

# Latham Letter

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Spring 1992

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR ALL LIVING THINGS THROUGH EDUCATION

## Disabled Horsemen Explore New Horizons

Kerrill Knaus-Hardy

One of man's oldest allies, the horse, has recently blazed a new trail in the on-going exploration of the many and varied benefits of the human-animal bond. A select group of horses are being specifically trained to assist the disabled by providing a sturdy set of legs capable of carrying their disabled riders into scenic and wilderness areas. These special horses called "Access Equines" are giving people with disabilities the opportunity to visit wild and secluded wilderness habitats previously too difficult to reach. Alpine meadows, ancient forests, and ocean beaches are not areas where wheelchairs or crutches do well, and although four-wheel drive vehicles may provide some access to these areas, they also cause severe damage to plant life, erosion of the natural landscape, and the intrusion of enough noise to cause even the boldest of wild creatures to flee.

Natural wilderness experience has traditionally been unavailable to most people with disabilities until now. A relatively young organization in a small rural community in the foothills of Oregon's Cascade Mountains is making great strides in an effort to bring people, animals, and the environment together. The non-profit organization is called



Eight year old Bobby leaves his wheelchair behind to enter his horse in a Western show. Photograph courtesy of H.O.R.S.E.S.

H.O.R.S.E.S. For The Physically Challenged. H.O.R.S.E.S. stands for Horseback Outdoor Recreation, Special Equipment and Services.

Not to be confused with therapeutic riding, H.O.R.S.E.S. provides a service that is strictly recreational. It is perhaps best described as an "Adaptive Riding Program." The goal of the organization is to provide a family oriented, integrated program offering the support services needed by disabled individuals who wish to become able to ride independently. This is accomplished primarily in three ways:

1. custom training of specially selected horses,

2. adaptive saddles and other riding and safety equipment, and

3. training the rider to understand and control his or her mount in spite of physical limitations.

Adapting the mind of the horse to the needs of riders with severe physical disabilities requires a philosophy of training that is detailed and highly versatile. It begins with the selection of just the right horse, and moves from there to creating a specific training program tailored to the abilities and intended use of that particular animal. The trainer must be constantly willing to deviate from tradi-

*Continued page 18*

## The Agonies of Morale Decision Making

Thomas E. Catanzaro,  
D.V.M., M.H.A.

As a veterinarian, the hardest question at the examination table doesn't deal with a patient, it deals with our patient's family. The clients, their children, and others that depend on the animal's nonjudgmental love undergo severe stress when our patient becomes a critical healthcare case. When do we make decisions for the best quality of life for the pet versus maintaining the quality of life for the family? The grief associated with a terminal illness or death often causes that toughest of questions, "What do I tell the children?"

### The Academic Answer

If we read the cursory literature, we are told to be truthful. The concept is solid and the need critical, but those cursory pamphlets don't tell us how to deliver this truth. There is a current video training program on Pet Loss that shows us a 45-minute "typical client coaching system" which has never been typical for me; I am lucky if I can keep their attention for eight minutes. A brief statement that reflects a caring concern, which also contains the truth, is how we assist our clients in dealing with the loss of a loved pet

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**REMEMBER  
TO  
RECYCLE**

## Find A Need And Fill It

### Concern for violence to- ward children and animals

A significant factor contributing to Latham's many successes has always been an intuitive ability to tailor humane educational services to the social needs and temperament of the times. During the past seventy-five years, those times have seen the depth of a worldwide depression, the turbulence and aftermath of wars as well as prosperity. Immediately following World War I, its initial efforts were designed to complement public and parochial school peace time programs through the provision of talented lecturers, interesting publications, and timely sponsored essay and poster contests (the latter of which grew to international proportions). In 1927, those services were augmented by its innovative "School of the Air" radio programming and, in 1953, by an award winning, multi-language "Wonderful World of Brother Buzz" TV series. During the past twelve years, a major Latham effort has produced, through the sponsorship of university level conferences, book and newsletter and film/video documentaries, gratifying results in promoting public awareness of the mutual benefits to be derived from human-companion animal bond programs and pet assisted therapy activity.

Few thinking people will disagree with the need for and value of humane education. One finds a considerable difference of opinion, however, concerning the identity and emphasis to be given to selected beneficiaries of humane education. Though, regardless of those differences there is a majority agreement that the human species should be the principal, if not the exclusive, bene-

ficiary of such education. As the Foundation's mandated concern continues to be for both human and nonhuman life, it takes issue with such a limited view and it remains firm in its conviction that the various applications of the human-companion animal bond are of important and mutual value to both man and animal. As such, it will actively continue its support and promotion of H/CAB activity.

In addition to H/CAB promotion, it has embarked upon a new and, in our opinion, an even more important effort: to inform and convince the public that child abuse and animal abuse are not two separate problems but one and the same; that where one exists in a family possessed of a child and an animal, the other is inevitably present. Latham's new effort will publicize the fact that the bilateral exchange of germane information, between child and animal welfare agencies is of inestimable, mutual value to each of their missions. Its promotional effort will be based upon the proven experience of agencies which have found such cooperation to provide material assistance in the detection and abatement of situations where abusive cruelty exists. The dissemination of that information will also provide a highly satisfying answer for those who, with raised eyebrows, question the validity of humane efforts in behalf of animals "When there are children suffering?" as well as those whose sincere attention is limited to animal welfare alone. It is suggested that each contemplate the wisdom of the statement: "If we are to prevent childhood cruelty to animals, we must also prevent cruelty to children." It is a proven fact that an overwhelming number of violent criminals have endured abusive childhoods.

Two major elements in Latham's efforts in support of the abatement of violence toward children and animals will be the production and distribution of public information videos for television and the sponsorship of regional, one day seminars for the edification of child and animal welfare professionals. The first of which is scheduled to be held in cooperation with Mills College at Oakland, California on October 24, 1992.

Hugh H. Tebault

## Animals in Entertainment

The Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) has announced the first-ever conference specifically organized to address the question of animals in entertainment. The conference, "Animals in Entertainment: The Problems The Solutions," will be held in Sacramento, California, May 7-10, 1992.

Highlights of the conference will include addresses on topics of animals in entertainment today, rodeos, captive elephants, primates in entertainment, circuses and much more.

For further information, contact Paws at P.O. Box 849, Galt, California, 95632, or call (916) 393-3340.



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## Pet Lives on in Memories and Hearts

Roy MacGregor

*The Ottawa Citizen*

I thought for the longest time that nothing would need to be said. But then, that was before I drove out into the countryside to pick up the middle daughter from a weekend sleeper. Her stuff was piled by the door and, like any trusting parent, I quickly went through the pile to find out how much of what she'd taken with her was going to be coming home.

Pajamas, Check. A change of clothes, Check. Stuffed toy, Check. Dog dish... I can see where this is going to take some explaining.

Several months ago I wrote about how the facts of life were catching up to our 16-year-old mutt. I wrote about the number of different ways people could phrase a question that, no matter what tricks the words played still came down to: When are you going to kill Bumps?

And I admitted that we had no idea. Sure she was stone deaf. Yes, her fur was matted. Indeed, she did stink. I think, too, she had dog's Alzheimer's. How else do you explain things like constantly getting caught under chairs and not being able to figure out that her chain led straight back to the door?

We talked about it. We edged up to the ugly fact when she temporarily lost control of her bodily fluids, but who in God's name could put a dog down because it piddled on a carpet? We came close when she had to have a growth removed from her rear end, but when she came out of

the anaesthetic with that once magnificent tail still wagging, who could not hope for the impossible?

There's no explaining why some stories get picked up and others don't. Everyone knows that the fate of a mongrel is a poor measure against human lives being lost and gained, but then...well, the only way to understand is to go through it yourself, and to know that there are certain things measured within a family that are not intended to make sense beyond.

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*"And even if it doesn't feel good, it does, somehow, feel right."*

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Outside of the family involved, a pet's death is, at best, a pause in the conversation. But within, it has a lasting expression one will not find in conversation of any length.

Whatever the reasons, the story was reprinted widely. A great number of readers wrote — some even sent prayers — and all contained the same essential message: You will know when that time has come.

It's true. First there was a second growth, this time inoperable. Then she fell down the stairs and couldn't get up. Her back end was gone. And yet, the last day I came home and she was still there, she tried to do the only chore that has ever been expected of her: whip a bushy tail from side to side and act like your coming home was the most significant event that has ever taken place.

But she still couldn't move. We had a talk. It didn't go well. The moon was full on the drive to the vet's, full and large and the color of a yellow apple.

Vets are good at these things. You're welcome to come in. You're welcome to stay. You're encouraged to hang on. And you do. But you know you can't hang on forever. It's over very quickly, very quietly. It would be a lie to say it feels good but it does feel right. Just as they said it would.

Back home her last tracks were still in the front yard and, for once, you pray for snow. You deal with the tears and turn to putting away things where every sound — a dropped chain, a rattled collar — sends ghosts scurrying about the house, some coming down the stairs to greet you, some wanting out, some two years old again and jumping as high as the worn leash can be held.

That first night, when there is no one to let out, there seems no way to close off the day. But one has gone to bed early. One has an envelope of black and white, matted hair. One has an old collar on her dresser. And one, of course, is found sleeping with a dog dish.

You know then it will take much more than snow to cover the tracks. And even if it doesn't feel good, it does, somehow, feel right.

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Latham salutes and wishes Lida McCowan well as she retires after 23 1/2 years as Executive Director and a primary architect of Cheff Center for the Handicapped.

Located in Augusta, Michigan, Cheff Center provides therapeutic horseback riding to physically and mentally challenged children and adults.



## Successful Pet Adoptions

Aline H. Kidd, Ph.D.,  
Robert M. Kidd, M.A., Carol  
C. George, Ph.D.

It is an appalling fact that 15% of all dogs and cats in the United States go through a Humane Society or end in a Shelter each year. And though some Shelters report that spaying and neutering programs have produced a reduction in the number of unwanted animals, there remain the millions of animals who are adopted, then rejected, and ultimately euthanized each year because no one wants them. In the hope that the results of our recent study might help to make pet adoptions more successful and so reduce the number of adopted pets returned to Humane Societies, given away, or abandoned, we compared people who retained newly adopted pets with people who rejected and abandoned or more deliberately disposed of them.

In the San Francisco Bay Area we enlisted the aid of the Humane Societies which had a combined adoption rate of 8000 pets a year. Their staff people asked each adult then in the process of adopting a pet to fill out a 2-part Pet Expecta-

tion Inventory designed by Carol George.

The first part asked the adults to rate their expectations (from a 7-high to a 1-low) that their new pet would be a **Companion**, a **Confidante**, a **Playmate**, a **Source of Emotional Support**, a **Living being to Touch and Cuddle**, a **Source of Laughter**, or a **Socializer** for themselves. A Total score indicated the full strength of their expectations for their new pet.

Similarly, the second part asked the parents to rate their expectations for their children that the new pet would be a **Companion**, a **Playmate**, would **Keep children Busy**, would **Teach children Love and Emotional Sensitivity**, would **Teach children Responsibility**, would be a **Source of Emotional Support**, and would be a **Provider of Physical Comfort**. Again, a Total score indicated the intensity of their expectations of the new pet for their children.

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*"Interestingly,  
rejecters never  
mentioned training"*

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Six months after the Inventories were initially completed, we telephoned all of the adopters who had responded. We asked them whether they had kept their new pets. If they had not kept their pets, we asked them to share their reasons why not. If they had kept their pets, we discussed any particular problems they might have had in coping with their pets' natural behaviors.

120 men and 223 women filled out the Inventories. Six months later, 68 (20%) had rejected their pets. By comparing those who had kept the pet with those who

had rejected them, we found that adults who already had or had previously owned pets retained significantly more of the new pets than did first-time adopters. The men had rejected a significantly higher percentage of pets than had the women and significantly more parents than non-parents had rejected!

Adults who retained pets had significantly higher expectations for the roles that pets would play in their own and their children's lives than did rejecters. However, parents with high expectations that the pets would **Keep their children Busy**, **Teach their children to Love and Nurture**, and/or **Teach their children Responsibility** were significantly more likely to be pet rejecters than parents who scored lower on these expectations.

There were, of course, different expectations based on the type of pet adopted. For adults, dogs were expected to be **Companions**, **Confidantes**, and **Sources of Emotional Support** significantly more often than were cats.

Our results suggested that the roles that pets were expected to play in adults' lives were quite reasonable, as were a majority of the roles expected for their children's lives. However, expectations that the pets would **Teach children Love or Responsibility**, and take up more of the children's time and thus permit parents more uninterrupted time for work or relaxation proved to be quite unreasonable.

The responses to our follow-up phone calls suggested some explanations for our findings. The adopters who were strongly attached to and had reasonable, high expectations for their pets' roles

were also those who had more experience with pets in the past. It is possible that first-time adopters with lower expectations simply did not know what to expect of the animals. Retainers and rejecters, oddly, reported identical behaviors: *"The kitten climbs my drapes, claws the hi-fi speakers, and swings on the table cloth."* Although the rejecters usually added *"So we got rid of it,"* retainers usually commented *"She'll probably outgrow it and settle down."*

In the telephone discussions, retainers asked or talked about ways of training the dog or cat to give up undesirable behaviors, and many specifically mentioned **behavior modification**. Interestingly, rejecters never mentioned **training**. Clearly, previous pet owners anticipated undesirable behaviors in their newly adopted pets and were aware of successful techniques in coping with or eliminating them.

Even though Humane Societies provide low-cost care and services, many of the retainers commented that, for them, a major consideration was the cost of food, vaccinations, spaying or neutering, and other veterinarian services. Although this topic never arose in discussions with pet rejecters, overall expenses probably contributed to the rejecters' decisions to get rid of their new pets.

The results of this research suggest some ways in which Humane Societies, veterinarians, and animal health technicians can help to reduce numbers of abandoned and rejected pets.

First, each adopter should be questioned about present and past pet ownership or experience. Those who have never owned a pet or have not owned a pet since childhood should be given information about the



material expense of pet ownership, about characteristic behaviors of kittens or puppies, dogs or cats, depending on the animal being adopted. Emphasis should be placed on behaviors usually considered undesirable such as chewing up furniture, shoes, slippers, books, scratching up rugs or tearing drapes and tablecloths, urinating, defecating, or marking in inappropriate places, biting, and jumping on people.

Responses to our phone calls also indicated that new adopters especially need to be warned against spanking, kicking, or hitting in trying to reduce unwanted behaviors, and also be given detailed information about the best ways of training to increase desirable behaviors and to reduce undesirable ones. Behavior modification with positive reinforcement should be strongly suggested. We believe that lack of knowledge about pets is a very important cause of pet rejection.

The expectations of first-time adopters should be discussed. Many adults who only see cute, well-mannered pets on television and who read popular articles on the human/companion animal bond, often develop unrealistic ideas about human/pet relationships. Pet animals do not free parents to work or play apart from their children! Pets can teach children responsibility and emotional sensitivity only in conjunction with parental teaching, guidance, and example. Pets cannot solve all human problems. New pet owners need to learn what are and are not reasonable expectations.

Indeed, we are convinced that the development of well-informed, reasonable, and responsible pet owners will reduce the number of rejected pets and

save a significant number of animal lives.

*Dr. Aline Kidd is a Professor of Psychology at Mills College in Oakland, California. Reverend Robert Kidd serves as the Chaplain at the V.A. Medical Center in Martinez, California and is greatly involved in research on the human-companion animal bond in conjunction with Dr. Kidd.*

*Dr. Carol George is currently Assistant Professor of Psychology at Mills College.*

## Healing Without Words: The Effects of Animals on Depressed Populations in Psychiatric Hospitals

Sherry Lebeck

"That man has not uttered a word for three months," exclaimed the enthusiastic administrator at a local psychiatric facility. "I had no idea that the animals would have this effect on the patients." Her excitement reflected the response of other administrators and occupational therapists at three psychiatric hospitals where a six-month study of the effects of animals on hospitalized depressed patients took place last year.

At our first visit, administrators stood behind a big glass window at the staff station, observing five volunteers walking into a patient dayroom carrying animal crates or pulling the large crate containing Sooeey-Heart, the Chinese pot-bellied pig. Patients assembled in the dayroom were eager to see what was inside.

"Would you mind helping me put the pen together," said one volunteer to a patient. This patient cautiously proceeded at first and then took charge. He spread the tarp over a portion of the li-

noleum-covered floor and put the pen over the tarp. Then a duck, three rabbits, two guinea pigs and a turtle were placed in the pen. Another patient was asked to fill water dishes for the animals in the pen and for the dogs and pig. Still other patients were asked if they would like to hold the leashes of the two dogs while the volunteers helped set up for the visit.

Some patients petted the dogs admiringly, while others stood near the pen in the middle of the room, watching the antics of the animals inside. Other patients sat on the periphery of the room watching and saying nothing, while others sat around the pig's crate waiting for him to come out. "He's scared," one patient said. "He'll come out when he feels safe."

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*"The patients took pride in the visits."*

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When everything was set up, the volunteers got their towel-covered baskets and placed a rabbit or guinea pig inside and began their one-on-one visits with patients. Patients would sit on one of the chairs on the periphery of the room while petting the rabbit or guinea pig on their lap. For some patients this was the first time they had ever touched a rabbit or guinea pig. For others, the animals brought back memories of family pets or favorite farm animals. We heard stories about runt pigs and rabbits and ducks. Many spoke of their favorite dogs or cats.

A volunteer went over to a man who was particularly quiet and not participating in the activities, although he seemed to be watching. She asked if he would like to hold "Marina," a guinea pig. He nodded slightly and she placed the basket containing the guinea pig on his lap. The man watched Marina mov-

ing around in the basket. The volunteer sat quietly near the man and also observed the activity. Suddenly, the guinea pig started digging ferociously in the basket and buried herself underneath the towel. A moment later, the man uttered in a surprised, loud voice, "She peed on me." Indeed, Marina left a large puddle on the man's lap. While cleaning him up as best she could, the volunteer profusely apologized and started to take Marina away. "Wait," said the man in a faltering voice, "I think she likes me." And a dialogue began between the volunteer and the man who had not spoken for three months.

A psychotically depressed patient who addressed himself as Jesus was fascinated with Saltine Quacker, the noisy Peking duck. A volunteer asked if he would like to touch her. He was hesitant at first, but then agreed. As another volunteer held Saltine, the man carefully moved a finger toward her body. When he touched the feathers as though painting them on her, his face lit up. "It's real!" he cried, continuing to gently pet the duck with one finger. When asked if he would like to have a Polaroid picture taken of himself and Saltine, he said earnestly, "Yes." He stared at the picture and again said, "It's real." "Yes, it's real," said the volunteer who was told by the man that he often "goes away in [this] head and doesn't know how to get back." The volunteer suggested that he find the picture when he feels that way and remember the moment. He smiled, looking down at the picture.

In another corner of the room, Sooeey-Heart the pig had come out of his pen and was snorting around the room, searching for food. Patients were laughing and touching the prickly hair on

*Continued page 6*

his back. They were also offering popcorn, carrots and apples for his attention, laughing as they felt his soft snout tickle the palms of their hands.

We were nearing the end of the hour and it was time to take pictures of individual patients and their favorite animals. Patients eagerly awaited their turns. Then an interesting phenomenon took place. Groups of patients asked to have pictures taken with groups of animals. Laughter and cooperation was prevalent. This was antithetical to the beginning of the visit when patients were alienated by their own preoccupations.

At the end of the visit, patients took down the pen, emptied the water dishes and folded the tarp. Nearly all of the patients attempted to show their appreciation for the visit. "Thank you for coming," they said over and over again. "Next time I want to hold the dog's leash," said one. "And I want a picture with Sooeey," said another.

In the hallway, the administrator was ecstatic. "If I had known the animals had this effect on the patients, we would have had you here long ago."

During the six-month study which was funded by The San Francisco Foundation and the Delta Society, we studied the effects of animals on depressed patients at three psychiatric hospitals. What we found was amazing. Patients who ordinarily would not communicate with the staff or each other would open up with an animal and volunteer. Staff who were standoffish towards certain patients viewed them in a different light after watching them interact with the animals. Patients who initially acted out would be indistinguishable from staff after we put them to work

setting up during the visit. We found that by treating these people as equals, actively participating in a visit, rather than treating them as patients by expecting them to sit passively watching volunteers perform, their expectations and ultimate behavior was positively altered. The patients took pride in the visits and watched over the animals as though they were their own, gently catching a guinea pig who escaped from the pen or noticing that an animal seemed hungry or tired. The patients also were extremely sensitive to what they deemed to be the emotions of the animals, particularly the pig and the turtle. Both of these animals seemed to represent metaphors of withdrawal for the patients confined in these hospitals. Patients succinctly stated their own fears through these animals. "She's hiding her head (turtle) because she doesn't want anyone to see her. That's all she's got left. She'll peek out when she's ready." Patients who were not talking with each other were, by the end of the hour, sharing pictures, laughing together and participating in group photographs with groups of animals. We were told by the occupational therapists at each of the hospitals that the patients often talked about the visits over the next two to three weeks during group meetings with individual therapists.

As we were measuring the effects of the animals on three groups of patients through evaluation forms collected before and after visits from both staff and the patients, we found a significant lessening in the level of depression in the group of patients who enjoyed animal visits.

Another group observed photographs of various types of animals with volunteers. These visits usually lasted less than half an hour as com-

pared with the hour-long visits to the groups with the animals. However, we found that there was also some improvement, although not significant, in the level of depression in this group. There was no improvement in the control group which received no pictures or animal visits. The people in this group were offered the opportunity to participate in either the animal or picture visits, but refused to join either. In fact, this group's depression scales showed an increase in depression.

This pilot study significantly demonstrates the importance of animal visits to psychiatric wards. Over a six-month period, we repeatedly saw the same types of positive effects of the animals on patients who were mute, withdrawn, frightened or psychotic at each of the three hospitals. There was a sense of calmness and "unconditional positive regard" that the animals engendered to patients that neither the volunteers alone or the staff could provide. A bond of trust was established by the animals to the patients, yet no words were exchanged.

The visits not only affected the patients, but the volunteers and staff as well. We noted staff coming from all parts of the hospital when they knew we were making our visits. Some wanted a "pig fix" or to pet their favorite dog or see a rabbit or guinea pig. Sometimes there were more staff crowding into the visiting room than patients. The volunteers, too, stated that the animals calmed them. Every one of the 15 volunteers participating in the program stated there was something "magical" that occurred during the animal visits that was missing in the photograph visits. Most of these volunteers have extensive experience in working with psychiatric patients, as most were recruited

for clinical psychology programs from various schools around the East Bay in California. As one volunteer stated, "This had been a profoundly moving experience for me. I thought I understood the importance of animals to people. But I was not truly cognizant of that importance until I saw them together in this setting. It blows me away."

*Sherry Lebeck is a doctoral candidate at the California School of Professional Psychology. This is the narrative of one of her research projects.*

## Until There Are None

The Humane Society of the United States has launched a new campaign directed toward encouraging people to adopt their new companion animals from local humane societies and animal shelters. According to a recent study by the American Animal Hospital Association, only 14% of pets were obtained from animal shelters. A statistic that makes the reason behind the high euthanasia rate for animal shelters painfully obvious.

"Until There Are None, Adopt One!" is fully explained in the December 1991/January 1992 issue of *Shelter Sense*. The issue is filled with helpful suggestions for improving the adoption rate. Among the information provided are a variety of reasons why many people do not consider adopting their pet from a shelter. Other articles within give recommendations on attracting more adopters, improving your shelter's appeal and much much more.

For more information, contact HSUS, 2100 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20037.

## Killer Bees: Fact or Fiction?

Martin Prince

Remember the reports in the newspapers and on TV a few years ago about "killer bees?"

Apparently, a strain of African honeybees released in Brazil was swarming its way north at 200 miles per year. The bees were called "killer bees" because, according to popular press reports, they would sting to death anything that got in their way.

Ever wonder what happened to the "killer bees?" After all, it was forecast that they would reach the Texas border in a few years, and if you think back, you'll remember that a few hardy reporters continued with "killer bee" stories until the pestiferous insects began their buzzing path of death and destruction across Mexico.

Often, when ill tidings not based on fact are disseminated, the credibility gap in the press is smoothed over by simply dropping the subject. This is the case with the much written about killer bees.

"They are not 'killer bees' at all," says Dr. Bobby Davis, an entomologist with the Texas Department of Health. "They are honeybees. I was very interested in them from the start, for obvious public health reasons, so I started re-searching. The evidence shows that the reports we all heard in the press simply were not true. Now, we have the so-called "killer bees" in South Texas. And they are not presenting a public health problem, period. And I don't expect them to in the future."

According to public health officials, apiarists

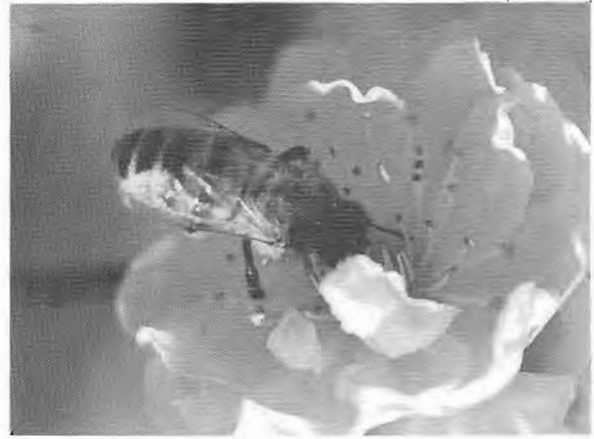
and university experts, it appears that the vast majority of the reports of the depredations of "killer bees" in Central and South America had little or no truth to them. If one digs deep enough, like Dr. Davis has, one will find that the African honeybee, or Africanized honeybee (other honeybees crossed with the African variety), was originally named the "killer bee" for political reasons and the name stuck simply because "killer bee" stories, true or not, made good news—especially in the United States.

Dr. Davis recounted to me an exchange he had with a close friend, Dr. Thomas Betz, an M.D. with the Austin County Health Department and formerly employed by the Center for Disease Control. Dr. Betz has also spent months in Venezuela and Peru, working for A.I.D., the Agency for International Development.

Dr. Betz was in Venezuela working with A.I.D. when so-called "killer bees" entered that country. Betz ranged far and wide in the Venezuela countryside during that summer and remained in close contact with health authorities there as he worked to improve the health of the Venezuelan people. Betz was confounded upon returning to the United States and learning from Dr. Davis of the reports that up to 3,000 Venezuelans had been killed by killer bees while Betz had been in Venezuela.

"It is just absolutely untrue. I was there. I was in the area. I don't know what they are talking about," Betz told his friend.

To engage in any rational examination of so-called killer bees, therefore, one cannot join the fray at some point after "reports" of killer bees first emanated from South America. In-



stead, it is important to fully understand the circumstances under which the African honeybee came to be called a "killer bee" in the first place. The rest is journalistic history at its worst.

Following is an excerpt from an article in *The Smithsonian*, September, 1991, by Sue Hubbell, a beekeeper in Missouri and the author of *Book of Bees* (Random House, 1988). Hubbell's article is entitled "Maybe the 'killer' bee should be called the 'bravo' instead." Hubbell writes:

"The 'killer bee' label, it turns out, was invented not by headline writers or by Hollywood but by military strongmen in Brazil. According to Professor Roger Morse of Cornell University, the grand old man of American beekeeping, the term's origin was purely political.

"Morse worked with Dr. Warwick E. Kerr, a university professor in Brazil who introduced African honeybees to Brazil in 1956. The Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture had requested Kerr's help to bolster beekeeping in the warmer parts of Brazil where other subspecies had not survived."

In a book which Hubbell cited, *Bees and Beekeeping*, published by Cornell University Press, Morse explained the bizarre chain of events which gave us the term "killer bee."

Kerr's hardworking but somewhat feisty honeybees were doing fine in the tropical climate of Brazil, and no one took much notice of them until eight years later, after a military takeover of the government. As a leading scientist in the country, Kerr often represented Brazil at international conferences and his cooperation was needed by the new "government." But Professor Kerr was a vocal opponent of the new regime, criticizing in particular its treatment of a group of railway workers and its proclivity for torturing Catholic nuns.

The military threw Kerr in jail in 1964 and again in 1969. But the strongmen's most useful weapons against Dr. Kerr were the lies they spread about his bees and his work. They played upon people's fear of stinging insects by labeling the Africanized honeybee, in Portuguese, the language of Brazil, as *abelhas assassinas*—killer bees. To credit these tin-pot dictators, the effort to sell the idea of "killer bees" turned out to be one of the most successful smear campaigns ever. In fact, by 1965, one year after the takeover of Brazil, the September 24 issue of *Time Magazine*, no less, included references to killer bees, picked up from

*Continued page 8*

one of the Brazilian militarist's false press releases. *Time* carried another "killer bee" story on April 12, 1968. Professor Morse writes:

"Those stories prompted others to write in this same vein, and the term and the Brazilian association with "killer bees" was firmly established."

The fact is, the African honeybee, *Apis mellifera scutellata*, the so-called "killer bee" differs only slightly from various European breeds inhabiting the U.S. Hubbell visited beekeepers in Central America last year and found that keepers of *A. m. scutellata* use methods similar to her own to handle the insects. In some cases, she noted, keepers actually wore less protective clothing than one would for European honeybees. Hubbell visited beekeepers in Guatemala who were raising *A. m. scutellata* and was incredulous when one keeper beat on the side of a hive to get his bees to come out to investigate. Hubbell wrote that she would never dare to disturb her own Missouri hives that severely.

Many beekeepers in Central and South America are very pleased with the new bees. They work harder, are more disease resistant and in some cases are easier to handle than European bees, though not usually.

Hubbell says that *A. m. scutellata* has forced beekeepers in Central America to make some adjustments as the bees have migrated northward, establishing new hives and interbreeding with European varieties. Once the European strains have been "Africanized," they can require more precautions when handled. *Apis mellifera scutellata* and crosses tend to be more protective of their hives. Hubbell notes that it is com-

mon practice among apiarists to arrange several hives on common stands. With European varieties, except for German honeybees, beekeepers can treat an individual hive with a bee smoker to calm the bees, and then work with the hive without disturbing bees in adjacent, untreated hives. Africanized bees are more protective of their hives and, according to experienced apiarists who raise them, hives must be kept on individual stands, because the more protective Africanized bees may sting a keeper who jiggles a hive while working on another which has been treated with a bee smoker.

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"... in my view,  
they're not a  
significant health  
problem."

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Also, with Africanized bees, keepers have found that they are less tolerant of human activity near their hives and that it is a good idea to allow a little more leeway around hives, setting them further from houses and animals than one would for European honeybees.

Hubbell writes that there has been a consistent increase in honey production (after a brief downturn) in each of the countries which have been "invaded" by *A. m. scutellata*. When the new bees show up, some beekeepers go out of business because they cannot or will not make the adjustments necessary to commercially produce honey with the Africanized strains. After that, however, remaining keepers and newcomers to the business adjust to the new insects, and honey production rises dramatically. Why?

The fact is, *Apis mellifera scutellata* and its crosses are, to be succinct, busier bees. It is flatly untrue that Africanized honeybees produce less honey than other honeybees, because "they spend all their time protecting the hive, instead of making honey." While some apiarists are doubtful about handling the more energetic bees, it is generally accepted that they are more productive. Central American beekeepers point out enthusiastically that Africanized bees are out of the hive and onto the flowers twenty minutes to a full hour earlier each morning than European varieties.

As far as the honey industry in the United States goes, there is some disagreement among experts on the effect that *A. mellifera scutellata* will have, especially since there is a disagreement on how far north the migration will reach.

Dr. Davis observes wryly: "It's a funny thing with these bees. When they were a long way off, and it was near impossible to substantiate any kind of claim, we were receiving reports that these bees killed hundreds and thousands of people. As they got closer to our own backyard, I started to notice that the claims were lower and lower. Now we've got 'em in South Texas, and in my view, they're not a significant public health problem. Each year in Texas, we might have two or three, or sometimes more people die from bee stings. Some years we get by with none. We've had Africanized honeybees in Texas for eleven months. In that time, three people have died of bee stings. I just don't see that these bees are killers."

If there is another aspect of the "killer bee" saga worth reiterating, — it would only be for chuckles

— it would be the United States Department of Agriculture plan called the Bee Regulated Zone (BRZ).

According to Sue Hubbell, the plan was devised to keep the invaders out of Texas. The BRZ caused more than a little merriment among scientists and beekeepers. According to Hubbell, who wrote "Anyone who has worked with bees knows that they cannot be forced to do anything or prevented from doing anything. Eventually the USDA altered the mission of the BRZ to conform with reality by deciding that the real goal of the program was to slow down the invasion by the feisty fliers from the south, rather than keep them out completely.

The first swarm of *Apis mellifera scutellata* crossed the Rio Grande in October 1989. The USDA promptly killed them. But others soon followed and Africanized bees now live in Texas.

Dr. Davis says there is a lot of misunderstanding of Africanized honeybees among the public.

Davis said that a heavy equipment operator was stung over 300 times by Africanized bees in Texas. The man was treated at a hospital and released. The "killer bee" story was highly publicized, with local newspapers reporting his condition thusly: "He is expected to live."

"I called and spoke with the treating staff and asked them about the case. They were amused by the way it was reported — saying the man was never in any danger of dying whatsoever," Davis said. Davis also noted that because the news reports used the term "killer bees," public health and animal control agencies were flooded with calls and reports from citizens concerned about bees in their yard, or about a person who

had been stung by a bee, and was it a "killer bee?"

During the same time period, in another state, a man was stung over 1000 times by another type of honeybee, the European honeybee. The man was treated in a hospital and released. Davis says that in that case, no citizens called local authorities with questions or concerns of any kinds. No press reports exaggerated the incident or led the public to believe that the man was in danger when he was not. The difference?

In the Texas case, the bees were killer bees! Not only did the press feel obligated to give the story much more coverage, but it had to be reported that the man almost died. After all, they were killer bees! Killer bees kill people! If they don't, then as a responsible reporter, apparently, you at least have to assume that they almost killed someone.

With the public's more realistic perception of the danger associated with "regular honeybees," a person who is under attack, or has simply been stung, is very likely to receive aid from other people, even those giving aid have a reasonable expectation of being stung also.

However, Davis is convinced that people may die unnecessarily in the future from the stings of all kinds of honeybees, because victims may not be aided by bystanders who would help otherwise, but would be afraid to get near because of the perception that the bees might be "killer bees."

Davis is convinced that Africanized bees will not be a health problem in Texas or anywhere else, if only people would stop referring to them incorrectly as "killer bees."

*Apis mellifera scutellata.*

Honeybees that work a little harder and defend the hive a little more aggressively than most strains of

honeybee. They do not roam far and wide in swarms with the intent of stinging animals and people to death. The sting of *A. mellifera scutellata* is not more powerful than the sting of other honeybees — unless a person is allergic to bee stings, one would have to be stung hundreds or even thousands of times for death to be caused, as is the case with other honeybees.

In order to be stung to death by Africanized bees one would have to go out of one's way to approximately the degree required to be stung to death by any other kind of honeybee.

Consider this: Forty to fifty people die of bee stings every year in the United States. According to the best estimates available now, somewhere between 600 and 1000 people died of bee stings from Africanized bees throughout South and Central America since the bees started northward in the 1960s, according to Dr. Davis. During that time, using 40 deaths a year as an average in the United States, and counting from, let's say, 1970 onward, it is safe to assume that during the same period about 900 people died of bee stings in the United States — a country with hospitals, 911 service, paved roads and ambulances and even helicopters to transport allergic people for immediate treatment.

Even if Dr. Davis's careful research and extensive contacts with public health agencies in Mexico and South and Central America have missed three-quarters of the deaths due to Africanized honeybees, it still would not appear that Africanized bees are any more dangerous than other honeybees.

If a person is allergic to bee stings, that person has to have a respect for bees

that other people do not. Any person who is allergic to bee stings must respect Africanized bees right along with any other kind of honeybee or stinging insect. But looking at the evidence rationally and following the observations of knowledgeable people, the public has no more to fear from Africanized honeybees than from honeybee honeybees, in the view of this writer.

*Martin Prince is the Editor of the NACA News, the newsletter of the National Animal Control Association. The above article appeared in the November/December 1991 issue of that publication and is reprinted here with permission.*

## Humane Education in Alberta

Joy Ripley

Happiness is helping young people to grow up into "animal people"; special people whose circle of concern embraces animals and people.

I believe children are born with the seeds of compassion already sown in fertile gardens of their humanness. Compassion, sympathy for the feelings and needs of others, animals and people, is surely the essence of humaneness (having feelings proper to humans).

Occasionally, I am called on by students at the junior high and high school levels to explain to them the Alberta S.P.C.A./animal protectionist attitude or position on animal-related issues. Listening to them, discussing with them, participating with them is energizing! A recent opportunity to help a team of Grade 7 pupils was especially so. They were students participating in an EdPlus project titled "Conflicts in Agriculture." EdPlus projects are designed for stu-

dents who have completed curriculum requirements ahead of schedule so they have time to do extra, more challenging assignments under the guidance of a special coordinator for EdPlus projects.

Several conflicts in agriculture had been identified, including: conventional farming vs. organic farming, the raising of calves for white veal, artificial insemination vs. natural breeding of livestock, game ranching, and the GATT (General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs). The issues to be discussed required above average endeavors on the part of the students for a combined Science and Language Arts venture. They had to prepare a written journal describing their approaches to the projects, data gathered, references, and conclusions drawn from their investigations. They also had to make an oral presentation to the class and teachers describing the materials and data gathered, support the presentation by visual displays, and make a clear representation of both sides of the issues. The students were divided into teams of twos, threes and fours, and each team was assigned a topic to investigate.

The team of two assigned to investigate the raising of calves for white veal called one Friday to ask if I would explain to them the SPCA/animal protectionist attitude toward this practice and provide written material in support of this position. I relish the opportunity to spend time putting together information for students. And, of course, adding a package of information for their school library about the work of our Society. Promptly at 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning the

*Continued page 10*

students arrived, each with a list of questions they wanted answered. We spent almost an hour talking about their questions and the information I had describing the raising of surplus bull calves to produce white veal. I became completely caught up in their new concerns for these animals, whose feelings and role as food animals they had never been aware of or considered before, and their sudden sense of the unfairness of it all. They had already enquired about traditional methods of raising beef calves and how their nature as social, herd animals was satisfied. The comparisons they saw emerging were easily detected.

As we finished our discussion, I urged them to be guided by their obvious sensitivity to the feelings of animals and to learn more about the treatment of food animals. I wished them well with their project, and, as a special favor, I asked them to call and let me know how their presentation went. (I always ask students for feedback on their projects, but seldom hear from them.) I really wanted to know about this project, though, for the manner in which these students were responding to the new information they had found seemed like a text book example of what we all dream of for humane education.

I was ecstatic, about two weeks later, when one of the students called to invite me to attend for the period in which they would present the information gathered about raising calves to produce white veal, also to meet their EdPlus coordinator and home room teacher, and to hear other presentation which would be made during the period.



Photograph © The Humane Farming Association

Realization of the age and level of learning of the students was quickly lost as presentations were made demonstrating what I considered to be, extraordinary skills of investigation, comprehension and presentation; also outstanding guidance from the EdPlus coordinator.

The written portion of the project on white-veal calves explained how the team had conducted a survey amongst other Grade 7 students in their class, and Grade 8 and 9 students at their school. The survey had 11 questions, including such questions as: Of these 4 animals, which is white veal made from—a) chicken b) piglets c) calves d) lambs? Have you ever eaten veal? Did you or anyone you were with ever purchase veal? Do you have any

knowledge of how the animals were raised before they were killed? They also enquired of family, friends and neighbors about their veal-eating habits, either at home or in restaurants, and what they knew about the raising of calves for white veal. They went to supermarkets and checked out the availability of white veal, its price compared to other meat, and asked employees at meat counters what they knew about the production of white veal. They enquired into the nutritional value of white veal compared to other meat. They interviewed a representative of Alberta S.P.C.A. They were unable, however, to locate a white-veal producer in the Calgary area. They had brought a wide range of perspectives into their research.

To support their presentations visually, they had made a model of a barn with a dark interior, lined with little stalls containing miniatures of Holstein calves which just fit the stalls, showing how the calves could not turn around and were prevented from interacting with each other. They had copies for all the class of the Alberta Cattle Commission brochure explaining the "five freedoms" traditional cattle producers provide for their animals. They had made graphs depicting the results of their surveys (adding some humorous asides about how Grade 7 students had more correct answers than Grade 9 students!) and a "Veal word search" puzzle for all the students to try based on what they had learned from the presentation.

They concluded we have enough meat from other animals raised in a way which lets them experience a healthy, relatively natural life with others like themselves so we don't need white veal. They did not speak in terms of rightness or wrongness. Considering what they understood young calves would feel about their confinement and lack of interaction with other calves, they felt people treated the calves unfairly. They were sure that if people knew how white veal is raised, they wouldn't eat it. They also concluded they would not eat white veal and would encourage their friends not to either. Their conclusion was further supported by the fact that white veal offers no nutritional value not available from other meat, therefore, no need for it could be established.

The other presentations I heard were equally as good. The report of the team enquiring about artificial in-

semination vs. natural breeding of livestock brought great levity to the period; but it was no reflection on the sincerity and efforts of the students who went to the country to interview a veterinarian in a large animal practice and then made the taped interview the major part of their presentation. I learned most of what I know about the GATT from the presentation I heard that afternoon. The visuals for that presentation included numerous explanatory charts and graphs and, imaginatively, concluded with a bowl of cookies made by the students for all of us to enjoy, to highlight the importance of and good things that come from wheat. The presentation on game ranching was highlighted by a video made from news broadcasts relating the problems which have arisen from the outbreak of bovine tuberculosis in ranches. In their presentation, the students had overlooked the cutting off of velvet antlers. I welcomed the opportunity to explain animal protectionists' concerns, acknowledged by game ranchers, about the pain which could be experienced by the animals in this procedure.

We can all share the exhilaration of being humane educators, kindly reaching out and teaching by the example of our lives as animal people; people whose circle of concern embraces animals and people. Our societal values and ethics are evolving as attitudes change about the fairness of treatment for animals and people. Young people are asking, how can I help to change the world? As humane educators, let us nurture the seeds of compassion so they will grow and bloom in animal people, committed to creating a world in which ani-

mals are treated with the respect due to fellow creatures with whom we share the earth.

*The above piece is reprinted from AnimalKind, the newsletter of the Alberta S.P.C.A.*

## The Luckiest Pets in the World

The 1992 "Luckiest Pets in the World" fund-raising calendars for animal care and control agencies were so overwhelmingly successful that The Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region (633 3. 8th St., Colorado Springs, CO 80905) is repeating the project for 1993 and inviting agencies to participate.

The calendar, the world's first designed to be read to dogs and cats, is customized for local shelters. In 1992, 45 agencies in the U.S. and Canada participated. "By pooling our orders together, we provided a quality product at a fraction of what it would cost for a local agency to create and produce this on their own," said Phil Arkow, Humane Society coordinator of the project.

"The 'Luckiest Pets in the World' calendar features 4-color photographs of 13 mixed-breed dogs and cats who were fortunate to have been adopted from shelters, with testimonials by their owners as to why they are the luckiest in the world," he said. The 8-1/2 x 11 calendars are printed on an exceptionally bright recycled stock and cost only \$1 apiece, plus a small customization charge and freight.

The photographs are enhanced by pun-ridden calendar dates featuring historically-accurate holidays which dogs and cats with a sense of humor might understand, such as



Teeca and baby Ellis are the winning photograph for April, 1992. The photograph was taken by Mr. & Mrs. Richard Torrance of West Palm Beach, Florida

the birthdays of "Woofgang Amadogus Muttzart" and "Retriever Knieval" and anniversaries of the "Star-Spanieled Banner" and the opening of the "Panama Kennel."

Arkow said, "This is the world's first calendar specifically designed so people can read them to their pets. We've even had people put them over their pets' food dishes so the animals could look at a pin-up calendar and chuckle over today being the First Day of Springer or the start of Daylight Spaying Time."

The calendar is designed to be a promotional piece and a fund-raiser for any animal care and control agency. The inside covers are custom-imprinted with specific information about the organization. Two detachable coupons are also

customized so people may order more calendars, make a contribution, or get discounts at sponsoring area businesses.

"A number of shelters are producing their own calendars locally. Rather than reinvent the wheel, it makes sense for us to pool our orders together and come up with a better quality product at a cost far less expensive than doing this independently, said Arkow. The calendar highlights the plight of unwanted animals and the difficult job we all do in rescuing and finding homes for so many lucky pets.

Delivery will be Oct. 1, 1992. Deadline for participation is June 15. For information, call Arkow at The Humane Society at (719) 473-1741.

## Book Reviews

### *The Leading Lady Dinah's Story*



Betty White  
and Tom Sullivan

### *The Leading Lady: Dinah's Story*

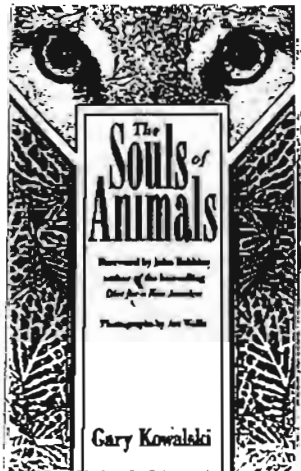
Betty White & Tom Sullivan  
Bantam Books  
666 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10103  
Hardbound, 211 pages

*The Leading Lady: Dinah's Story* records the true heart-warming experience of its three principals: television actress Betty White, her songwriter, author and lecturer friend, Tom Sullivan, and his exceptionally intelligent, loving leader dog, Dinah. In alternate chapters, the authors tell of Dinah's life and of her dedicated service to and companionship with Tom, and how it impinged on the relationship of the authors' personal families. As with all true love affairs, Dinah's, too, involved a crisis in which she was unable to accept, when her age and failing eyes forced her retirement, her replacement by a new leader dog.

*The Leading Lady: Dinah's Story* is told with such warmth and personal understanding, that it leaves each reader with the feeling that the authors have spoken di-

rectly and personally to him. For a very pleasant experience, read *The Leading Lady: Dinah's Story*.

Hugh H. Tebault



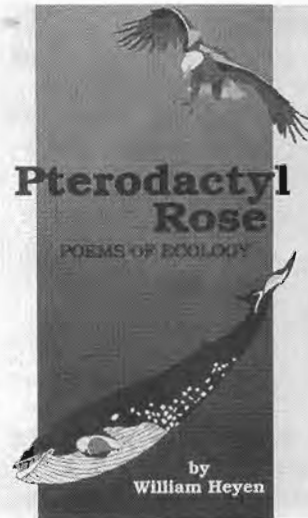
### *The Souls of Animals*

Gary Kowalski  
Stillpoint Publishing  
Box 460  
Walpole, NH 03608  
1 (800) 847-4014  
Soft bound, 114 pages

In plain words, Gary Kowalski superlatively expresses that which those of us who love and enjoy animals happily experience but find so difficult, if not impossible, to explain to our friends of contrary mind.

For those fortunate individuals who find an intimate relationship with animals to be rewarding, *The Souls of Animals* offers an opportunity to enjoy a wonderfully warm reading experience. This reviewer found the author's sensitive but thought-provocative expressions to engender a degree of introspection which can only deepen and enrich the reader's understanding of and with animals.

Hugh H. Tebault



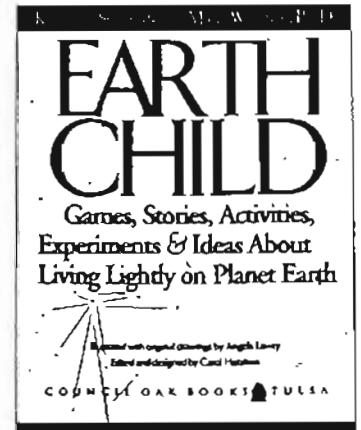
### *Pterodactyl Rose*

William Heyen  
Time Being Books  
10411 Clayton Road  
St. Louis, MO 63131  
Hardbound, 62 pages

The title poem of "Pterodactyl Rose" sets its theme as poet Heyen reflects on his tendency to peer into the rear view mirror of his auto and imagine the air behind filled with the bodies of those ancient creatures which his internal combustion engine is burning. His book is replete with thoughtful poems concerning our society's cavalier debasement of an environment which supports all life. And, he leaves the reader with an unanswered question: will it be the 21st century which determines that mankind will have a long tenure on this planet or become just another vanished species?

The sincerity behind William Heyen's profound work cannot be questioned and the basis for his apprehension is most certainly apparent to all who have eyes. But what of those with eyes who won't see, will they continue to turn away with a voiced or implied "I don't want to hear it"?

Hugh H. Tebault



### *Earth Child*

Kathryn Sheehan & Mary  
Waidner, Ph.D.  
Council Oaks Books  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
1 (800) 247-8850  
Paper bound, 367 pages

*Earth Child* makes me almost wish I were still teaching and that is a high compliment indeed.

This handbook of absorbing games, stories, activities, experiments and beautifully expressed ideas about "living lightly" on planet Earth, compiled by Kathryn Sheehan and Mary Waidner, Ph.D., helps children and adults understand the problems facing our earth.

This is no mere "Save the Rain Forest" environmental jargon (not that saving rain forests isn't important). *Earth Child* is thoughtfully and delightfully written. It includes hundreds of fascinating hands-on activities that are appropriate for pre-kindergarten and elementary students, whether the children live on a farm, in a small town, or in the heart of New York City. The projects and experiments make it possible to understand many of the relationships between people, the earth's animals, plant life, atmosphere, and the seas. It is truly a multi-purpose handbook for teachers and parents. Interestingly, the

authors are mother and daughter.

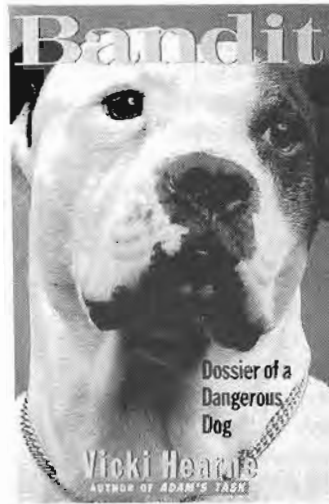
*Earth Child* is beautifully but simply illustrated. Like a good cookbook, it excites and inspires at first glance and leaves one looking forward to delving into it in more detail and trying the recipes/activities.

The book begins with a chapter called "The Circle of Day and Night," which explores the dependency of all life on the sun, the food chain, solar energy, our place in space, and energy awareness and conservation. Other chapters include earth celebrations, seasonal cycles and moon phases, the wonders in a garden, the water supply on earth, weather, protection of marine life, how personal choices affect the environment, threatened animal habitats and extinction, the earth as a global community, prejudice, and peace.

Chapter Eight, "Hurt No Living Thing," may be of particular interest to *Latham Letter* readers as it includes activities for exploring our relationship with animals. It explores common traits between animals and people, the needs of animals, animal's feelings, animal rights, negative representations of some animals in literature, pet responsibility, communication between animals and people, orphaned wildlife, how to handle the death of a pet, and attitudes about hunting.

*Earth Child* celebrates the gift of the written word with annotated lists of hundreds of books that children will love. Each fascinating idea and activity nurtures imagination, empathy, and a deeper understanding of the earth and its marvels. It teaches children that they, as humans, are also animals and that they share traits with other members of the animal kingdom.

Judy Johns



### *Bandit: Dossier of a Dangerous Dog*

Vicki Hearne  
Harper Collins Publishers  
10 East 53rd St.  
New York, NY 10022  
Hardbound, 304 pages

Vicki Hearne's treatise is an inspired work, which is generally in defense of the several breeds of dogs roughly and improperly called Pit Bulls, but very particularly in behalf of one dog named Bandit. From her viewpoint as an experienced animal trainer as well as a published poet, philosopher and university instructor, the author describes the conviction which motivated her extended campaign to save the life of a dog, fallaciously labeled as vicious.

From time to time, one dog breed after another is declared to be dangerous, witness the concern expressed about German Shepherds, Doberman Pinschers and the Schutzhund-trained animals, to name but a few. *Bandit* recounts the actual experience of the author with State of Connecticut authorities and a "Pit Bull" type dog that has bitten. Ms. Hearne's rational and sincerely ex-

pressed opinions will be found of interest to all but also very surprising to some in that she takes umbrage at and names names of many groups and individuals which one would assume to be her natural allies—notably the Humane Society of the United States and the animal-rights lobby.

We recommend *Bandit* though we personally found the author's inclination to skip from the principles of dog training to philosophy to legal matters to social problems to personalities and morals, etc, difficult to follow.

Hugh H. Tebault

### *The Loving Bond: Companion Animals in the Helping Professions*

Edited by Phil Arkow,  
*The Loving Bond* remains one of the most definitive works in the field. It is available through R & E Publishers, P.O. 2008, Saratoga, CA 95070.

#### *Morale Decision Making continued*

while keeping the communication channels open for later assistance if needed.

What is the truth? Fluffy was "put to sleep" by the veterinarian is the worst form of truth. Many children will then fear sleep, or blame the veterinarian, or in some cases, expect the pet to return when they reawaken. Why do we continue this euphemism?

"The veterinarian thought it was best to put Fluffy out of her misery." Again, here is a truth that conjures up a fear of becoming hurt in children, a fear of telling Mom that the stomach pains are causing them misery. The shifting to "professional-based why answers" will generally cause referral of responsibility, an avoidance of personal par-

ticipation in the decision process. The child needs to know the truth, but at their level of understanding.

#### *The Caring Response*

Don't "give" the child the truth, rather "answer" each question honestly. The child's ability to understand is dependent upon both personal experiences, family values and knowledge development. The age groupings provided herein are only general concepts, since each child is on a continuum of development that is completely dependent upon their specific life experiences.

#### *Preschool —*

Children this age usually do not comprehend the idea of absence of life.

Often television analogies confuse the concepts we offer; they take very literally the interpretations of adult euphemisms and often accept self-blame very easily when it cannot be explained away. Preschool children need to be told in terms that relate to experiences they understand, but do not need to be given more information than what they request. Repetition of questions will be common as they struggle to understand this new concept of death. Parents, relatives, and siblings need to be consistent in answering questions, in order to minimize misconceptions.

#### *Early School Age—*

These kids understand that death is final and can identify specific external causes. Again because of the television drama, they often believe death is a gradual process, happening only to others. Many perceive the personification of death in a spirit role such as a ghost or bogeyman and may believe they can cause death by wishes or ill feelings. This age child usually shows an

*Continued page 14*

increased interest in the permanence of death and role play in death rituals. They can also misunderstand adult euphemisms although they often realize the assumed meaning contradict the evidence. Early school-aged children will understand the pet is dead, but may need concrete evidence of the death. Encourage this 5- to 9- year old to ask questions about anything they do not understand, but answer at their level of knowledge and experience. Parents should support exploration and play related to death, and keep teachers informed of the potential grief reactions so they can be consistent and caring.

**Older School-aged Children (10 plus years)** — This is the age where abstract thinking begins, using ideas, theories, and logical relationships to explain their experiences. They understand that death will happen to all living things, eventually, that it may be immediate rather than gradual, and that it can occur suddenly and without warning. They begin to accept the natural cessation of life functions as the cause of death, and are capable of understanding religious or philosophical concepts, such as heaven or rituals. Older school-aged children have a good understanding of death and should be encouraged not only to ask questions but also express their thoughts and feelings. Children at 10 years and older are capable of participating in the decisions or arrangement of the pet's body and should be consulted before and after the euthanasia and/or final disposition.

### Support Systems

There are many ways to support the family and chil-

dren at the time of a loss of a loved one. "*Kids Grieve Too!*" by Lombardo, V.S. & Lombardo, E.F. (1986), published by Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, IL, is one of the more common references, and "*Talking with Young Children About Death*," Rogers, F. & Sharan, H.B. (1979), by Family Communications of Pittsburgh, appears to be one of the cornerstone references. Texts that can help parents are provided in a supplemental bibliography, and the one(s) that fits into a veterinary practice must fit the needs of clients that frequent the practice. As such, a large selection is provided. The fact that "*The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*" works well for me doesn't mean it will fit well for another veterinarian or for the client that has only hunting dogs.

Start reading now, and begin to build a grief therapy library in a manner similar to choosing the chemotherapeutics for a pharmacy or medicine cabinet shelf. Pick the references that best intercede in the process to help the recovery of the specific client that has felt the stress of a terminal, dying, or euthanized patient.

### Books to Help Children Cope With the Death of a Pet

The following books depict children as they deal with the death of a pet. Adults may wish to review books before sharing them with children, in order to find those which are most suited to individual situations.

Abbot, S. (1972). *The Old Dog*. New York: Coward. After his dog dies, Ben realizes that there is a difference between death and sleeping. Ben's grieving time is cut short when

his father brings home a new puppy. Ages 4-8.

Armstrong, W.H. (1989). *Sounder*. New York: Harper. After the deaths of his father and the family dog, a boy's memories of both become valuable tools in dealing with future experiences. Ages 10-14.

Brown, M.W. (1958). *The Dead Bird*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. This classic book addresses death with simplicity. A group of children find a dead bird and carry out an elaborate funeral. Ages 4-8.

Carrick, C. (1976). *The Accident*. New York: Seabury. A boy deals with anger and sorrow after his dog is killed by a truck. Ages 5-8.

Cate, D. (1976). *Never is a Long, Long Time*. New York: Thomas Nelson. Billy's father eventually agrees to get him a new puppy after the death of his old dog. Ages 9-11.

Fairless, C. (1980). *Hambone*. Plattsburg, NY: Tundra. Jeremy copes with the death of his pet pig by planting a memorial tomato seedling in Hambone's honor. Ages 8-11.

Gackenbach, D. (1975) *Do You Love Me?* New York: Seabury. The accidental death of a hummingbird helps Walter see that not all animals want to be pets. Ages 5-9.

Graeber, C.T. (1982). *Mustard*. New York: Macmillan. Alex's parents are supportive and honest as they help him cope with the illness and death of his cat, Mustard. Ages 4-10.

Hall, L. (1976) *Flowers of Anger*. New York: Follett. A girl's anger and sorrow after her horse is killed distance her from her best friend. Ages 10-12.

Hegwood, M. (1975). *My Friend Fish*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. A young boy encounters death for the first time

when his pet fish dies. Ages 6-9.

Hurd, E.T. (1980) *The Black Dog Who Went Into The Woods*. New York: Atheneum. Joel's strong sense of responsibility and loyalty are shown as he must choose between euthanasia and abandonment for his cat. Ages 8-12.

Rawlings, M.K. (1938) *The Yearling*. New York: Scribner. Jody must kill his beloved pet fawn when it begins to destroy the family's crops. Ages 12+

Rogers, Fred (1988) *When a Pet Dies*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. First experiences picture book from Mister Rogers' Neighborhood series, exploring the feelings of frustration, sadness, and loneliness that a youngster may feel when a pet dies. Ages 4-9. (Available from AAHA, PO Box 150889 Denver, CO 80215-0899.)

Simon, S. (1976). *Life and Death in Nature*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Simple experiments that help children explore decomposition, ecology, and the balance of life are described. Ages 6-10.

Stull, E. (1964). *My Turtle Died Today*. New York: Holt. The cycle of life is emphasized, as the death of a pet turtle is followed by the birth of kittens. Ages 3-6.

Thiele, C.M. (1978) *Storm Boy*. New York: Harper & Row. In Australia, a boy raises an orphaned pelican. His fond memories of the bird are great comfort after it is shot by a hunter. Ages 8-11.

Tobias, T. (1978). *Petey*. New York: Putnam. Emily's parents help her cope with the illness and death of her pet gerbil. Ages 6-9.

Viorst, J. (1971). *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*. New York: Atheneum. A boy is encouraged to remember good things about his cat after it dies. Ages 5-9. (Available from AAHA, PO

Box 150889, Denver, CO 80215-0889.)

Wagner, J. (1969). *J.T.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. A young boy feels a sense of being needed as he cares for an injured alley cat. His parents attempt to comfort him after the cat is hit by a car. Ages 8-10.

Wallace, B. (1980). *A Dog Called Kitty*. New York: Holiday House. Kitty has helped Ricky overcome his fear of dogs. After Kitty is killed, Ricky eventually accepts a new puppy. Ages 9-11.

Warburg, S.S. (1969) *Growing Time*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Jamie needs time to adjust to his old dog's death, and at first rejects the new puppy. Ages 5-9.

Wilhelm, Hans (1985). *I'll Always Love You*. Belgium: Crown Publishing. The family's story of Elfie, from puppy through life and into death, and the family's feelings. Ages 4-12. (Available from AAHA, PO Box 150889, Denver, CO 80215-0889.)

Winthrop, E. (1975). *A Little Demonstration of Affection*. New York: Harper & Rowe. A brother and sister are drawn closer together after their dog is shot. Ages 12-16.

White, E.B. (1952). *Charlotte's Web*. New York: Harper. Wilbur the pig is saved from death by the cleverness of his spider friend, Charlotte. Later Charlotte dies, and Wilbur is comforted by friendship with her children. Ages 7+

Young, J. (1974) *When the Whale Came to My Town*. New York: Knopf. The death of a beached whale is depicted as part of the natural order of things. Ages 6-10.

*Dr. Catanzaro is the President of Catanzaro & Associates, a veterinary practice consulting firm located in Golden, Colorado.*

## Measuring the Potential Benefits of Raising Calves at a Juvenile Correctional Center: A Human-Animal Bond Experience

Ben P. Granger, Ph.D., M.S.W.  
Robert Linnabary, D.V.M., M.S.  
John C. New, D.V.M., M.P.H.

### Introduction

This research project was a collaborative effort between two professional schools of a university (Social Work and Veterinary Science) and a State correctional facility for adolescents. The researchers hoped to show that adolescent offenders (students) who engaged in a human-animal bond experience through raising calves, also develop increased self-esteem and responsibility for self and others. This assumption was tested during a calf-raising project that was developed at this youth training center. Female adolescent students were the primary targeted group, although one male adolescent group was also included in the study.

A special calf raising farm areas was constructed on the grounds of the facility which included a small barn structure for the storage of grain, hay, milk supplements, and supplies. A corral area was also built, which included individual pens. Fresh water was piped to the area. Holstein dairy calves (heifers) were brought to the farm rearing area soon after birth, where they were hand-raised. Calves stayed in the rearing area for approximately two months where they were nurtured and weaned to solid food. Staff



Photograph courtesy of the College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

from the facility, as well as staff from the neighboring correctional dairy farm, provided guidance, instruction, and supervision in helping the students raise their individual calves. At the end of each two month period, the calves were returned to the neighboring dairy farm where they became part of the dairy herd.

While the Center staff received many positive comments from the students raising the calves, and observed students enjoying and benefiting from the experience, no formal research had been conducted to help determine the benefits to those students involved in

the project. The research was directed toward measuring improvement in self-esteem, functioning and behavior, and compliance with rules and regulations while incarcerated at the training center.

It was considered that the research project could contribute to the increase in knowledge regarding the therapeutic use of animals with humans. While there are numerous pet visitation and animal-assisted therapy programs throughout the country, few have provided systematic studies documenting the benefits or evaluating outcomes. There

*Continued page 16*

are several calf raising projects that have reported anecdotal or observational benefits. For example, Green Chimneys (a non-profit agency in New York that provides residential services for children overcoming personal problems) has a project where Jersey calves are purchased by a service club and raised by children at Green Chimneys. When mature, the heifer calves are donated to the Heifer Project International to provide milk for families in developing nations.

In addition, it was anticipated that the project could facilitate the correctional facility, and the department of corrections (youth development) in determining the benefits of this specific project toward the major goal of rehabilitation. It could also assist in further documenting the overall benefits of the human-animal bond in different settings and populations.

**Procedure**

The students for each calf raising period were randomly selected from the population of offenders (students) on program levels 1, 2, or 3 at the Center. Since each period of raising a calf at the facility was about two months, students who were on pre-release status (level 4) did not participate if their release date occurred during one of the calf raising periods. With the length of the research project scheduled for one year it was anticipated there would be about five calf raising periods from which to select participants.

For each period, there was a control and experimental group, consisting of ten students randomly assigned to each of the two groups. Other than pre- and post testing of the students in each group, there were no other requirements. The project also made use of regular behavioral assessments of students compiled by the center staff. Participation in the research project was voluntary. Students were free to participate in the research study and could drop out of it at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained in two ways: verbally and in written form.

The study used a before-after two group design with a non-stratified random sample. Control (non-calf raising students) and experimental (calf raising students) groups, each

consisting of ten students, were randomly selected from the general population of adolescents at the facility. They were given a pre-test consisting of one instrument, the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. This instrument was used to establish a baseline level of self-esteem for each student, and was again administered at the end of the calf raising period in order to measure any increase or decrease in the level of self-esteem that may have occurred.

The students who were randomly selected for the study were provided a complete explanation of the study, expectations, and the voluntary nature of it. The experimental group were further informed of the responsibilities and duties with regard to the care and rearing of each calf.

**Results**

During the 1990-1991 calendar year, five calf raising period were initiated, but only three completing the entire two month calf raising program. The primary reason for this was the unanticipated early release or transfer of students from the facility for a variety of reason. Because of this, the study was limited to the three periods where students completed the entire two month time-frame. Within these periods, 34 students completed both the pre- and post-tests; nine girls in period one, 11 boys in period two, and 14 girls in period four.

Control and experimental classifications were randomly assigned students in each period. The Piers-Harris method of measuring self-esteem was used in a pre- and post-test format for each student in the control or experimental groups. The multivariate repeated measures technique was used to analyze these data, using a general linear model with two levels of group (experimental, control) and three levels of group numbers (groups 1, 2, and 4) as the class variables. The primary interest was whether or not the control groups were statistically different from the experimental groups; that is if the groups that received the intervention scored significantly higher on post-test than the groups who did not.

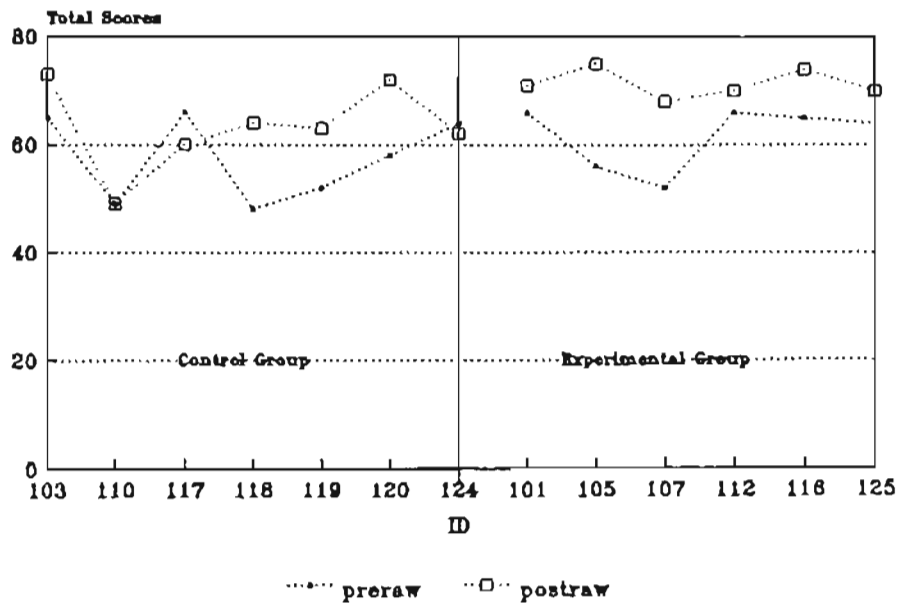
Table 1, the p-values, (levels of significance) shows that the differences between pre- and post-test scores (time preraw vs postraw) were statistically different for all participants. In other words, all of the students scored higher on the post-test. This could indicate that the rehabilitative program experi-

**Table I**  
Calf Raising Project  
p-values (levels of significance)

	All Groups	Group 4 Only	Group 4 with ID #122 Removed
Group (Experimental vs. Control)	p = .9694	p = .4664	p = .0704*
Time (Preraw vs. Postraw)	p = .0142	p = .0072	p = .0034

The p-values (levels of significance)

Table II  
 Figure 6. TPS CALF STUDY  
 Group 4 only with ID #122 removed



enced by the students at the facility improved test scores (improved self-esteem) over time. It could also indicate simply a testing effect.

While the post-test scores were higher for the experimental groups, the differences were not statistically significant. This suggests that the calf raising experience by itself did not necessarily increase or improve self-esteem. However, it did suggest, though not statistically, that the experimental groups had higher post-test self-esteem scores than did the control groups.

It was the researchers' observations that period 4, with 14 students (7 students in each group), had the greatest chance of successful intervention for a variety of reasons, one of which is that the calf-raising project was in place long enough for proper program development. Within this period, the experimental group scored somewhat higher on the post-test than did the control group. Table II provides a graph that depicts the pre- and post-test scores of the control and experimental groups, showing the experimental group scoring higher on the post-test. For the control group the pre-test score was 402 and the post-test score was 443, and increase of 41 points. For the experimental group the pre-test score was 416 and the post-test score was 472, an increase of 56 points. The net effect or gain for the experimental group was 15 points. Although this was not statistically significant the increase in post-test scores does suggest that the calf-raising experience did have a positive effect on the self-esteem of this group of students. It should be noted that the sample size is small, and that the statistical significance is difficult to show for small sample sizes.

### Summary

The results of this study support the many positive comments and observations by the students and staff with regard to the benefits of a human-animal bond experience in a correctional setting, and specifically the usefulness of having a calf-raising project as part of the rehabilitation program. Al-

though the sample size was small, the project findings suggest a trend that a student's self-esteem is enhanced by having the opportunity to nurture and raise a calf under the guidance, approval and supervision of staff.

The experience of these researchers in the project also indicates that any such program, especially involving animals, needs to be carefully planned and supervised. The success and effectiveness of such programs require the support, endorsement, and involvement of staff, and assurances that the animals will be properly cared for and protected.

The overall findings of this project support other studies reporting the benefits of having animal-assisted activities and programs as an integral part of rehabilitation. There are both educational/training and therapeutic components in such programs when they are carried out under the proper conditions.



Photograph courtesy of the College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.



H.O.R.S.E.S. teaches a variety of skills including wilderness packing for people with disabilities. Volunteer David Roe demonstrates one method.

### Disabled Horsemen *continued*

the abilities and intended use of that particular animal. The trainer must be constantly willing to deviate from traditional training techniques and expectations while at the same time building as much as possible on a strong foundation of knowledge and experience of tried, proven methods. The goal must always remain to create a working harmony between the horse and rider, not merely a list of tricks which the horse can perform. A horse doesn't need to be pretty to become an Access Equine, but he must be kind, intelligent, and brave.

Although training varies somewhat from horse to horse, some of the most frequently needed skills include coming when called by name so that disabled riders can catch their horses even in large open areas, having the horse lower his head to the person's lap to assist with bridling, lying down so the rider can mount easily from a wheel-

chair, and using verbal commands for the walk, trot, and canter so that a disabled rider without lower extremity function can travel at any chosen speed. The horse is also conditioned to relax on cue. The horse is taught to drop its head and assume a relaxed physical posture. This in turn causes the horse to emotionally relax.

Whatever the goal, be it recreation, sport, employment, or wilderness access and exploration, the horse's training is tailored to the needs and abilities of the individual disabled rider. With this foundation, the horse becomes an aid to the rider in his or her independence and mobility in much the same way that an Assistance Dog aids in the mobility and independence of its blind or disabled master. The Access Equine is one of the newest members of the Assistance Animal community.

In addition to custom training for the individual, the organization owns a number of specially trained horses which are used by

disabled riders who do not have animals of their own. These horses are used for both skill building and wilderness outings. H.O.R.S.E.S. offers adaptive riding lessons all winter and horseback camping trips throughout the summer for disabled equestrians and their significant others. Camping trips vary in length from one to five days and include beach, forest, and prairie locations. The program is staffed primarily by volunteers.

Custom made adaptive riding equipment enables many riders with limited or poor balance to ride comfortably and safely for extended periods of time. Saddles equipped with "Balance Belts" and quick release cinches allow riders to remain securely in the saddle unless they "choose" to fall. Any rider desiring a "quick exit" has only to pull a safety cord and the entire saddle, with rider still safely intact, will slip instantly from the horse's back. This eliminates the risk of a fallen rider becoming tangled in the stirrups and being pulled under the horse. Volunteer riding partners are trained in safety and rescue procedures in order to assist the disabled rider in case of an emergency. These safety procedures and equipment adaptations have been tested in controlled settings as well as having proven their success in real life situations involving water crossings, ground bees, and various wildlife including a recent encounter with a mother bear and her cub. To date no disabled rider has ever been injured.

As logging and other commercial uses of wilderness lands pose an ever increasing threat of destruction of natural habitats, recreational use is becoming economically



Beach riding on Oregon's coastline is one of the most popular summer trips.

attractive justification for preserving wild and scenic areas for the enjoyment of present and future generations. In a partnership project with the United States Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service, and Oregon Equestrian Trails, H.O.R.S.E.S. For The Physically Challenged is assisting in the design and implementation of barrier-free equestrian camping and riding facilities on federal and state lands. These camps are designed to provide both disabled and able-bodied equestrians with access to scenic wilderness areas while producing only minimal impact on the natural environment. A manual on the construction of "Barrier Free Horse Camps" is available for interested individuals and groups.

In response to numerous requests for information from throughout the United States, H.O.R.S.E.S. now offers training clinics, workshops, and consultation services to individuals

and organizations seeking detailed information on adaptive equine training, specialized equipment, safety procedures and low impact horse camping.

For more information, contact H.O.R.S.E.S. For The Physically Challenged at P.O. Box 5, Scotts Mills, OR 97375

*Kerrill Knaus-Hardy is a long time advocate of the importance of the human-animal bond. She was instrumental in the early development and operation of Canine Companions for Independence. She resigned as Director in 1987 to co-found H.O.R.S.E.S. For The Physically Challenged.*



Above left: Stanley is an Access Equine specially selected and trained by H.O.R.S.E.S. for Susan Sygall of Eugene, Oregon. He lowers his head to eye level and gently follows along when being led.

Left: Stanley helps Susan get ready to ride by lowering his head to take the bit. This is just one of the special skills that allows disabled riders to care for and use their horses independently.

Above: Saddle maker Greg Jacobs and Kerrill Knaus-Hardy evaluate a custom-made saddle

All of the photographs for this article were provided by H.O.R.S.E.S.



## "Hi, Steve": A Chance Encounter with the Author

Steve Nagy

I cautiously pushed through the crowd of people gathered here from around the world, and found it pleasant to hear friendly sounds and see the animated faces speaking in so many different tongues. The place?, the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, Austria. The occasion?, a gala evening of celebration in honor of world famous scientist, behaviorist and researcher, Dr. Konrad Lorenz's 80th birthday. Though proud to be invited, I did not think that I would know any of the fellow participants. The atmosphere was warm and cordial, despite the tight security which suggested the presence of many important people.

The crowd was immense and as the evening progressed, people stood shoulder to shoulder, in an interesting cacophony of languages, conversing with great intensity. All faces were friendly, but unknown to me, until a small voice said, "Hi, Steve." I looked around in surprise without recognizing anyone. The voice repeated, "Hi, Steve," this time a bit louder and with a familiar ring. I searched the faces about me again, without recognizing anyone. As I tried to move on, I almost fell over a dog near a wheelchair. It was Kerry and her assistance dog, sitting in her wheelchair, she was relatively unnoticeable in that stand-up crowd.

What an unexpected and happy occasion to be greeted by a fellow American in such a situation, her smiling face radiating with

joy and pleasure. I must have shown my surprise at seeing her there, but she graciously made no point of noticing it.

Kerry and I had recently worked on a film together in California. At that time, she supervised the training of assistance dogs and also served as the placement director. The Latham Foundation often makes "in kind" donations by producing documentaries about worthwhile programs, and helps those organizations by publicizing them on television and through the *Latham Letter*. This often results in fund raising and better public understanding of the value of such programs.

During our ensuing conversation, Kerry informed me that she had agreed to be interviewed by a French film crew, and asked if I would assist her during the filming. Of course, I was happy to oblige and we adjourned to a separate room where a camera crew was waiting. Because there was a language barrier, she asked if I would assist during the interview, which was scheduled to follow a demonstration of Kerry's and her assistance dog's teamwork. I noted, however, that she was more in charge than the director of the French film crew.

I wondered, in view of the obvious difficulties she encountered in her travel to Vienna with her wheelchair and assistance dog, what motivated her to come such a distance. I learned very quickly, however, that this trip was not just to Vienna, but to England, France, Switzerland, Italy and Austria. I really shouldn't have wondered about it at all, because Kerry is a remarkable woman with abilities in many fields; not the least of which is her ability to manage people and herself.

After Kerry and I had finished our "first film," I was asked, "What was it like to work with a severely handicapped person like Kerry?" For a moment I could not answer, then I asked, "Is Kerry handicapped?" I have never thought of her that way. Once she is behind a desk, at the steering wheel of her van or on the telephone, she is in full command. If she is handicapped, watch out world, we better take the "For Sale" sign off the Brooklyn Bridge.

*Dezsoe (Steve) Nagy is the Executive Film Producer for the Latham Foundation. He has filmed and directed numerous films for Latham documenting the various aspects of the human-companion animal bond as well as films for public service. His most recent productions are "Dog Bite Prevention" and "Your Humane Society."*

## Classroom Pets: The Wrong Message?

Michael Kaufmann

Humane education must at all times teach respect for and consider the welfare of the individual animal. It is crucial for children to learn empathy for all living things, but it is a sad contradiction when animals come to harm in the name of education.

Many public and private schools maintain classroom pets intending to provide an enriched learning experience for students. Unfortunately few educators have the time, resources and experience to properly care for an animal in addition to their teaching responsibilities. As a result, thousands of reptiles, mammals, birds and fish are abused and neglected in schools each year.

American Humane collected information from humane organizations throughout the U.S. to identify common areas of animal abuse in schools.

**Animals left at school without food or water.** Teachers often leave animals at school over a long weekend and during vacations. A dramatic example involved a custodian who was to care for rodents, fish and reptiles during a summer vacation. He was fired during that time and no one cared for the animals after his departure. All the animals died of starvation.

**Animal abandonment at the end of the school year.** In some cases the animals are just given away to the first takers. More commonly they are dumped at shelters. Sometimes these domestic or exotic animals are released. Dutch rabbits have wound up in the woods, and tropical frogs have found their way into local ponds and streams.

**Inappropriate housing or food.** Not uncommonly, aquatic turtles are kept on dry land or land turtles in water. Rabbits are cramped into small hamster cages or lizards slowly waste away from starvation. Inappropriate food reported in animal enclosures ranges from bagels, wilted lettuce and bologna to pizza crusts. Overgrown teeth, malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies are common.

**No veterinary care.** Hamsters with ulcerations, guinea pigs with overgrown toenails and turtles suffering from shell rot are treatable conditions sometimes ignored. Spending twenty dollars for a visit to a veterinarian is seen as "silly" when the animal only cost a fraction of that.

**Small animals getting dropped and stepped on.** Again and again shelters report that animals have been

hurt by inappropriate handling. Although generally unintentional, incidents have occurred where a child purposely hurt a classroom pet. Security and protection for animals is difficult to maintain in an open classroom.

Although animals can be humanely kept in the classroom, most schools cannot provide the environment needed for an animal to thrive. Unless an educational facility makes animals a financial and educational priority, it is unlikely that the animal will receive the proper care.

Teachers can be encouraged to educate students about animals without having pets in the classroom. In most cases schools welcome new ideas and suggestions, especially if these have been tried and do not require a great deal of preparation. Since classroom pets involve work, time and money, even teachers who keep pets can be convinced that there are easier and more exciting ways to teach their students about animals. Here are a few pragmatic suggestions:

**Observe wild animals.** Even the most urban school has pigeons, squirrels or sparrows living nearby. Place a bird feeder on the window or put up nest boxes and watch the animals throughout the seasons. This project combines biology and environmental education and teaches students the wonder of the most common animals that share our world.

**Pick a specie and integrate that animal into lessons for a whole week.** Dogs, for example, could be featured in the context of science, math, music and reading depending on grade level. Culminate the week with a speaker from or a visit to the shelter.

**Offer films, videos, information and books to help shape children's attitudes towards the living world.**

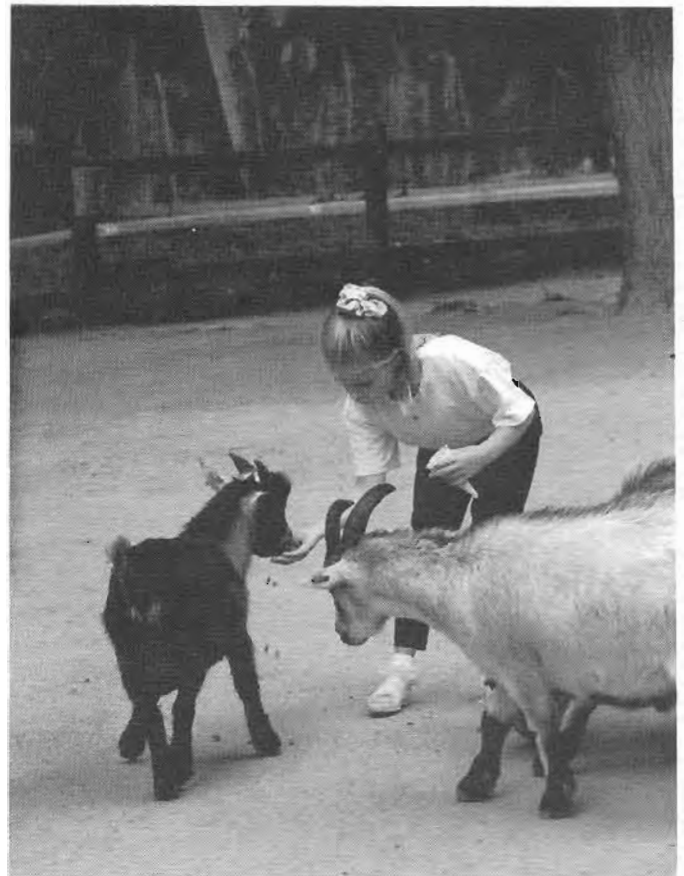
**Integrate humane concerns and environmental issues with the plight of animals to create a meaningful educational opportunity.**

**Visit a zoo, educational farm or nature center to provide hands-on animal contact.** Not all animal facilities provide the best care for their charges, so teach students critical thinking skills by examining the living conditions of the animals. Are the enclosures sanitary and appropriate for the species? Prepare students by researching applicable habitats, animal behavior, endangered species and farming practices. After the trip the students might compose a letter to the facility about their impressions of the visit.

**"Adopt" a whale, manatee, wolf or other wild animal.** Many conservation organizations allow you to track one special animal in its natural habitat. Packets by these organizations provide thorough information on the specie and of "your" animal on a regular basis. This project provides a year-long "classroom pet" experience that is both humane and educational.

**Use curriculum guides, lesson plans and special materials developed to teach children about animals.** These are available from humane societies, environmental groups and AHA (American Humane Association).

Besides educating teachers on the hazards of classroom pets and the available alternatives, shelters can help prevent their animals from winding up in bad classroom situations by properly screening teachers and discouraging inappropriate choices.



Shelters can also remind teachers to consider the following questions before they accept the responsibility of keeping animals with children at school.

- \* Does the school have a policy regarding animals in the classroom? Will they provide written acceptance of liability in case of an animal-related accident?
- \* Are there any parents who object to animals in the classroom?
- \* Are any students allergic to animals?
- \* What diseases can animals transmit to children and vice versa?
- \* Will the school pay for animal care or will the teacher pay? Even a small animal needs an environment, food and veterinary care.

- \* Who will care for the animal on weekends and holidays, especially since many schools shut off the heat, air conditioning and lights during those times? Sending animals home with children stresses the animals and often results in illness or injury.
- \* Who will care for the animal in the teacher's absence? Substitute teachers seldom have time to care for a strange group of students and an animal.
- \* Can an optimal environment be provided for the specie considered? This would include shelter, food, temperature, companionship (birds) or isolation (hamsters), exercise and health care.
- \* Is the area where the animal is to be kept secure at

*Continued page 22*

all hours of the day and night? Is student access to the animal controlled?

- \* What is the educational goal of having the animal? Has the animal been integrated into the curriculum?
- \* What happens to the animal at the end of the year? Simply giving it away on the last day is a sad and inappropriate practice.

To assist organizations in discouraging teachers from bringing animals into the classroom, AHA has developed a new flier, "The Classroom Pet: Considerations


for Teachers." The questions and alternatives listed in this article are contained in the flier.

For a free copy, send a self-addressed, stamped, business envelope to AHA Humane Education, 63 Inverness Dr. E., Englewood, CO 80112.


*Michael Kaufmann is AHA's Humane Education Coordinator.*

*The above article appeared in the December 1991/January 1992 issue of AHA Shoptalk.*

AMERICAN  HUMANE ASSOCIATION



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For more information please write to:  
**Dr. Erich Klinghammer, Institute of Ethology,**  
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