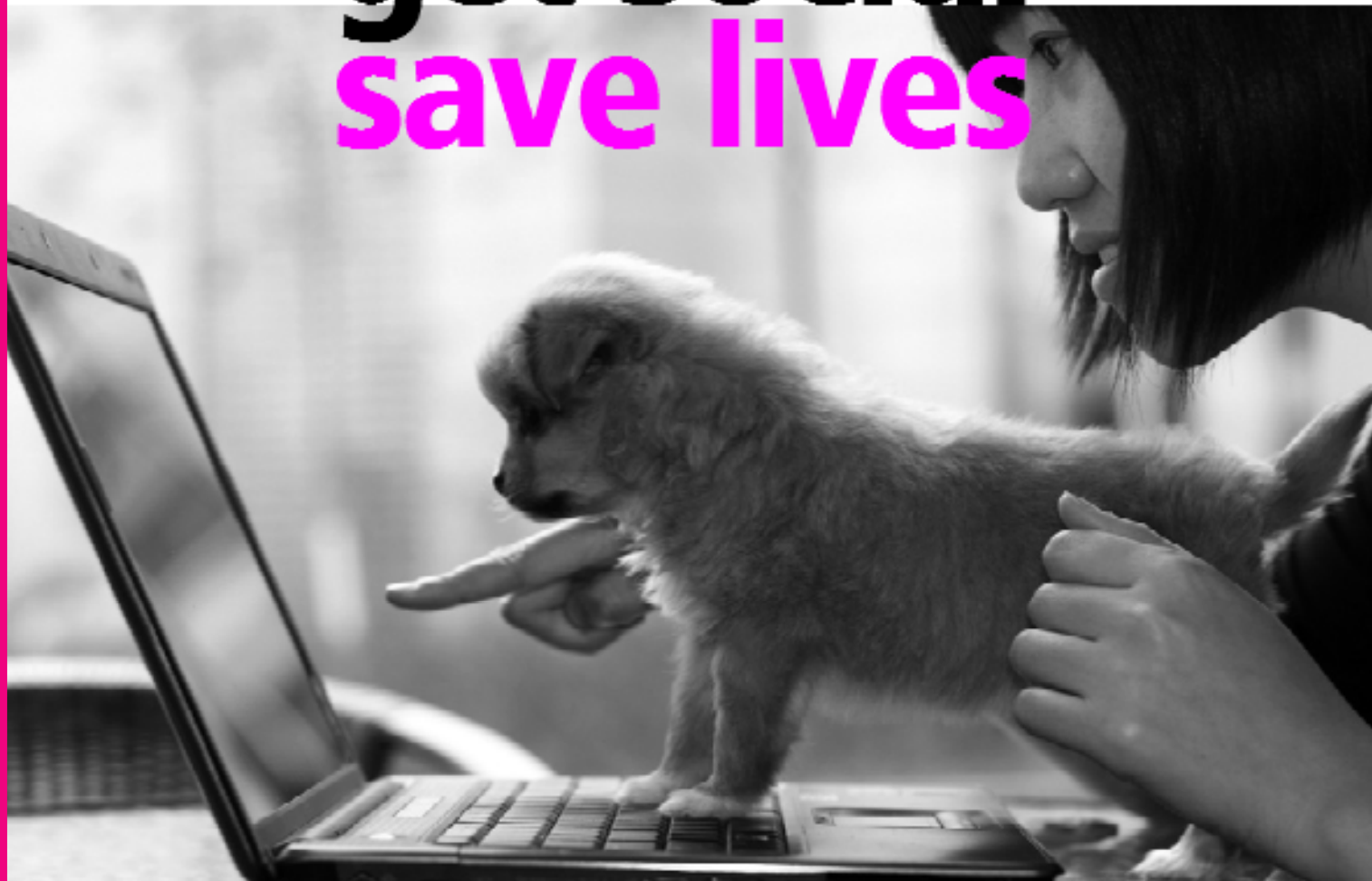


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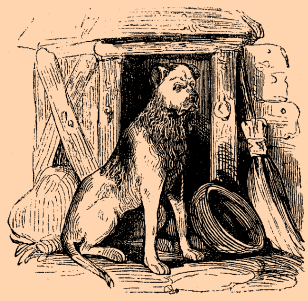
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# The Watchdog

*The Watchdog monitors fundraising, spending, and political activity in the name of animal and habitat protection—both pro and con. His empty bowl stands for all the bowls left empty when some take more than they need.*

## Shooters Party tries to force hunting in parks of NSW, Australia

**SYDNEY**—“We won’t be looking at hunting in national parks,” New South Wales environment minister John Robertson told reporters on October 28, 2009, but pledged to “do more to deal with feral animals in our national parks.”

Robertson’s statement came a week after NSW prime minister Nathan Rees suggested that the nominally governing Labor Party might cut a deal with the two-seat Shooters Party to allow hunters to cull “vermin and feral animals.”

A party that wins just 106,513 votes out of 3.8 million cast seldom enjoys much clout. But the two seats held by the pro-gun and pro-hunting Shooters Party have given it the balance of power since April 2007 in the five-party New South Wales Legislative Council. The Legislative Council is the upper house of the NSW parliament.

The Labor Party, nominally forming the government, can govern only with Shooters Party support. The Shooters Party has since June 2009 refused to back Labor Party legislation, in an attempt to force the Labor Party to pass a Shooters Party bill that would open 13 NSW national parks to hunting.

*Sydney Morning Herald* reporter Erik Jensen on October 21, 2009 described several deals that Robertson’s office allegedly offered the Shooters Party—all refused by the Shooters, who insist that their bill must be passed intact.

The report that the Labor Party might allow hunting of some sort in national parks, or at least some parks, brought an open split between Labor and the Public Service Association, one of the major NSW labor unions. “The Public Service Association, which represents park rangers, has ordered its members not to assist in establishing recreational hunting in national parks in NSW,” wrote *Sydney Morning Herald* state politics correspondent Louise Hall. Public Service Association general secretary John Cahill warned that without park ranger support, “a plan to introduce regulated hunting under the supervision of NSW National Parks would likely fail,” Hall reported.

Cahill asked uniformed rangers and other Public Service Association members to join a rally against the Shooters bill, organized by the Green Party.

“There is no such thing as conservation hunting. It is a myth,” declared National Parks & Wildlife Services area manager Kim de Govrick at the rally.

During the legislative standoff, however, the Labor Party has allowed local councils to authorize culls of species from mynah birds to kangaroos. In September 2009, for example, the Bathurst Regional Council was allowed to have 140 kangaroos shot—half the local population—to keep kangaroos away from the route of the Bathurst 1,000 automobile race.

Earlier, *Sydney Morning Herald* state political editor Andrew Clennell revealed that “Documents obtained under freedom-of-information laws show Department of Environment & Climate Change officials warning the Government of dire consequences, including to public safety, should shooting be allowed in national parks. The documents also cast doubt over the usefulness of the Game Council, set up by the Government to regulate hunting, headed by members of the Shooters Party. The

Government has been accused of setting up the council,” Clennell wrote, “to secure Shooters Party support.”

This came three days after *Sydney Morning Herald* reporter Jensen wrote that the NSW government “is under pressure to undertake a full audit of the Game Council after revelations that it awarded a key tender to a company its chairman had run for 10 years,” while Ben Cubby of the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the same day reported that the Environmental Defenders Office of NSW had filed a complaint of false advertising against the Game Council with the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission.

Explained Cubby, “The Game Council—funded by the state government—began a marketing push in Sydney earlier this year, saying shooters help the environment by eradicating feral animals.” The complaint “says the council’s claims do not stack up because of the relatively small number of animals killed, and the relatively high cost of killing them.”

Elaborated Clennell, “One document shows that the Game Council issued 9,000 hunting licences across the state between 2006 and 2007 and that 6,000 feral animals were shot (0.5 pest animals per hunter per year). At the same time, one three-day cull by the Department of Environment & Climate Change resulted in 3,000 feral pigs being culled, illustrating how much more effective departmental teams were than the Game Council in ridding the state of feral animals.”

Not mentioned was that killing any abundant feral species, by anyone using any method, has never lastingly eradicating the species from any part of mainland Australia.

Scandals involving the Shooters Party continued when in August 2009 the Taronga Western Plains Zoo was suspended from selling animals, after selling 16 blackbuck antelope, native to India, to a private game reserve being developed by a prominent Shooters Party member. “Hunting exotic animals in enclosed game reserves is illegal in NSW, but is the subject of Shooters’ Party legislation before Parliament,” wrote Jensen of the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

## Wild Animal Orphanage leadership transition

**SAN ANTONIO**—Nicole A. Garcia on October 4, 2009 succeeded her mother, Carol Asvestas, as chief executive of Wild Animal Orphanage, but it was not an easy succession.

Asvestas, who founded WAO in 1983, resisted stepping down. Garcia, who grew up helping to run the sanctuary, but had lived in Florida for several years, returned in late 2008 in anticipation of helping Asvestas fend off critics, including a former board member who had resigned and taken a list of allegations to the USDA and the Texas Office of Attorney General.

Instead, Garcia told **ANIMAL PEOPLE**, she found that many of the allegations she had heard were substantially true. After taking the evidence to the board, Garcia found herself cleaning up after an October 4, 2009 *coup d’etat* that displaced both of her parents.

“The board of directors did not oust Ron and Carol,” WAO vice president Sumner Matthes told **ANIMAL PEOPLE**. “Our original legal vote was to place them on 90-day administrative leave. Unfortunately, this was not acceptable to them, and they immediately proceeded to the WAO offices and removed computers, records and various other things essential to our conducting an in-house investigation. These items have essentially been returned as a

result of legal action,” Matthes said. “This resulted in the board holding another meeting at which it was voted to terminate them.”

Garcia within the next few days invited in USDA inspectors to get an updated list of needed improvements and repairs to the WAO facilities, and sent the Texas Office of Attorney General stacks of documents the office had requested earlier but had not received. She also dropped a libel suit filed by her parents on behalf of WAO against the *San Antonio Lightning* news web site, and told **ANIMAL PEOPLE** that she would have dismissed the attorney who had represented WAO, except that he resigned first. Garcia said that much of the *Lightning* reportage was accurate, and that what was not had been reported in good faith, in her opinion, with mistakes resulting from her mother failing to respond to questions.

Allegations of animal neglect at WAO came as a shock to Garcia as well as to WAO supporters and donors, she said. Carol Asvestas was a founder of the American Sanctuary Association in 1996, one of the two major U.S. sanctuary accreditation bodies, and later split with ASA to form an accreditation body with stricter standards called Animal Centers of Excellence. The latter failed to attract membership. Asvestas also rapidly added ambitious new programs for several years, culminating in retitling her facilities The Animal Sanctuary of the U.S. in 2001—but the new name did not catch on. However, for nearly 20 years WAO has received exotic animals rescued by the International Fund for Animal Welfare, and has received animals from law enforcement agencies as far away as Washington, Idaho, and New Jersey.

Garcia announced immediate improvements to the animals’ diets, and on October 26, 2009 announced \$15,000 worth of other changes, including completing bear and macaque housing at the 102-acre main WAO facility so that bears and longtailed macaques can be moved from the 10-acre original WAO site at the edge of San Antonio.

Both **ANIMAL PEOPLE** and the *San Antonio Current* asked Carol Asvestas for comment, but nearly a month after the transition she had not responded to messages.

## Ric O’Barry wins ASPCA Lifetime Achievement Award

**Ric O’Barry**, campaigning against dolphin captivity since 1970, on October 29, 2009 received the **American SPCA Lifetime Achievement** award. The ASPCA honored **Rolling Ranch Animal Sanctuary** founders **Steve Smith** and **Alayne Marker**, of Ovando, Montana, with the **Henry Bergh Award**. About two-thirds of the 70 animals in their care are blind. The ASPCA law enforcement officers of the year were **Tim Rickey** and **Kyle Held** of the **Humane Society of Missouri** and **Missouri Highway Patrol** undercover agents **Terry Mills** and **Jeffrey Heath**, whose work led to an eight-state dogfighting raid in July 2009, including more than 30 arrests and the

seizure of more than 400 dogs. The ASPCA **Tommy Monahan Award**, named for a 9-year-old who died in 2007 trying to save his dog from a housefire, went to **Monica Plumb**, 11, of Powhatan County, Virginia, who has raised funds to donate more than 50 pet-sized oxygen masks to fire departments in nine states. The **Hingham Fire Department**, also recently honored by **PETA**, received the ASPCA Firefighter of the Year award. The ASPCA Dog of the Year was **Archie**, 8, a black Labrador who assists disabled Iraq veteran **Clay Rankin**. Cat of the Year was **Nora**, a piano-playing former shelter cat whose YouTube performances have attracted more than 15 million viewings.

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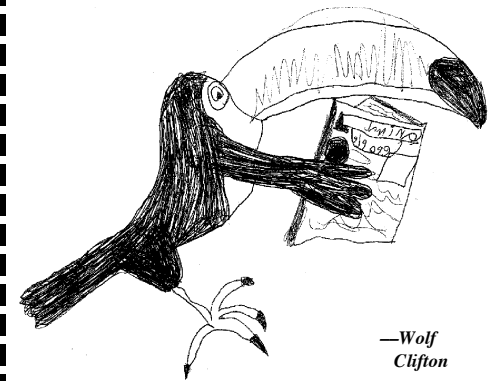
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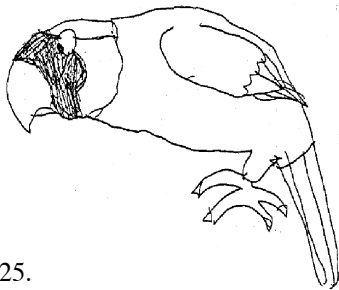
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## The 1st Church of Animal Rights tried to launch the movement in 1921

What if the animal rights movement had launched out of the older humane movement 55 years earlier, before factory farming methods were invented, before laboratory use of animals expanded into big business, before wildlife management was funded by hunting license fees, before the humane movement came to be dominated by an “animal welfare” rather than “animal rights” philosophy?

This is no mere fantasy. It could have happened, impelled by the brief confluence of Diana Belais and Royal Dixon, flamboyant and charismatic personalities whose talents and background, differently mixed, paralleled those of the late Cleveland Amory, who founded the Fund for Animals in 1968, and Ingrid Newkirk, who cofounded People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals in 1981.

Belais and Dixon on March 13, 1921 attracted more than 300 prominent and affluent New Yorkers to the Hotel Astor for the founding meeting of the First Church for Animal Rights.

“Services will be held each Sunday at 3 p.m. in the hotel,” reported *The New York Times*. “A school for children to teach consideration for animals and the prevention and cure of bird and dog diseases also is contemplated. An animal ritual and an ‘animal Bible’ will be used at the Sunday services. The Bible will contain chapters from both the Old and New Testaments dealing with humanity to animals.”

Membership cards distributed to donors stipulated that the purpose of the First Church of Animal Rights was “To preach and teach the oneness of all life, and awaken the humane consciousness; to champion the cause of animals’ rights; to develop the character of youth through humane education; to train and send forth humane workers; to awaken the realization that every living creature has the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; to act as spiritual fountainhead and spokesman of humane organizations and animal societies, and give a better understanding of their work and needs to the public.”

Besides Belais and Dixon, both accomplished orators, the speakers included Miles M. Dawson, an early advocate of national health insurance; attorney John Edward Oster, remembered as the definitive biographer of John Marshall, the first U.S. Supreme Court chief justice; and Anna Catherine Murphy, second wife of the poet Edwin Markham.

Markham, then age 69, would in 1922 dedicate the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. At his death in 1940 *The New York Times* lauded Markham as “the dean

of American poets.” Yet almost nothing is known of Murphy. “I had not heard of this before, and there seems to be little written about his wives,” Markham biographer Annette Nellen told ANIMAL PEOPLE. “Edwin Markham wrote articles about child labor that helped get laws enacted. I haven’t read all of his poems, but don’t recall any animal themes,” though Nellen recalled that he wrote poems entitled *The Hummingbird*, *The Lizard*, and *The Panther*.

### Diana Belais

Diana Belais, 63, described at times in press accounts as a curly red-haired firebrand, and as “middle-aged” at age 77, had already been battling on behalf of animals for most of her life. Published record of her antivivisection activity appears to have started in 1889, when she was 30. She founded *The Open Door*, an animal welfare magazine, in 1895, and continued publishing it until 1938. Her husband, jeweler David Belais, in 1893 founded the Humane Society of New York (formally incorporated in 1904).

David and Diana Belais appeared to have become dissatisfied with the drift of the then-35-year-old American SPCA away from founder Henry Bergh’s emphasis on doing anti-cruelty investigations and prosecution, into focusing for most of the 20th century on doing animal control for New York City. In 1912 David Belais challenged the ASPCA’s use of \$1 million in receipts for the animal control contract to start an endowment, instead of using the money to save more of the 80,000 animals per year that the ASPCA was then killing with carbide gas.

Taking a stronger position than the ASPCA against laboratory use of animals, the Humane Society of New York soon found itself ostracized by the American Humane Association, then the only national humane organization, whose focus at the time was on child protection. Circa 1908 Diana Belais founded the New York Anti-Vivisection Society, to campaign against vivisection more vigorously than the constraints of operating an animal shelter permitted. For the next two decades Diana Belais made frequent headlines in public debates against prominent medical researchers—in one instance, three against one—and early science fiction writer H.G. Wells, who defended vivisection.

Diana Belais also presaged to some extent the PETA use of eroticism to promote the animal cause. A November 1912 fundraiser for the New York Anti-Vivisection Society held at the Hotel Plaza created a particular stir.

“The identity of two society women who appeared in Greek and modern dances was not disclosed,” said the *New York Tribune*, but two young women who assisted Blais and may have been the dancers were Maud R. Ingersoll, then 30, and E. Almy Gatter, about the same age.

Maud Ingersoll, daughter of famed rationalist orator Robert Ingersoll, was in her

youth a well-known activist in her own right, traveling and sometimes lecturing with her father from age 15 until his death in 1899. But Robert Ingersoll’s notoriety among tent circuit evangelists made a target of his daughter. Several messy episodes after his death gave the evangelists much to talk about. Maud Ingersoll’s work for the New York Anti-Vivisection Society may have ended before the attempt was made to form the First Church of Animal Rights.

### Royal Dixon

At the formation of the First Church of Animal Rights the star performer was Royal Dixon, author of *The Human Side of Plants* (1914), *The Human Side of Birds* (1917), and *The Human Side of Animals* (1918).

A *Wikipedia* entry apparently drawn mostly from a 1926 *New International Encyclopedia* listing says, “Royal Dixon (1885–1962) was an American author, born at Huntsville, Texas, educated at the Sam Houston Normal Institute and as a special student at the University of Chicago. After spending five years with the department of botany at the Field Museum of Chicago, he entered the literary field as a member of the *Houston Chronicle* staff. He made special contributions to the newspapers of New York, where he lectured for the Board of Education. His interest and attention were directed to immigration, as a director of publicity of the Commission of Immigrants in America, and as managing editor of *The Immigrants in America Review*,” a periodical which vanished without any other trace.

Royal Dixon in 1932 claimed an 1885 birth date, but the Social Security Death Index, which lists all births and deaths of deceased U.S. residents known to the U.S. Social Security Administration, records no such birth. The *Abilene Reporter-News* on June 6, 1962 reported that Dixon had died in Houston, stating his age as both 75 and 82. The Social Security Death Index does not list the death of anyone named Dixon near Royal Dixon’s reported death date, either, but does document that eight men have been named Royal Dixon, two of whom had lifespans approximating that of the author.

The other six were all born while the author and lecturer was in mid-career. Five were born in places where he spoke.

One of the two elder Royal Dixons, 1892-1971, was too young to have the life history that the author claimed to have before producing his first book, and appears to have lived quietly in upstate New York. One of the younger Royal Dixons appears to have been that man’s son. The other elder Royal Dixon, 1876-1963, appears to be the author—if the author shaved nine years off his actual age in the information given to the *New International Encyclopedia*. This seems likely: the author Royal Dixon, as late as 1940, was still publicizing his speaking appearances with a profile photo first used at least 25 years earlier, when he asserted in Atlanta that “Every woman reappraises some type of flower or plant.” The *Atlanta Constitution* magazine section on that occasion devoted a full page to Dixon’s assessments of socialites including Miss Eva Balfour—“a trumpet”—and Mrs. Ava Willing Aster—“the American Beauty Rose.”

### What happened?

The first assembly of the First Church of Animal Rights, like much else that either Belais or Dixon did, generated reverberating publicity. Two months later it was discussed in the *Mansfield News*, of Mansfield, Ohio. *The Evening Independent* of Massillon, Ohio, likened the Bahai religion to the First Church of Animal Rights in 1932. *The San*

*Antonio Light* mentioned the First Church of Animal Rights in connection with a Dixon lecture in 1936. Yet there is no record that the First Church of Animal Rights ever met even a second time, despite the success of the first meeting, and even though the timing for launch looked auspicious.

The U.S. humane movement had enjoyed rapid growth from the formation of the ASPCA in 1867 to 1914, with the American Humane Education Society as an effective recruiting arm for the entire cause.

Formed by George Angell in 1882, 14 years after he founded the Massachusetts SPCA, the American Humane Education Society focused for about 30 years on encouraging the organization of schoolroom humane education clubs called the Bands of Mercy.

More than 265,000 Bands of Mercy were chartered by the time of Angell’s death in 1909. His successor, the Reverend Francis Rowley, hosted a Band of Mercy tent meeting in Kansas City in 1914 that drew 10,000 teachers and ministers to learn about humane education, and 15,000 school children to hear the lessons. A parallel organization for teens called the Jack London Club claimed 750,000 members. World War I and the post-war recession, however, caused MSPCA fundraising to implode. Rowley had incurred enormous debt in building Angell Memorial Animal Hospital, opened in 1915. To avoid losing the marble hospital, the MSPCA cut back the Bands of Mercy and Jack London Clubs.

Still, as of 1921, there was the possibility that Belais and Dixon—or someone—could build on the past momentum, recruiting the now adult graduates of the Bands of Mercy and Jack London Clubs to help educate and inspire another generation of activists.

Why did it not happen? Hindsight unfamiliar with the conventions of the time might suppose that incorporating as a church—as the Best Friends Animal Society initially did, 50 years later—ran afoul of religious conservatives.

Since David and Diana Belais were Jewish, their mere use of the term “church,” usually reserved to Christians, might in retrospect be imagined to have been controversial.

But these were not issues. In that era, incorporating an advocacy organization as a church was quite common and quite uncontroversial, especially with religious conservatives, who typically incorporated societies to promote temperance and chastity as non-denominational churches, and in much of the U.S. welcomed Jewish support.

Lack of funding does not appear to have been an issue, either. Diana Belais enjoyed conspicuous fundraising success even in the depths of the Great Depression.

### Dixon hit the road

What the record shows is that Royal Dixon soon moved on. There is no indication that Dixon ever crossed paths again with David and Diana Belais, or even returned to New York City.

Dixon was on the advisory board of the Geographic Players, formed in New York City in 1933 by paleontologist Roy Chapman Andrews. More than 50 other cultural and scientific luminaries from around the U.S. endorsed Andrews’ effort to “establish a legitimate theatre, where the world’s geographers, explorers and scientists may present their experiences and records in a popular way.” Dixon was not among the listed performers during the year that the theatre lasted.

Dixon seems to have spent most of the rest of his life traveling the hinterlands, living out of a suitcase. His success as an author of popular books on natural history was

(continued on page 15)

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Dixon clips from 1940, 1935, and 1916.



## Two 1st Church of Animal Rights cofounders never gave up (from page 14)

already several years behind him in 1921, and so were most of his publications about immigration, but in the era before television, entertaining speakers were in high demand. Almost every week for the next several decades Dixon surfaced somewhere, mostly addressing women's clubs about flowers and animals.

The arrival of radio, World War II travel restrictions, and eventually television cut repeatedly into the audience for itinerant lecturers. As Dixon aged, he appears to have paid fewer visits to big and even medium-sized cities. Yet he remained on the road quite late in life, explaining evolution in Emmett, Arkansas, passing as a "profound student of the Bible" in San Antonio, and discussing the history of inventions in Corpus Christi.

### The Belais kept at it

David and Diana Belais, after the short existence of the First Church of Animal Rights, continued their work much as before.

David Belais in June 1927 won the first and perhaps only conviction of a vivisectioner under the 1867 New York state anti-cruelty law. Recounted *Time*, "The doctor was David

H. Shelling, who has been trying to determine the relation between dietary restrictions and bone formation at the Jewish Hospital in Brooklyn. Last spring the superintendent of the Humane Society of New York visited the hospital. In Shelling's laboratory he found a mongrel with her muzzle strapped shut with adhesive tape. She could not eat, drink or lick her wounds. That was cruelty, decided the humane society agent, who forthwith had experimenter Shelling arrested.

"David Belais, president of the humane society, altered his will to cut off the Jewish Hospital from a legacy."

"Magistrate Charles Haubert of Brooklyn knew not what allowances, under the 1867 law, he could make for Dr. Shelling's scientific experiments; found him guilty; suspended sentence."

The Humane Society of New York superintendent was Harry Daniel Moran, hired in 1918. After attending David Belais' burial on June 6, 1933, Moran the next day suffered acute appendicitis, followed by pneumonia. He died 13 days later.

"Sorrow at Mr. Belais's death was

believed to have aggravated Mr. Moran's condition," the *New York Times* reported.

Diana Belais continued lecturing against vivisection through 1935, but appears to have eventually decided that improving the public image of animals would be necessary to achieve legislative progress. Toward that end she formed the Legion of Hero Dogs in 1930, honoring nine dogs in 1931, 13 in 1933, and more in 1935 and 1937.

As the Legion of Hero Dogs gained national recognition, Diana Belais in January 1932 told media that "A peaceful army is being mobilized in every election district in New York to support humane candidates." Meant as the prototype for organizing a national pro-animal political organization, this may have been a forerunner to the 1947 formation of the American Vegetarian Party by members of the American Naturopathic Association, who hoped to draw support from antivivisectionists. In August 1947 the Vegetarian Party nominated pioneering vegetarian restaurateur John Maxwell, 84, to run for president.

But Diana Belais did not live to see that. Recognizing her advancing age and con-

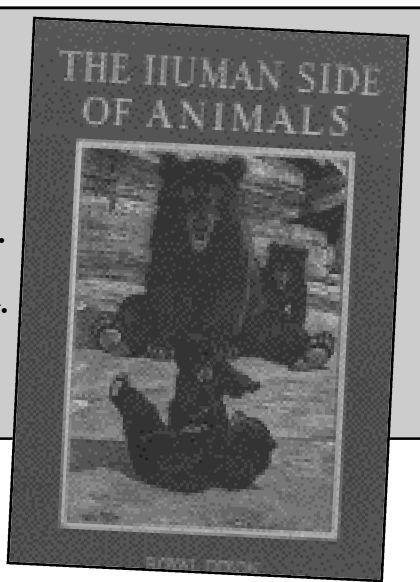
sidering she lacked able successors, she resolved in 1935 to disband the New York Anti-Vivisection Society and distribute the assets of the society, valued at \$80,000, to other pro-animal organizations that had been crippled by the Great Depression, through no evident fault of their own. The sum was equivalent in purchasing power to more than \$1 million today.

Diana Belais was immediately challenged by a coalition of society members led by Helen King, a Brooklyn resident described by author Gay Talese in 1960 as "a contest judge who since 1935 has given away 1,000 automobiles, millions in cash prizes, and 300 free trips to exotic lands."

Failing to oust Diana Belais through internal procedures, King sued seeking to block her plan to redistribute the assets in March 1937. Diana Belais prevailed in 1938. She died, at age 86, on February 12, 1944.

Ironically, the largest bequest ever left to the New York Antivivisection Society, the \$460,000 R.M.C. Livingston estate, arrived in May 1945. It was redistributed to six other organizations. —Merritt Clifton

**The Human Side of Animals**  
by Royal Dixon  
Project Gutenberg Ebook #19850, 2006.  
Free download from  
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/19850>>.  
Originally published by  
Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1918.  
254 pages, hardcover.



Royal Dixon, who in 1921 launched the First Church of Animal Rights to great fanfare but with no evident follow-up, was no Cleveland Amory. Yet *The Human Side of Animals*, published a year before Amory was born, sufficiently presaged Amory's 1974 opus *Man Kind?* that it might have been among Amory's early influences—even though it does not appear in the extensive *Man Kind?* index.

Unlike Amory (1919-1998), Dixon made little use of humor, and was not a curmudgeon. But like Amory, Dixon sought to establish the premise that animals should enjoy basic rights and better treatment by humans through passionate narration of strings of anecdotes. Like Amory, Dixon could shock, but held his audience chiefly as a story-teller.

Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation*, also published in 1974, is widely viewed as the philosophical foundation document for the animal rights movement—but Amory's *Man Kind?* was read by many times more people, and almost certainly attracted more to the cause, not least because Amory coupled promoting the book to promoting the Fund for Animals, which he had founded in 1968.

*The Human Side of Animals*, though popular, was not nearly as influential as either *Animal Liberation* or *Man Kind?*. As a sequel to *The Human Side of Plants* (1914) and *The Human Side of Birds* (1917), *The Human Side of Animals* might even be considered a pot-boiler, produced with no aspiration greater than making money for the author, who was an itinerant lecturer for most of his life.

As a gent whose living usually depended on flattering the speaker selection committees of women's clubs, Dixon was known to glibly turn a florid phrase. But he

appears to have sincerely appreciated animals.

"The love that fills a mother's heart when she sees her first-born babe is also felt by the mother bear," Dixon opened in *The Human Side of Animals*, "only in a different way, when she sees her baby cubs playing before her humble cave dwelling. The sorrow that is felt by the human heart when a beloved one dies is experienced in only a little less degree by an African ape when his mate is shot dead by a Christian missionary. The grandmother sheep that watches her numerous little lamb grandchildren on the hillside, while their mothers are away grazing, is just as mindful of their care as any human grandparent could be."

Having a scientific education, Dixon styled himself a scientist, and often cited scientific research, but was frequently critical of science that treated animals as instinct-driven automatons.

"The trouble with science is that too often it leaves out love," Dixon argued. "If you agree that we cannot treat men like machines, why should we put animals in that class? Why should we fall into the colossal ignorance and conceit of cataloging every human-like action of animals under the word 'instinct'?"

Dixon was much more interested in the findings of social scientists than in the discoveries of so-called "hard" science made through vivisection and dissection. His own informal animal studies convinced him that, "some animals can count. Most of the arithmetical feats of trained animals are hoaxes,"



Dixon conceded, but added, "I have known a monkey who could count to five. He played with a number of marbles, and I would ask for two marbles, one marble, four marbles, as the case might be, and he would quickly hand the number requested."

"There is no reason that a dog should not be taught arithmetic," Dixon opined, going on to explain how he thought it might be done, using a method similar to those used in testing and challenging the math acuity of dozens of species during the past 50 years.

"The zebu, or sacred bull of India," Dixon continued, "shows his mathematical qualities to a pronounced degree. When he grows attached to a small group of his kin, he will often refuse to leave them unless the entire group accompany him. When driven from his pen, if by chance one of his party is left behind he refuses to go—thus indicating that he is able to tell that the exact number is not with him. No wonder he is worshipped in India, where the human side of animal life is understood and appreciated to a degree quite unknown to the Western world!"

Dixon shared with United Church of Christ minister William J. Long (1867-1952) the conviction that animal communication is far more complex than was usually imagined. Among the most read nature writers of the early 20th century, Long was an outspoken opponent of hunting. This earned him some influential enemies. John Burroughs, an early advocate of hunting-based wildlife management, denounced Long in 1903 for allegedly propounding "sham natural history." Then-U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt called Long a "nature-faker"—and the name stuck.

Falling out of popularity, Long retreated to writing mostly for a small audience of devotees, among whom was Dixon, who defended Long against some of his most eminent critics. "In the words of that remarkable naturalist William J. Long," Dixon wrote, "to call a thing intelligence in one creature and reflex action in another, or to speak of the same thing as love or kindness in one and blind impulse in the other, is to be blinder ourselves than the impulse which is supposed to govern animals."

"The fact that all animals possess ideas, no matter how small those ideas may be, implies reason. That these ideas are transmitted from one animal to another, no one can doubt in the light of our present scientific knowledge," Dixon continued. This was a year before Long produced his own opus *How Animals Talk And Other Pleasant Studies of*



Left: Royal Dixon with his sister's fawn.  
Right: Nimrod and Dixon, then in his teens.

*Birds and Beasts*, reissued in 2006 and reviewed in the May 2006 edition of **ANIMAL PEOPLE**.

Dixon went on to quote Bronx Zoo founding curator and Long critic William T. Hornaday: "Be not startled by the discovery that apes and monkeys have language; for their vocabulary is not half so varied and extensive as that of the barnyard fowls, whose language some of us know very well."

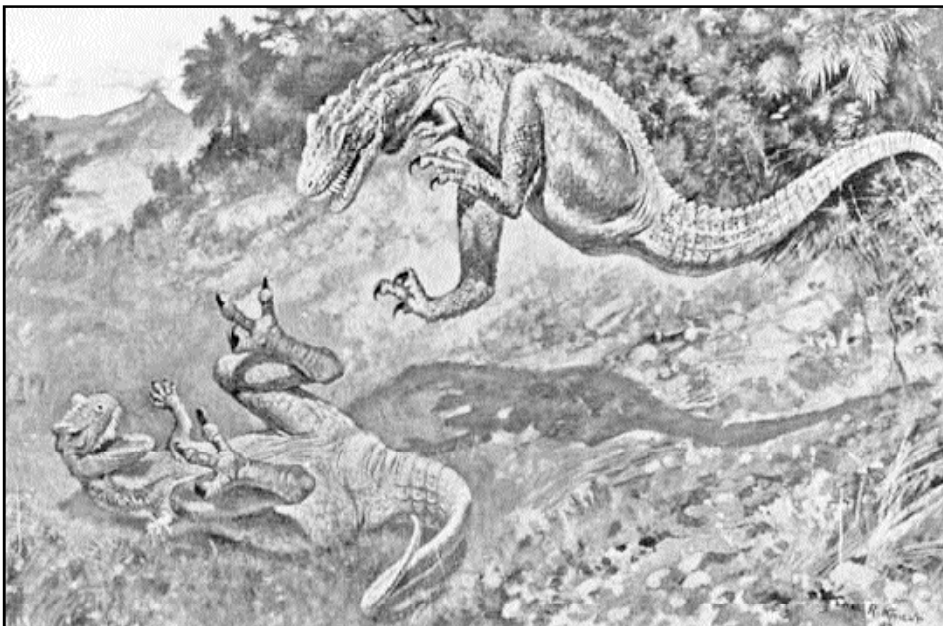
Added Dixon, "An instance of canine language is given by John Burroughs, who says that a certain tone in his dog's bark implies that he has found a snake."

But, like Long, Dixon argued for telepathy among animals, instead of recognizing that many species communicate through sounds and scents that elude human perception. Telepathy, Dixon contended, "is spoken by no man, but is understood by every brute from the tiniest hare to the largest elephant; it is the language whereby spirit communicates with spirit."

Dixon was on much firmer ground in contending, like Mark Bekoff today, that "one touch of Nature makes the whole world kin" is shown in no clearer way than by the games and play of animals. Recreation is as common among them as it is among our own children," Dixon wrote. "Animals, like ourselves, feel every sensation of joy, happiness, surprise, disappointment, love, hope, ambition, and through their youthful games an entire index of their future lives may be obtained." He illustrated this point with a sketch of two grinning dinosaurs enjoying a rough-and-tumble game (left).

Dixon's next examples were recited somewhat at his own expense, as he seemed to realize. "I once owned a tame raccoon, and often kept him chained in the back yard," Dixon confessed. "He devised all kinds of schemes to relieve the monotonous hours. He would pile up a number of small stones, and carefully await his chance to fling one into a group of young chickens. He seemed to understand that he was more apt to make a hit when he threw into a crowd than when aiming at a single chick. One day he pounced upon a rooster who insulted him by drinking from his water vessel, and plucked a long feather from his tail so quickly that we could hardly realise what had taken place. He then had great fun in attempting to stick the feather in his head or by planting it upright in the ground."

Unaware that a doe usually leaves a young fawn unattended while grazing,  
(continued on page 16)



"Dryptosaurus. The prehistoric animals, too, undoubtedly had their play time, with games and 'setting up' exercises," asserted Royal Dixon.



Free download: **The Human Side of Animals** by *Royal Dixon* (continued from page 15)

Dixon's sister "rescued" such a fawn, who became a family pet. "Our tame fawn used to delight in playing with our old rabbit-dog, Nimrod," Dixon wrote. "They were the best of friends. The fawn would begin the chase by approaching Nimrod as though he were going to stamp him into the earth. Then suddenly leaping quickly and safely over the dog, he would run away. At this signal for a game, if Nimrod was in the mood, he chased the fawn, who would delight in jumping over fences and hedges and waiting for poor Nimrod to get over or under just in time to see his playmate leap to the other side."

Frequently citing Charles Darwin, Dixon contended as Darwin had, to little notice in his own time, that behavioral as well as physical traits are products of evolution, and that all creatures are part of an evolutionary continuum.

"Man has long preached this doctrine that he is not an animal, but a kinsman of the gods," Dixon summarized. "This anthropocentric conceit is the same thing that causes one nation to think it should rule the world, that the sun and moon were made only for the laudable purpose of giving light unto a chosen few, and that young lambs playing on a grassy hillside, near a cool spring, are just so much mutton."

ANIMAL PEOPLE has discovered no explicit statement that Dixon was a vegetarian, but he frequently made a point of the human-like qualities of farm animals, and in

*The Human Side of Animals* never mentions eating any.

Dixon was many decades ahead of his time in appreciating coyotes, and even had a few good words, between repeating stereotypical condemnations typical of the era, for jackals, hyenas, vultures, mongooses, pecaries, and badgers.

"No more remarkable creatures exist in the animal world," Dixon opined, "than those that play the role of Nature's scavengers and criminals. They are as numerous and varied in their methods of working as they are interesting. The only things they have in common are their profession and their appetites. As individuals they are ugly, unattractive and apparently void of personality and charm. Nevertheless, they have an important part to play in the scheme of things.

"As time goes on, it is to be hoped that we will understand our animal brothers better, and that our old attitude toward the so-called 'brutes' will be entirely changed," Dixon continued. "Heretofore we have greatly abused the zebra, for example, because of his wild disposition, ferocious humor, distrust of all power except that in his own legs, and his pronounced aversion to work.

"Why should we reproach him for his wildwood philosophy? It is perfectly natural that any animal of his experience with man, and with sufficient brains, would have only contempt for all mankind," Dixon assessed, only to mingle his seemingly enlightened view

about animals with passages in which he made clear that his moral egalitarianism did not extend to people of other races.

"His native home is in Africa," Dixon added of the zebra, "and his human associates, if they are human, have been the most impossible and hideous people on the earth. He has seen nothing but cannibalism and carnage among the savages; and since his transportation to Europe by a strange occurrence of horrible circumstances, he has been the subject for all kinds of barbarous punishments...The zebra is not of the mental calibre to be suddenly seized with love for the human species and its civilizations! And the human species is astounded and thinks the zebra stupid and wicked. He may be both, but his wisdom is undeniable when it comes to trusting humanity, and his wickedness is small in comparison to man's terrible cruelties. He should be awarded a medal for wisdom! For man is far the greater ass of the two!"

Dixon was no more appreciative of Native Americans than Africans.

"On the North American prairie," Dixon wrote, "though the bison are extinct, their great roads still remain as evidence of their former habits...How interesting must have been the life on this great animal highway, before the Indian made the deadly arrow to destroy these nature-loving travellers!"

Three years later, addressing the inaugural meeting of The First Church of Animal Rights, Dixon belatedly acknowledged that Caucasians with guns had a part in depleting bison, but continued to blame Native Americans in equal measure.

Dixon, raised in Huntsville, Texas, in part by former slaves who had been owned by his forebears, was a contemporary but not a close relative of Thomas Dixon Jr. (1864-

1946), author of *The Clansman* (1905) and 15 other books glorifying the Ku Klux Klan. In contrast to Thomas Dixon Jr., whose works are such monotonously racist screeds as to occasion wonder that anyone ever read them, Royal Dixon merely interrupted himself with racist outbursts—but they were more than just casual reflections of the times, and must have particularly jarred Diana Belais, his partner in founding the First Church of Animal Rights.

Born in West Virginia, Belais was nearly as much a native Southerner as Dixon, yet in more than 50 years of frequently forceful public speaking and writing on behalf of animals, Belais appears to have left no record of ever even using a racist expression. While human rights were not her issue, her compassion for humans as well as animals appears to have not been questioned by any but the nastiest of the many vivisectionists she met in debate.

Dixon, while frequently capable of great insight, was equally capable of writing nonsense, including in his closing arguments.

Taking note of increasing populations of urban wildlife, Dixon wrote, without pausing to consider the ecological factors, "It seems that the secret ambition of all animals is to become the allies of man. This is demonstrated," he asserted, "by the fact that most of them have gone near the villages and towns, and, consequently, there are comparatively few remaining in the heart of the big forests."


But Dixon finished with a plea for tolerance and appreciation of "nuisance" species. "Under the true state of conditions man should live in harmony with these animal brothers," Dixon suggested, "with mutual trust and respect existing between them. That would mean, of course, that man would have to show a little more kindness to them."

—Merritt Clifton

### Oceans: *Exploring the hidden depths of the underwater world*

by Paul Rose & Anne Laking

University of California Press (2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94704), 2008. 240 pages, illustrated. \$34.95 hardcover.



"Four fifths of all life on Earth is found below the waves and there is still much to be discovered," say authors Paul Rose and Anne Laking of their year-long journey circling the globe. Sailing with a crew of 25, and supplies including a shark cage, they crammed a lot of research into a relatively short time. They found "underwater caves that preserved the remains of lost civilizations," saw rare and endangered sea creatures, ran into a swarm of sharks, and yes, their shark repellent worked.

*Oceans* educates readers about oceanic history, what's down below, and how the oceans are stressed from pollution, contamination, and commercial fishing.

Their travels included a stop in the Mediterranean Sea. To help understand the Mediterranean's earlier history, the group investigated some of the world's longest submerged caves, with "breathtaking formations." Beaches in countries like Italy, Greece and Egypt attract millions of visitors and job seekers every year. "No less than 80% of urban sewage discharged into the Mediterranean is untreated," say the authors. At least half a million tons of crude oil per year end up in Mediterranean waters from shipping. Overfishing plus a contaminated environment endangers the blue fin tuna, which may become extinct. "The sea that gave us the roots of civilization is now reeling under its impact," say Rose and Laking.

The Atlantic, the second largest ocean, contains the Gulf Stream, "one of the most important currents on the planet," Rose and Laking explain. The *Oceans* team views shark species in the Bahamas including hammerheads, bulls, makos, and nurses. They also encounter the lionfish. Although stings are rarely fatal, it is said that fishermen would rather drown themselves than deal with the "agony of a lionfish barb." Lionfish are alien to the area, native instead to the Indo-Pacific. Theories abound on how they ended up in the Bahamas, but regardless of how they got there, they attack the coral reefs.

On the Pacific side of North America, the crew visits the Sea of Cortez. Giant manta rays live there, as do sea lions, fin whales and the cannibalistic Humboldt squid. "The California gray whale completes the longest migration of any mammal by spending a few winter weeks each year in breeding grounds here before returning to the Bering Sea 5,000 miles away," say the authors. Dolphins, sharks, and many fish species share the Sea of Cortez too.

Sharks, perhaps the predator most feared by humans, are vastly more menaced by humans than the other way around. The demand for shark-fin soup in several newly

affluent Asian nations brings the death of as many as 26 million sharks per year. The practice of slicing off a shark's fin and throwing the rest of the shark back into the ocean is illegal in U.S. and European waters, but enforcement on the open seas is lax.

The Indian Ocean, the third largest, is vulnerable to powerful earthquakes. The December 2004 tsunami, for example, killed about 275,000 people, and left tens of thousands homeless, jobless, and destitute in a region that was poor to begin with. Economic desperation increased the pressure on the already stressed environment.

The Indian Ocean, 20 years ago, was reputedly the only ocean that was not overfished. That may have changed—for the worse. Manta rays still thrive there, but dugongs, also known as sea cows, are in decline. The seagrass beds that are dugongs' only food source are imperiled by silting, dredging, pollution, and effects of global warming. Female dugongs usually birth just one calf in a lifetime. Slow-moving, they get caught in fishing nets. Once hunted for hides, meat and oil, most dugong populations are now protected, but remain endangered.

The Antarctic Ocean occupies "nearly eight million square miles and is the second smallest," Rose and Laking say. The cold Antarctic water provides a rich environment for plankton and algae, which suck up as much as 8% of human-created carbon dioxide. Giant kelp shelters the pot-belly and the big belly sea horse, and crested and golden weedfish. The spiky and poisonous cowfish is found nowhere else.

Australian fur seals, the largest seal species, were nearly hunted to extinction, but appear to thrive in Antarctica today because of legal protection. However, "Parts of the ocean here are warming up over two and a half times faster than anywhere else on the planet," Rose and Laking warn.

*Oceans* contains stunning pictures of their world-wide travels. There are fascinating shots of divers interacting with sperm whales and close ups of coral reefs. The crew took more than 1,000 dives and spent at least 700 hours underwater to complete their mission. But there wasn't always smooth sailing. Sea sickness posed a challenge for some. To gain entry into certain countries took complex negotiations. Authorities impounded their boat once. Despite a few snags, the crew completed their goal of studying the world's oceans and produced this fascinating book. Their findings, which should be of interest to oceanography fans all over, are worrisome. The world's oceans and the plant and sea lives they sustain won't last forever unless we work harder to preserve them.

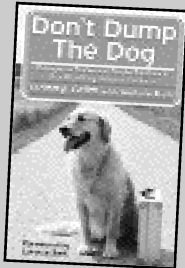
—Debra J. White

### Don't Dump the Dog:

*Outrageous Stories and Simple Solutions to Your Worst Dog Behavior Problems*

by Randy Grim with Melinda Roth

Skyhorse Publishing (555 Eighth Ave., Suite 903, New York, NY 10018), 2009. 216 pages, paperback. \$14.95.



"My boyfriend doesn't like my dog," says a caller to Stray Dog Rescue of St. Louis, a shelter founded and operated by author Randy Grim. The caller wants to surrender Rover. What shelter worker hasn't answered a call like this? Shelter staff, including Grim, would like to tell her to ditch Romeo instead, but politely take down Rover's pertinent information, hope the owner leaves a donation and say thank you, have a nice day.

Randy Grim rescues dogs from the gritty, mean streets of St. Louis. These dogs have often been kicked around, used as "bait dogs" by dogfighters, or have been used to guard meth houses. Not every stray dog is captured, so Grim often leaves kibble at feeding stations.

Stray Dog Rescue cares for the dogs Grim and staff catch until they are adopted. Some are placed in foster homes. Many have gone home with Grim himself.

Not every adoption ends happily, despite screening to weed out inappropriate adopters. Months or even years after an adoption, some adopters return their dogs, for reasons suggesting that they should never have had a dog. Max, for example, barked whenever someone knocked at the door, barked to signal when he needed to go outside to relieve himself, and barked if he saw another dog trotting past. Annie's people wanted to return her for being too active. Grim asked how many times a day they walked her. They never did. They only let her out to relieve herself, and failed to see that as a cause of her destructive behavior. Such calls send Grim's blood pressure surging. He pops a few happy pills prescribed by his psychotherapist and deals with each situation.

Saving dogs from the gang-ravaged streets in certain St. Louis neighborhoods is stressful in different ways. Grim confronts thugs with guns and knives. Hungry, frightened dogs with broken legs or mange tug at his heart. There is always a pressing need for money to continue his mission. Calls demanding help do not stop. Most give him a Maalox Moment, especially calls about moving: "I'm moving and I can't take Fluffy. When may I take her back [to Grim's shelter]?"

Grim wonders if the caller's children are part of the moving plan.

Grim suggests that the owner find an apartment that takes dogs. Many apartments

do, especially with an additional pet deposit. If that is not possible, then Grim says it's their responsibility to find a home for the dog. A shelter should be the last option, not the first. Not many people want to adopt twelve year old dogs with arthritis. Not everyone listens, and yet another dog gets dumped at Stray Rescue.

Grim may not have an official training title attached to his name, but he knows how strays react to stress and fear. Years of abuse can cause submissive urination. Lack of socialization is hard but not impossible to overcome. Gnawing hunger affects a dog. If a dog keeper is committed, Grim can help.

Grim recommends behavior classes, offered by many shelters at reasonable prices; halter collars for hard-to-control dogs; reward-based training; exercise, especially for young dogs; and of course sterilization.

Never use physical abuse, Grim emphasizes. Crate-training is not cruel, he believes, unless the dog is left inside for extended periods of time or outside in the scorching sun.

*Don't Dump the Dog* is entertaining, informative and at times infuriating. The excuses Grim hears when people surrender a dog are not new, but Grim and Roth turn each one into a useful lesson. This is their third book together, following *Miracle Dog* (2005) and *The Man Who Talks to Dogs* (2004).

—Debra J. White

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# The 100 Silliest Things People Say About Dogs by Alexandra Semyonova

Published by Hastings Press, England in association with The Carriage House Foundation  
(Postbus 10 308 2501 HH Den Haag, The Netherlands), 2009. Downloadable at <www.nonlineardogs.com>.  
269 pages, paperback. \$25.00. Download: \$15.00.



"I wasn't exposed to all the stories dog people tell until I got my first puppy," behavioral scientist Alexandra Semyonova relates in her introduction to *The 100 Silliest Things People Say About Dogs*. But then Semyonova "read every book I could get my hands on and talked to many trainers. All sources agreed that dogs live in a hierarchy, and that they spend all their time being either dominant or submissive to each other.

"I was told I needed to make sure I was the Alpha Leader," Semyonova recalls. "I should always go before my dog through a door. I had to eat before I fed the dog. The dog wasn't allowed on the couch, since the Alpha wolf always lies on the highest spot when the pack is resting...Most of the trainers also urged me to train the pup with punishment.

"My doubts began," Semyonova explains, "when I started to have many and various dogs in the house and to observe their group behaviour for long periods of time, in groups with ever changing composition. There was no dog who always lay on the highest spot. It was always a different dog who was first to go through a door. They seemed above all interested in being considerate to each other and avoiding arguments where possible. None of my own observations confirmed any of what the experts had told me."

As a scientist, Semyonova "decided to delve deeper into the literature. I also started my own research project." *The 100 Silliest Things People Say About Dogs* "is based on real live observations of real live dogs, in their natural surroundings, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for fourteen years."

Semyonova learned that "The dog's social system is based on a few simple rules of politeness that are aimed above all at not disturbing the peace."

Almost everyone who has studied street dogs, or almost any dogs who are at liberty to be themselves among other dogs, has reached the same conclusion. Yet few pet keepers and dog trainers seem aware of this finding, valuable as it is to understanding how best to teach and motivate a dog.

Instead most embrace the fallacy that as Semyonova puts it, "The dog is a descendant of the wolf, and because of this we should regard him as a sort of tame wolf."

Responds Semyonova, "Our ancestors didn't tame the dog at all. The dog most likely tamed himself."

Meanwhile, Semyonova points out, wolves "didn't exist yet when the dog began to split off into a new species." The ancestral dog "had already split off from the wolf family line some 200,000-500,000 years ago," Semyonova recounts, who "probably looked somewhat like the dingo and other primitive dogs who still live in the wild today."

Emphasizes Semyonova, "The dog is not a wolf. If you want to know about dogs, you have to study dogs. But aside from this, we don't have much knowledge about wolves in the first place. The stories that are told about them are all too often hunters' tales and jailers' anecdotes—basically nonsense, based on myths, fantasy, imagination, speculation, projec-

tion, lies and/or poorly designed research; or by watching them behave in a habitat that is decaying and disappearing right under their feet.

"The dog evolved at the rubbish dump," Semyonova determines. "He didn't need to kill to eat. Aggression not only lost its function, but actually became a threat to the dog's survival in our proximity. The killer bite disappeared from the dog's natural behaviour pattern.

"Dogs are anything but pack animals," Semyonova continues. "The whole reason the domestic dog does so well living among us humans is that she adapted herself to a different life than the pack life. Dogs wander alone around the rubbish dump or the back alleys, looking for food. When dogs do form groups, the members are not related to each other, didn't grow up together, met each other as adults, and formed their easy friendships. Their groups are fleeting collections of acquaintances. Of course a dog becomes attached to other dogs she knows well—but she has no aversion to strangers, and is glad to turn them into friends."

Semyonova also refutes the common belief that dogs are strongly territorial. "The only thing all dogs seem to claim," Semyonova observes, "is a sort of personal zone. Inside [the zone]," a dog "moves around the dump without bothering about strangers. The dog might keep more distance from a stranger than from a familiar dog, but he does this without trying to claim the whole dump as his own. Free-living city dogs tend to travel around within a relatively small range, but this range is also not a territory. A city dog will defend a vestibule or a clump of bushes where he sleeps, but he does not defend his travelling space. Even in agrarian regions, where food is less abundant, dogs who know each other do not defend their ranges or their dumps from strangers....Once dogs have met a stranger several times elsewhere, the stranger can often join the group at the sleeping spot. Dogs do not claim a territory as defined by biologists."

Semyonova takes critical note of the influence of Nazi trainers and theorists on conventional beliefs about dogs, especially ethologist Konrad Lorenz, who mostly studied geese, but wrote about dogs to make money.

"Unlike some others who stood at the roots of animal psychology as a science," Semyonova points out, "Lorenz never had problems with the Nazi authorities...Lorenz worked at the Race Policy Bureau. In 1942 he participated in examining 877 people of mixed Polish-German descent, selecting who would and who wouldn't go to a concentration camp to be murdered. He believed firmly in superior and inferior races and consistently expressed great contempt for the latter. He believed in a strict, hierarchical society, in which an absolute authority ruled to whom all owed obedience," and projected this view in his writing about dogs.

Normal dogs, Semyonova observes, "don't live in a hierarchy and aren't interested in controlling each other's behaviour beyond demanding ordinary politeness."

What is usually described as dominance behavior, Semyonova argues, are just mechanisms for developing mutual trust. Once dogs trust each other, she says, they don't bother with these rituals.

## Dangerous dogs

"The domestic dog is a highly non-aggressive species," Semyonova continues, "but this doesn't mean there is no such thing as a truly aggressive dog. Plenty of dogs exist who are, by nature, aggressive, and there are plenty of others who have learned to be aggressive. There are definitely dogs who use their weapons without restraint, and who do inflict serious to deadly damage. These dogs are, by definition, abnormal."

Semyonova cites in particular, "The fighting dog breeds (the pit bull/American Staffordshire terrier, the English Staffordshire terrier, the English Bull terrier, the American Bulldog etc.). These dogs have been bred either to fight to the death in the pit, or to tear apart a bear or a bull who was tied to a tree. Since most dogs won't bite unless severely provoked, breeders selected for dogs who would attack unprovoked—and not only that, they wanted dogs who would go on attacking once they started, even though they met no defence. Don't let anyone tell you that this is past tense, or that these are now household breeds, or worse yet that they have always been household breeds. They are working breeds that are still bred and used for killing purposes."

Semyonova puts into a separate but related class "Other breeds (the Presa Canaria, the Dogo Argentino, the Fila Brasileiro, the Boerboel etc), who have been bred to have a sort of general, unbridled aggression not only toward animals, but also toward humans." These are typically mixes of pit bulls and mastiffs. The Dogo Argentino and the Fila Brasileiro, Semyonova writes, were bred by slave owners "not to catch and return escaped slaves, but to rip these slaves apart on the spot as a lesson to other slaves. In order to make them able to do this, they were bred with a body mass so large as to make resistance futile. This body mass also means that by the age of about four months, they are too large for other dogs to teach them to shun aggression. By the time they are adolescents, it can be lethal for another dog to try to discipline them or teach them anything at all."

Warns Semyonova, "When you are dealing with a dog from one of these two categories, you are dealing with dogs who have genetic defects. They have been bred to have different brains and different body structures than normal dogs. They are also not at all like our romantic wolf, who does hunt and use his weapons for real, but wouldn't think for a second of wasting scarce energy on pointless aggression."

Observes Semyonova, "a certain kind of man (and, increasingly, woman) likes to have these dogs in the house, proud to show all the world that s/he's capable of keeping one of these dogs under control, and smiling condescendingly at visitors who are frightened of the 'sweet' pit bull/Presa/Dogo/etc. However, this sweet dog, who you think is so nice because he smiles the brachiocephalic smile at you all the time, will—once triggered—kill your child.

"There are huge economic interests involved when we talk about these breeds of dogs," Semyonova acknowledges. "The breeders and the various kennel clubs are not inclined to be honest about the kind of dog they have created. They tell us that despite at least 200 years of careful selection for the willingness to fight to the death, there is no such thing as a fighting dog. On the other hand, where it's to their advantage to do so, they cheerfully claim that all kinds of other breeds most certainly do have genetically determined characteristics that you can rely on if only you buy their puppy."

In a boxed subsection, Semyonova notes that "Most of the discussion about these breeds is about whether they are dangerous to humans. To me, an equally important tragedy is what these breeds are doing to other dogs since they have become so popular. Many, many more dogs than humans have been maimed or killed since the fashion started, and I have never understood why people who claim to love dogs seem unconcerned about this.

"The myth that you can raise a killing breed dog to be 'sweet' is mostly aimed at preserving these breeds by claiming they aren't always dangerous to humans," Semyonova continues. "This myth has contributed to an ongoing slaughter of ordinary household dogs," for example at dog parks, where Semyonova herself has witnessed pit bulls killing other pets. "It has also led to a revival of the dogfighting culture in many countries," Semyonova adds. "Shame on the humane societies and 'scientists' who have contributed to this."

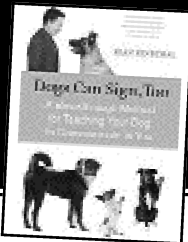
Semyonova is no less critical of almost every common approach to dog discipline and training. She acknowledges trainer Cesar Millan's success, but points out contradictions between much of what he does, quickly getting positive results, and the explanations he gives his audience on television and in books, frequently repeating conventional belief.

"Dogs run their relationships on the basis of trust, not dominance, violence and punishment," Semyonova emphasizes over and over. "People who try to dominate dogs must be suspected of being infantile, blind and petty. I hope this book will help us behave towards our dogs as good friends should," she concludes, "without feeling ashamed of it. We will affectionately try to understand and consider our dogs' needs and longings, happily seek compromises with them, and thankfully answer their friendliness with the same coin. We will, above all, not punish them, but rather help them when they don't understand what we want."

—Merritt Clifton

## Dogs Can Sign, Too: A Breakthrough Method for Teaching Your Dog to Communicate by Sean Senechal

Random House (1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019), 2009.  
224 pages, paperback. \$16.99



Sean Senechal, founder of the AnimalSign Center in Monterey, California, would probably quickly endorse *The 100 Silliest Things People Say About Dogs* author Alexandra Semyonova's view that instead of punishing dogs, people should "help them when they don't understand what we want."

Suggests sales literature for Senechal's book *Dogs Can Sign, Too*, "Imagine being able to ask your poodle, 'Who's at the door?'" and having her respond, 'It's Katy.' Or asking your golden retriever, 'Do you want a treat?' and him responding, 'No, water.' Or asking your border collie, 'Which toy do you want?' and getting the response, 'Stick.' The K9Sign system," developed by Senechal, "teaches dogs to communicate to us," the promo says.

Senechal developed the K9Sign system, she explains, after studying animal communication with Penny Patterson. Patterson, founder of the Gorilla Foundation, has over the past 38 years taught several gorillas to use American sign language and even communicate via the Internet, using a specially adapted computer key pad.

Senechal contends that the main reason why dogs do not "talk" in a combination of barks and language that humans understand is that humans do not take the time and trouble to teach them how. Otherwise, dogs seem to welcome the opportunity to converse, in basic ways, with almost everyone of comparable intelligence of any species.

Having witnessed canine efforts at interspecies communication including Simon, a newly arrived

Taiwanese street dog, teaching recently rescued feral burros to play-bow, I have no doubt that dogs can both learn and teach rudimentary language. Senechal's theoretical basis appears to be sound, the K9Sign system appears to be within the capacity of most dogs to learn, and Senechal has shown credible results.

However, the whole exercise strikes me as being more a matter of teaching humans than of teaching dogs. The K9Sign system works, I suspect, because teaching it by rote impresses upon the human trainers that dog behaviors have specific meaning. Otherwise, dogs already tend to have ways of communicating whether they want a treat or want water, which toy they want, and who is at the door, if they know.

The hard part, for humans, is understanding as well as other dogs do what the dogs are saying, in terms which may vary from dog to dog. Some gestures, such as the play-bow, are seemingly universal. Others are an improvised patois.

When a new dog enters a home, some of the ensuing cacophony appears to me to be a process of synchronizing the meanings of communication. Soon, though, the new dog learns—and appears to learn specific variations used in particular places.

My pointer Madeira, for instance, who is no rocket scientist, barks for food at the ANIMAL PEOPLE office. She never does at home.

At home, a single quiet bark at the door means "Let me in," or "Let me out." No response brings a slightly louder bark, but never more than one

bark at a time. At the office she is able to let herself in or out, so she never uses that modulated single bark sequence.

At the office, Madeira learned from the other office dogs to bark furiously at the sound of a car, or the presence of a deer in the yard. At home, where she arrived three years ago to find that none of the six resident cats barked at either cars or deer, she has yet to bark at cars, and—though she barks often at my one tomcat—she will quietly watch as many as three deer at a time as they graze just a few yards away.

On walks, every dog I have ever had would identify the presence of wildlife, with different signals for animals who were potentially dangerous and animals who might be chased—if I allowed it, which I don't. However, the first few dogs I walked with had difficulty teaching me that they were signaling at all times when they did such-and-such, in part because dogs respond primarily to scents, and what they smell is not necessarily visible, even if alarmingly close. Thus I once nearly jogged into a collision with a bear, whom two dogs were frantically warning me to avoid. Fortunately the bear was also eager to avoid the encounter.

Senechal, I suspect, has devised an approach for people who want to understand their dogs without really paying attention. It works, but will take a great deal more effort than simply observing more carefully what dogs are already trying to tell us.

—Merritt Clifton



ANIMAL OBITS

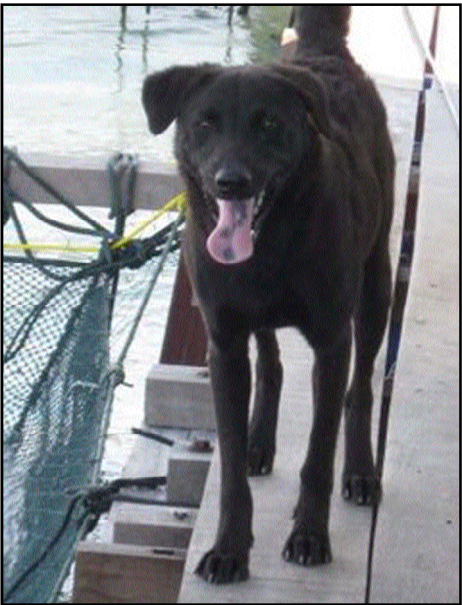
**Titus**, 35, the “Gorilla King” of Volcanoes National Park in the Virunga mountains in Rwanda, died on September 14, 2009 of injuries apparently suffered in a fight with another silverback gorilla. Most of Titus’ family were killed by poachers, reported Edmund Kagire of the *Kigali New Times*. Abandoned by his mother, after she was attacked by the surviving silverback, Titus was accepted into an all-male gorilla band. They were eventually joined by five females. When the first dominant silverback showed signs of age, Titus dethroned him, and went on to sire more offspring than any other known mountain gorilla. Featured in the film *Gorillas In The Mist*, based on the life of primatologist Dian Fossey, Titus was buried near Fossey, who named him, at the Karisoke Research Center.

**Mzima**, 19, the second oldest bongo in the world was euthanized due to painful complications of age on October 20, 2009 at Zoo Atlanta, her home since 2004. She was born at a zoo in Texas.

**Tweet**, 18, the giraffe featured in Toys “R” Us commercials and the Jim Carrey film *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, long resi-

dent at the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston, died on September 10, 2009 while eating lunch after a shoot for a film called *The Zookeeper*.

**Hitam**, a Malaysian offshore island dog who helped Furry Friends Farm to rescue dozens of others, died in early October 2009 from apparent poisoning. Hitam and his fellow rescue dog Kuning were apparently among the first of about 300 dogs who were abandoned on desolate Pulau Selat Kering island in the Straits of Malacca in early March 2009 by residents of Pulau Ketam, the nearest inhabited island. Instead of remaining on Pulau Selat Kering, Hitam and Kuning swam to the nearest *kelong*, or fishing platform, where the fishing crew adopted them. Furry Friends Farm founder Sabrina Yeap learned of the abandoned dogs’ plight in April. The ensuing international rescue effort was featured on page one of the June 2009 edition of **ANIMAL PEOPLE**. The *kelong* where Hitam and Kuning lived became rescue headquarters. The rescuers had not intended to use Hitam and Kuning, but Hitam and Kuning “volunteered,” swimming to Pulau Selat Kering to lead other dogs out of the mangrove swamp to



**Hitam. (Furry Friends Farm)**

be captured. Hitam and Kuning also kept a lookout at the *kelong* for other dogs trying to swim to safety. A photo sequence at the Furry Friends Farm web site shows them spotting a refuge dog named Grace at sea, greeting her as she struggles aboard the *kelong*, and leading her to food.

OBITUARIES

**Gayle Kegin Hoenig**, 68, died on September 19, 2009 in Aspen, Colorado, from complications of a stroke suffered in January 2009. A licensed wildlife rehabilitator since 1984, Hoenig operated a private wildlife sanctuary at her home in Colorado Springs; did extensive wildlife education, “especially about bats,” recalled friend Marcia Davis; contributed articles to *The Ark*, published by the British-based organization Catholic Concern for Animals; and was active in support of the Zimbabwe National SPCA and Zimbabwe Wildlife Conservation Task Force. “Gayle devoted her life to animal welfare. She worked tirelessly for the prevention of cruelty to animals. Her death is a tragic and irreplaceable loss,” e-mailed Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force chair Johnny Rodrigues.

**Jeanne Toomey**, 88, died on September 17, 2009 in Falmouth, Maine. Toomey at age 21 quit studies at the Fordham University law school to cover the police beat for the *Brooklyn Eagle*. Among the first women to cover crime in New York City, and possibly the first in the 20th century, Toomey later covered the waterfront, cofounded the New York Press Club in 1948, and worked for other newspapers as far west as Reno, Nevada. With psychiatrist Colter Rule, Toomey co-authored several successful self-help books in the early 1970s. She later produced a crime novel. Her 2006 memoir *Assignment Homicide: Behind the Headlines* described the difficulties women had in developing careers on mainstream news beats during her era. Toomey retired from journalism in 1989 to head the Last Post no-kill cat shelter in Falls Village, Connecticut, after the death of founder and longtime New York City radio show host Pegeen Fitzgerald. Toomey retired from that position in 2007.

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**Theresa Foss**, 48, an animal control officer for the Plainfield Police Department in Plainfield, Connecticut, died on October 8, 2009 from head injuries suffered on September 29 when she fell while trying to apprehend a pit bull terrier who had reportedly trapped a family inside their home. Home owner Ron Roberts told Emily Groves of the *Norwich Bulletin* that the pit bull lunged at Foss. After she fell, Roberts—who has three dogs himself—shot the pit bull with a .22 rifle. The wounded dog returned to the home of distant neighbor David Coombs the next morning. Coombs told police he shot the pit bull dead and buried the remains about four miles away.

**Ram Kumar Adivasi**, 40, a forest guard at the Palpur Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary in western Madhya Pradesh, India, on September 30, 2009 responded to gunshots, with two other forest guards, all unarmed, and found themselves surrounded by a Monghiya poaching gang. “He warned them of dire consequence by uttering that he could identify some of them,” reported Raja Chatterjee, secretary of The Junglees. “That spelled doom on him. While his men were beaten mercilessly and later fled, one of the gang members pulled the trigger on his chest at point-blank range.” Adivasi posthumously received the Junglees’ Green Guard award, as did Palpur Kuno forest guard Ram Dayal Srivas, who was murdered in his sleep by poachers in 2007.

**Sunil Renade**, 37, died on October 24, 2009 from a bite by a cobra he had rescued earlier in the day. An inspector for the Bombay SPCA since 1994, Renade lived on the premises with his wife and daughters, ages 10 and 3. “He was an expert on reptiles, especially snakes. He even had emergency vaccines and a pump to remove poison at his home. Despite all precautions, he met his end,” said Bombay SPCA chief executive Colonel J.C. Kanna, who pledged that the society “would provide all necessary assistance to his surviving family members.” Other Mumbai animal charities promised to assist. Renade was especially known for rescuing nearly 100 snakes who were stranded in Mumbai by flash flooding on July 26, 2005, returning them to wild habitat outside the city.

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MEMORIALS

In memory of all the animals who have suffered in 2009.  
—Hilde Wilson

To Kim and Wolf in memory of their Shamsy: He found his way to you despite all the challenges he faced. He fought hard to be well, as you kept him safe and cared for. The end came too soon for all of you, but he would not have given up a moment in your arms. Love,  
—Lindy, Marvin & Melinda Sobel

In memory of Gayle Hoenig, a much loved “animals’ voice.”  
—Marcia Davis

In loving memory and honor of Rainbow Ranch animals.  
—Heather Miller



**Taylor Josephine Stephanie Luciw**, 19, a Toronto folksinger/songwriter known professionally as Taylor Mitchell, died on October 28, 2009 in Halifax, after an emergency airlift from Chetikamp, Nova Scotia. Hiking alone on the Skyline Trail in Cape Breton Highlands National Park on October 27, Mitchell was mauled by as many as six coyotes. Hearing Mitchell scream, other hikers chased away the coyotes and called for help, but she was already in critical condition when Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers—already in the area—arrived minutes later. Two coyotes were shot at the scene. One died and was sent for necropsy. The other escaped. Mitchell was only the second human on record to be killed by wild coyotes, and the first adult. The only other human victim was a three-year-old who was attacked by a coyote in 1981 in Glendale, California. However, a teenaged girl was bitten on the arm by a coyote on the Skyline Trail in 2003, and another teenaged girl was attacked by a coyote in the trail parking lot in 1988. Biologists are investigating whether the coyotes—who hunt moose in the Cape Breton region—might actually be coyote/wolf or coyote/dog hybrids, Project Coyote founder Camilla Fox told **ANIMAL PEOPLE**. “Data collected by Michael W. Fox—Camilla’s father and my mentor—showed that captive first generation coyote/dog hybrids often showed aberrant behavior, and I saw some of this first hand,” said ethologist Marc Bekoff. Mitchell was in Cape Breton on a three-week tour to promote her first recording, after being nominated for a 2009 Canadian Folk Music Award in the Young Performer of the Year category. “There are no words to describe my grief,” said her mother, Emily Mitchell, in a written statement. “Taylor was my shining light, my baby, my confidante and best friend,” but instead of dwelling on her grief, Emily Mitchell appealed for the coyotes who killed her daughter to be spared. “I want people to know that Taylor was a seasoned naturalist and well-versed in wilderness camping,” Emily Mitchell said. “She loved the woods and had a deep affinity for their beauty and serenity. We take a calculated risk when spending time in nature’s fold—it’s the wildlife’s terrain. When the decision was made to kill the pack of coyotes, I clearly heard Taylor’s voice say, ‘Please don’t, this is their space.’ She wouldn’t have wanted their demise, especially as a result of her own. She was passionate about animals, was an environmentalist, and was alsplanning to volunteer at the Toronto Wildlife Centre in the coming months.”

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