



# ANIMALS & SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2004

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## NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

Animals and Society, the official publication of the American Sociological Association Section on Animals and Society, is edited by Tracey Smith-Harris, Department of Anthropology & Sociology, University College of Cape Breton, PO Box 5300, Sydney, NS B1P 6L2, Fax: (902) 563-1247, Email: [tracey\\_smith@uccb.ca](mailto:tracey_smith@uccb.ca)

Contributions to the newsletter are most welcome.

## NOTE FROM THE CHAIR—JANET ALGER

Dear Friends,

The Teaching Resource Manual that we (Tracey Smith-Harris, Shawn McEntee, Kim Stallwood, and myself) have been working on has been sent to the ASA for review. It will, no doubt, require some revision but we expect that it will be published in time for the August 2005 meeting. It contains syllabi, bibliographies, assignments, films and articles that can be used to construct a course in Animals and Society or a section of an existing course that one already teaches. It was important that we complete this task as soon as possible because it will further our goal of increasing the number of courses in our sub-field and integrating animal and society issues into courses that are currently taught.

At the August 2005 ASA meeting in Philadelphia we will have one regular session, one section session, and a joint session with the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. The deadline for submission of papers online for ASA is January 15, 2005. The joint session with SSSI must be submitted to Prof. Clinton R. Sanders, Department of Sociology, Box U-2068, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06269. The deadline for the joint session is February 1, 2005. Please use our section website on the ASA website for information on our sessions and where to contact organizers

If you have not yet used our website, I think you will find it very useful. It has contact information for all section officers, has some syllabi posted, lists books written by section members, tells of upcoming conferences, gives other announcements and our newsletter will be posted there as well.

Slowly, the Animals and Society section is becoming institutionalized within the ASA. We have had a regular session for a couple of years now and this year we will be able to give awards. Be sure to nominate colleagues and students for these new awards which will be presented at our reception next year. Our most serious task will be to increase our membership. With 300 members we would have two section sessions rather than one as well as a larger budget. Unfortunately, we are a long way from that. The final figure I received from ASA was 196 members. We must all encourage our colleagues and students to join.

I wish you all a terrific holiday season and winter break.

Sincerely,

Janet

## CALL FOR PAPERS: ASA ANIMALS & SOCIETY SESSION

### American Sociological Association Annual Meetings

#### Philadelphia, August 13-16, 2005

Although the formal call for papers will be posted on the ASA website later this month, here's a reminder of the sessions that will be of special interest to Animals & Society section members. At the 2005 meetings, our section will have one regular session, a section session and a joint session hosted by the Society for the Study of Social Interaction. The regular session entitled "Animals & Society" is being organized by **Jessica Greenebaum**. The section session is being organized by **Rebecca Plante**. She writes that "the theme is very loosely about animals and people in interaction, which is purposefully broad enough for everyone to envision a relevant paper to submit. I'm looking for a range of topics, from theory-building to empirical research, both qualitative and quantitative." Please contact Rebecca or if you have any questions, especially prior to the formal submission deadline. Rebecca F. Plante, Dept of Sociology, Ithaca College; [rplante@ithaca.edu](mailto:rplante@ithaca.edu), 607-274-3311. The deadline for submissions is January 15, 2005.

A session entitled "Human-Animal Interactions and Relationships" will be included in the 2005 meetings of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction (August 13-14, Philadelphia). Of special interest are papers that employ an interactionist orientation or discussions based on data collected through qualitative approaches (especially ethnography). Please send completed papers or abstracts by February 1, 2005 to:

#### Clinton Sanders

Department of Sociology U-2068  
University of Connecticut  
Storrs, CT 06269  
[clinton.sanders@uconn.edu](mailto:clinton.sanders@uconn.edu)

## COMMITTEE NEWS

### *Membership Committee News By Leslie Irvine, Committee Chair*

We are very pleased to have received generous funding for the Jane Goodall Fellowships, which provide graduate student memberships to the ASA and the Section on Animals and Society. The call for applications appears on page 3 of this newsletter, and will also appear in the November *Footnotes*. I am pursuing possibilities of securing similar funding from other sources.

Those of us who attended the meetings in San Francisco sported buttons featuring the section's new logo, designed by Theresa Goedeke and Gene Ertel. We hope to have t-shirts in the future. Meanwhile, if you would like a button (or two), please send me a self-addressed envelope with TWO first class stamps on it. My address is: Leslie Irvine, Department of Sociology, 219 Ketchum, 327 UCB, University of Colorado, Boulder CO 80309-0327.

Please remember to renew your membership in the section when you renew your ASA membership for 2005. We need to keep our numbers above 200, and we are just a few short of making that goal. Please encourage colleagues and students to join. I am always looking for ways to recruit new members. If you have ideas you would like to share, please get in touch with me at [irvine@colorado.edu](mailto:irvine@colorado.edu)

**"Please remember to renew your membership in the section when you renew your ASA membership in 2005"**

### *Liaison Committee News By Jessica Greenebaum, Committee Chair*

The Liaison committee (Jessica Greenebaum, Tracey Smith-Harris, Rebecca Plante) has contacted numerous sections (gender, family, environment and technology, social movements, etc.) to plan a joint panel for the 2006 meetings. However, we have learned that we would have to give up a session in order to do a joint session with another group. Since we only have one section session, this is not feasible at this time. The liaison committee is now working on applying for a thematic session that would not count against our one section panel.

The theme for the 2006 conference is "The Great Divide-Sociology of Boundaries." How Perfect!

## ANIMALS & SOCIETY SECTION AWARD NOMINATIONS

### *The American Sociological Association Section on Animals & Society Awards*

#### *Award for Distinguished Scholarship*

Beginning in 2005, the Animal & Society section will review published books/articles (in alternating years) in the field to determine if there is one whose merit deserves an award for Outstanding Scholarship. This award will be given in 2005 for distinguished scholarship in the form of a book to an author(s) whose work makes a significant empirical or theoretical contribution to the sociological understanding of animals and society. The book must have been published within the 2002 through 2004 calendar year, and must be a treatise as the committee will not consider textbooks, edited volumes, or articles for this award. To nominate such a work (self-nominations are acceptable), please provide the author(s), the title of the book, the publisher, the publication date, and a letter (maximum 2 pages) outlining why you believe this work is a substantial contribution to the field. A book may be nominated more than once as long as its publication date falls within the appropriate time frame. The deadline for nominations is February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005. A copy of the book should be sent with the letter to Dr. Lisa Anne Zilney, Montclair State University, Sociology & Justice Studies, Dickson Hall 314, Upper Montclair, NJ, 07043.

#### *Award for Distinguished Graduate Student Scholarship*

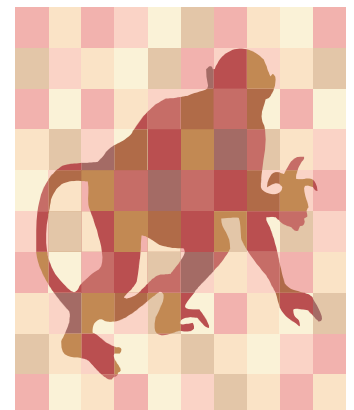
The Animal & Society section announces its 2005 Award for Distinguished Graduate Student Scholarship. Papers may be empirical or theoretical, and they may be on any aspect of animals and society. To be eligible, a paper must not be published, accepted for publication, or under review for publication. Papers which have been presented at a professional meeting or which have been submitted for presentation at a professional conference are eligible. Jointly authored works are eligible, as long as all authors have student status. Papers must be no longer than 25 pages, including all notes, references, and tables. When submitting your paper, please include a brief letter from your advisor certifying your graduate student status. Papers must be postmarked by March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005 and winners will be honored at the Animals & Society reception at the 2005 annual meeting of ASA.

One hard copy of the paper should be sent to Dr. Lisa Anne Zilney, Montclair State University, Sociology & Justice Studies, Dickson Hall 314, Upper Montclair, NJ, 07043. One e-mailed copy should be sent as a word document to [lisa.zilney@montclair.edu](mailto:lisa.zilney@montclair.edu)

## 2005 JANE GOODALL FELLOWSHIPS

**ASA Section on Animals and Society** announces the 2005 Jane Goodall Fellowships. An anonymous member of our Section has given a generous gift of two student memberships to the ASA and to the Section. The fellowships are to honor Jane Goodall's work in broadening our awareness of the capacities of non-human animals. The awards will be made to two graduate students in the form of fellowships that will pay their membership fees for one year. Those selected as fellows will be asked to contribute a research note on their own work or a short book review on an appropriate volume for publication in the Section newsletter. To apply for these fellowships, the Section requests that graduate students send a brief letter of application (no longer than one page) describing their interests in the study of animals and society, along with a letter of nomination from one professor of their choice under separate cover.

**Application materials should be received by January 15, 2005, and should be sent to: Leslie Irvine, Department of Sociology, University of Colorado, 219 Ketchum, 327 UCB, Boulder CO 80309-0327. Preference will be given to first time members of the Section.**



## BOOK REVIEW

### *If You Tame Me: Understanding Our Connection with Animals*

By Leslie Irvine

Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004

**Book Review by John Sorenson, Sociology Department, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario**

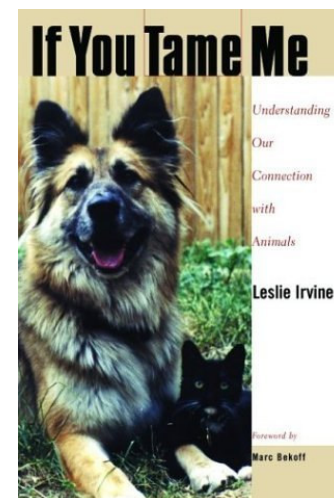
We live in a society with deeply contradictory ideas about non-human animals. While we have enslaved them and consume their bodies by the billions, many of us experience intimate connections and satisfying emotional relationships with other animals. Leslie Irvine's book explores the nature of some of these relationships, those that people form with cats and dogs. In the first part of the book, Irvine examines the idea of pet-keeping and contrasts this with the concept of companion animals, adding some discussion of the historical context for these socially-constructed categories. There is a short middle section based on Irvine's observations of strategies used by people who adopt cats and dogs from a veterinary clinic/animal shelter at which she is a volunteer. These observations are used as the introduction to issues taken up in the final third of the book, which applies theories taken from social psychology to issues of intersubjectivity, recognition of animal selfhood and how animals serve as "resources for self-construction".

Some sections of this book could be re-examined or better-developed. For example, Irvine makes a comparison between the visits by potential adopters of animals at a shelter and the activity of window-shopping, suggesting that fantasizing about animals is similar to fantasizing about the objects in the shops and that both processes offer "new possibilities for selfhood". Given the fact that animals are commodified in our society and that the consequences of that are frequently grim for them, the comparison seems somewhat ill-considered and the implications of categorizing animals as property is not considered until the conclusion of the book. The sections on intersubjectivity and interactions with animals are interesting to consider but there is no discussion of how attitudes might differ according to various factors such as class, gender and culture.

Irvine does a nice job of succinctly setting out some popular theories about pets (i.e. arguments based on deficiency, affluence, dominance and biophilia) and pointing out some of their shortcomings. However, in trying to explain some new attitudes toward animals she relies on ideas raised by Adrian Franklin's *Animals and Modern Cultures* without submitting them to any similar inspection. This is followed by the introduction of the concept of "animal capital" which is not developed to any great use in the book. Although, as Irvine notes, the shift in terminology from pets to companion animals has not been accompanied by any actual changes in the legal status of animals, she suggests that this represents a significant transformation in our conceptualization of the world and our place in it. One would like to think that this is so but the real extent of these transformations needs to be examined so the section intended to explain new attitudes towards animals needs to be developed at greater length and more critically.

Despite some shortcomings, this is an appealing book that would be quite useful for undergraduate sociology and psychology classes in particular. It is engaging, clearly-written and introduces a range of topics that can be explored through class discussions. The book can provide a means of getting undergraduates to see how a particular body of sociological theories can be applied to their everyday lives. The focus on companion animals and the personal anecdotes are likely to encourage students to think about their own relationships with animals in greater depth. As Irvine points out, recognizing the significance of these relationships will have far-reaching consequences for how sociologists conceptualize not only the self but also the family and the social world. While the book focuses only on cats and dogs, it might be combined usefully in the classroom with videos such as "Peaceable Kingdom" or "The Witness", which both show how intersubjectivity and compassionate relationships with these more popular companion animals need to be extended to other animals as well.

The concluding section makes the important point that people who recognize their companion animals as more than merely things or property are obligated to further extend their concern for animals. Irvine and her informants all refer to the important connections they have all felt with nonhuman animals. While many academics and some animal advocates find it easy to dismiss this connection as anthropomorphism or sentimental indulgence, the fact remains that many of our best (and worst) impulses are enacted in relation to animals and by exploring and building upon this connection with companion animals, readers may be encouraged to develop those better impulses and extend them to those other animals who are not fortunate enough to have been classified as companions but must suffer the consequences of being designated as food or experimental subjects.



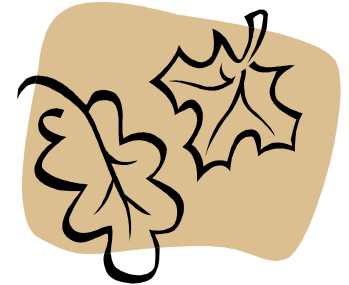
## NEWS: SOCIETY AND ANIMALS FORUM

Readers of this newsletter may be interested in the two following recent developments:

A group of 20 invited scholars met in Raleigh in October for a one-day meeting to discuss the further development of the field of Human-Animal Studies. Society & Animals Forum (formerly PSYETA), the Institute for Animals and Society, and the Culture and Animals Foundation sponsored the event. Agreeing that the field has made good progress in intellectual infrastructure (books and journals), the group focused on plans to enhance institutional support of the field. For the moment, the group will operate with a loose structure of a task force and two working committees – the first to explore the development of extra-departmental minors or certification programs or concentrations; the second, to seek a university-based center for HAS. We will post news of our progress on the [humananimalstudies@psyeta.org](mailto:humananimalstudies@psyeta.org) listserve.

In August, the Board of Directors of the American Psychological Association accepted the completed petition for a Human Animal Studies Division. After a five year effort (piece of cake, really), the APA Council of Representative will vote in February, 2004 on whether to accept the division for a trial period.

*By Kenneth Shapiro*



## COMMENTARY

### ***Why Animal Scholars can Benefit from Environmental Scholars***

*Lisa Anne Zilney, Ph.D., Montclair State University*

Those pursuing the scholarly role of nonhuman animals within sociology know that this area has received minimal attention in historic academic pursuits. The Durkheimian sensibility toward social facts traditionally led to an understanding of the 'environment' as social and cultural, rather than physical, leading many sociologists to ignore the paradigmatic potential of early environmental works. Several environmental scholars have articulated the need for sociologists to broaden the analysis of the connections between human activities, especially economic activities, and components of the physical environment to improve understanding of the nature, causes, and extent of the connections. While environmental sociology theoretically includes the reciprocal influences between the environment and larger society, researchers have rarely shown much interest in this area to date.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, linkages between human and nonhuman animals have increased in academic prominence and have slowly begun to infiltrate sociology, though frequently continue to be regarded as a non-mainstream concern. It is the contention of this scholar that because of the intricacies between the early history of humans and other species, as well as the impact of this relationship on population expansion, accumulation of wealth, and our system of social values, that matters related to nonhuman animals may benefit from the theoretical tradition elaborated by environmental sociologists. With environmentalism increasing in the 1970s, scholars became increasingly concerned with studying the reciprocal relationships between society and the larger environment. Those scholars interested in pursuing the study of nonhuman animals may find guidance in the works of environmental sociology which allow us to understand with increased clarity both the environment and the connections between animal exploitation and environmental degradation. Working together, environmental sociologists and scholars of the human-nonhuman animal bond can challenge further the historically rigid boundaries between human and animal societies and increase the academic exploration of these issues, as well as the acceptance of such social problems into academia and society at large.

**“Working together, environmental sociologists and scholars of the human-nonhuman animal bond can challenge further the historically rigid boundaries between human and animal societies”**

## MEMBER'S NEWS

In early September, Leslie Irvine visited areas of southwest Florida that were devastated by Hurricane Charley to study the impact on companion animals. Her research was funded by a Quick Response Grant from the National Science Foundation via the University of Colorado's Natural Hazards Research and Applications Center. Irvine studied the network of shelters and animal care organizations that provided service to people and their animals. One shelter in Port Charlotte had to be evacuated, and a second shelter that served as the staging area had to transfer animals out to make room for those left homeless by the storm. The complex coordination behind the rapid organizational response has numerous sociological implications. The response in Charlotte County can be considered successful because no animals were euthanized for lack of space. This is in contrast to the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in 1992, when 1000 or more healthy animals were euthanized simply for overcrowding.

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Scott Vollum has an article in the latest issue of *Society & Animals* entitled, "Moral disengagement and attitudes about violence towards animals," 12 (3): 209-235.

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The Foundation for Interdisciplinary Research & Education Promoting Animal Welfare [FIREPAW, Inc.] has recently had an article accepted for publication based on their Companion Animal Victims Study.

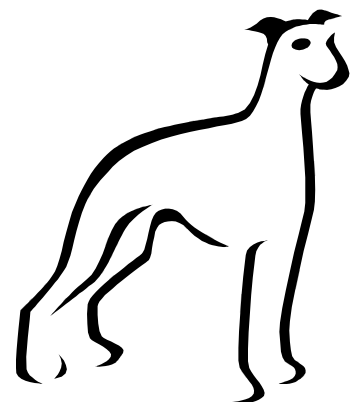
Carlisle-Frank, P., Frank, J., and Nielsen, L. (2004) Selective Battering of the Family Pet. *Anthrozoos*, 17 (1), pp 26-42.

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FIREPAW Principals are currently working on several new projects: (1) Guardian Study which examines the factors associated with those who consider themselves guardians of their companion animals and those who consider themselves to be their animals' owners; (2) Breed Discrimination Study which examines the financial and economic factors associated with discrimination of dog breeds by insurance companies, and (3) A study of the effectiveness of spay/neuter at reducing shelter intake in Maddie's Fund programs across the country. New educational projects entail writing books for the mainstream and professionals based on previous animal-related research studies. Please contact either Pamela or Joshua at [firepaw@firepaw.org](mailto:firepaw@firepaw.org) or [firepaw@earthlink.net](mailto:firepaw@earthlink.net) if you have any advice on publishers that might offer these book-length studies a home.

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Tracey Smith-Harris has recently published an article called "There's Not Enough Room to Swing a Cat and There's No Sense Flogging a Dead Horse: Language Usage and Human Perceptions of Other Animals," in the fall 2004 issue of *ReVision*.



## OF FLEAS AND FRENCH WINE

The other day, I was approached by an elderly neighborhood woman. Something of an eccentric, she always carries— rather than walks— her dog. Looking at the dog up close, I quickly discovered why: nearly all his hair was gone and the wretched animal was scratching himself nonstop. Such a dog will not walk on a leash, he will sit and scratch and scratch and scratch.

"Excuse me," I said strongly, "This dog needs to see a Veterinarian. He has fleas. See how itchy he is."

Thinking that my voice was falling on deaf ears, I made a quick decision: do something to help the dog.

At the local hardware store, there were two choices: flea collars or medical drops, identically priced. Murphy's law dictates that should I apply the liquid, even with the permission of the owner, the dog could die one week later of some unrelated illness, and I get sued. Better to go with the collar. I especially like the name of the manufacturer—DoggyMan"—a gem of Japanese English, a name to trust.

Perhaps it was Murphy's revenge. After a week of lugging the collar on my morning jogs, I did not cross paths with either woman or mutt. "Oh well," I said in another hopeless attempt at self consolation, "at least I tried."

Later that day, I arrived home to find a shopping bag containing a letter and a gift. The letter written in beautiful calligraphy, was a profuse thank you for advising a vet, adding that the dog was being treated for fleas and a liver disorder. The gift: a bottle of Chateau Reynon, a white wine from the Bordeaux region!

Moral of the story: Other people's animal problems are your business.

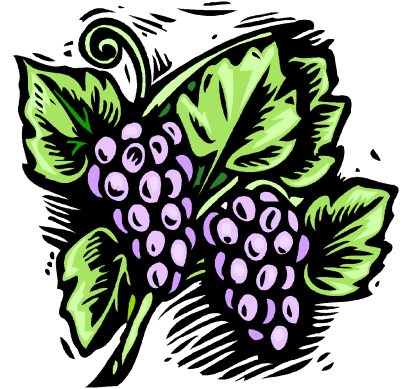
**Michael H. Fox**  
Hyogo College  
Japan  
[Foxofjapan@mac.com](mailto:Foxofjapan@mac.com)

### *Have you been to the section website lately?*

It's a valuable resource that contains:

- Links to society & animals and animal welfare/rights related websites
- Relevant conference information
- News and announcements
- Information on the 2005 Awards for Outstanding Scholarship & Distinguished Graduate Student Scholarship
- Back issues of section newsletters
- And much, much more...

The website address is: <http://www.asanet.org/sectionanimals/>  
To contribute to the website, please contact our Webmaster,  
Sabrina Oesterle at [soe@u.washington.edu](mailto:soe@u.washington.edu)



## ANIMALS & SOCIETY—ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

By Corwin Kruse ([crkruse@comcast.net](mailto:crkruse@comcast.net))

Animal Legal & Historical Center:<http://www.animallaw.info>

This site, hosted by the Michigan State University College of Law, is one of the best resources on the web for animal law issues. The Center maintains a database of U.S. cases and statutes and allows users to search by jurisdiction or by topic. Access to a more limited body of world law is also available. In addition, users can retrieve selections from a substantial collection of articles and historical materials.

Best Friends Animal Society:<http://www.bestfriends.org>

The Best Friends Animal Society is an organization working to help homeless animals around the country. The Society runs a shelter in Kanab, Utah that draws 20,000 visitors a year. Through the site, users can access copies of Best Friends Magazine, which is published by the society and addresses a number of issues relating to human-animal interaction.

The Jane Goodall Institute:<http://www.janegoodall.org>

The Jane Goodall Institute works for the welfare of chimpanzees and other primates, the preservation of primate habitat, and to increase awareness of the interconnections between humans, other animals, and the environment. This site is a good initial resource for those interested in these issues.

International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations:<http://www.iahaio.org>

The IAHAIO attempts to gather together organizations involved in the study of human-animal interaction and encourage the growth and dissemination of research in the area. The Association sponsors an international research conference each year, the most recent of which was held this past October in Glasgow.

International Environmental Law Group Wildlife Website:<http://www.internationalwildlifelaw.org/index.shtml>

A great resource for documents relating to international wildlife law. This site provides access to a large number of national and regional regulations, including European Union legislation, as well as international resolutions and treaties pertaining to animals. A number of these are available in both the original language(s) and in English translation.

Showing Animals Respect and Kindness (SHARK):<http://www.sharkonline.org>

SHARK, headquartered in Geneva, Illinois, is a non-governmental organization working to end animal abuse. Among the issues addressed by the group are hunting, rodeos, and bullfighting.

NOAA – Office of Protected Resources:[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/prot\\_res.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/prot_res.html)

This website information on marine mammals and protected marine species. Through the site, visitors can access a number of reports and publications relating to marine life as well as federal legislation such as the Endangered Species Act.

Netherlands Centre for Alternatives to Animal Use:<http://www.nca-nl.org>

The NCA is part of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Utrecht University. This site, available in both Dutch and English, provides information regarding alternatives to experimentation on animals. Included are links to the organization's newsletter, as well as some reports and legislation (primarily Dutch).

Animal Criminology:<http://old.animalcriminology.com>

This website has not been updated in some time. Nonetheless, it contains links to potentially useful interviews, reports, legal decisions and organizational sites that may be of use to those beginning research in this area.

“Visitors can access a number of reports and publications relating to marine life as well as federal legislation”



## CALL FOR NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

The next issue of the *Animals & Society* newsletter will be published May 1st, 2005. All materials should be sent to Tracey Smith-Harris by April 10th for inclusion. Please send material via email: [tracey\\_smith@uccb.ca](mailto:tracey_smith@uccb.ca). Mail and fax submissions: Department of Anthropology & Sociology, UCCB, PO Box 5300, Sydney, NS, B1P 6L2 or Fax: 902-563-1247



## NEW RESEARCH GROUP

### *Michigan State University*

The Ecological and Cultural Change Studies Group is a newly formed research group at Michigan State University. The group is made up of scholars working in interdisciplinary areas that transform cultural and environmental arrangements, including animal studies. Dr. Linda Kalof, Professor of Sociology and Professor of Community, Agriculture, Recreation & Resource Studies at MSU, studies the cultural representations of humans and other animals, with a focus on visual culture and embodiment. Amy Fitzgerald, a doctoral candidate in sociology specializing in animals and society, environmental sociology, gender studies and research methods, also works in the area of animals and cultural transformations (ACT).

The group is involved in several scholarly projects related to ACT. Kalof's forthcoming book *Reading Animals* (Continuum, 2005) focuses on the visual representations of animals. She is a general editor of the forthcoming six-volume book series *A Cultural History of Animals*, and edits the volume titled *Animals in Antiquity*. Kalof has also published research on discourses of animal concern, human perceptions of similarity with animals, display of animal bodies in trophy photography (with Fitzgerald), and the connection between animals, women and weapons in the discourse of sport hunting (with Fitzgerald and Lori Baralt, another research group member). Fitzgerald has written a book detailing her research on the relationship between animal abuse and family violence (Mellen Press, forthcoming), and has a forthcoming article in *Women's Studies Quarterly* that examines the increasing participation of women in sport hunting from various feminist perspectives. The group published a bibliography of animal studies research in the spring 2004 issue of *Human Ecology Review*. ([www.humanecologyreview.org](http://www.humanecologyreview.org)).

The bibliography is searchable on-line at <http://ecoculturalgroup.msu.edu/animalbiblio.html>. For more information about the Ecological and Cultural Change Studies Group at MSU, please visit <http://ecoculturalgroup.msu.edu>.

"The group is made up of scholars working in interdisciplinary areas that transform cultural and environmental arrangements, including animal studies"

## CONFERENCE REPORT

### Empty Cages:

#### *The Nineteenth Annual International Compassionate Living Festival*

By Kim W. Stallwood

The Culture and Animals Foundation (CAF) and the Institute for Animals and Society (IAS) recently partnered on “Empty Cages: The Nineteenth Annual International Compassionate Living Festival.” For three days in October, nearly 200 people—artists, academics, movement leaders and grassroots activists—demonstrated their commitment to work together on a movement-wide, long-term strategic plan to advance animal issues in American public policy.

The contemporary animal rights movement has written some remarkable success stories in the past 25 years. Despite fierce opposition and resistance from entrenched powerful forces that profit from animal exploitation, there have been some important victories for animals – in the courts, in the legislative chambers, and in the classrooms. Integral to future successes, however, is the movement’s ability to position animal issues in the arena of public policy. Heretofore, the focus has mainly been on public education but increasingly positive developments (e.g., the passage of pro-animal ballot initiatives) indicate that now is the time for action in the mainstream political arena. Further, there are significant lessons to be learned from the U.K. animal rights movement, which since 1976 has used general elections to form coalitions and advance a “manifesto for animals.” The mission of the conference – inspired also by the important new book, *Empty Cages*, by CAF’s president Tom Regan, was to develop a comprehensive program of animal issues – *The Animals’ Platform* – to advance the moral and legal status of animals in the arena of public policy for the four-year U.S. presidential cycle starting in 2005.

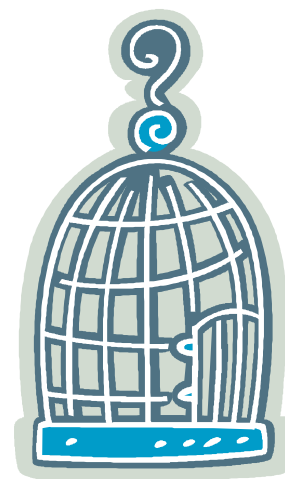
Early this year, the IAS commissioned leading experts on four primary areas of animal use (Animals in Agriculture, Companion Animals, Wildlife, and Animals in Research, Testing and Education) to help draft the platform. The document was to present an overview of each topic, discuss related laws and regulations already in place, and recommend specific short-term legislative goals that animal advocates could work toward in the lead up to the November 2006 election. Drafters were also asked to identify long-term goals extending beyond the next election. In August the IAS posted the draft platform on its web site ([www.animalsandsociety.org](http://www.animalsandsociety.org)) for public comment, and then presented them for review and discussion at the October conference. Presently, suggestions and perspectives from more than 50 reviewers are being considered for a second revised draft platform that will be posted on the IAS web site for more public review and comment.

In early 2005 *The Animals’ Platform (2005-2006)* will be produced and a campaign launched to secure individual and organizational endorsement. With movement-wide support, animal advocates will mobilize citizens to question candidates for public office and elected representatives about their positions on the issues addressed in *The Animals’ Platform (2005-2006)* through to the November 2006 election. Thereafter, the IAS will produce updated and revised editions on a two-year cycle timed to coincide with the U.S. presidential and off-year elections. Although nonprofit organizations are prohibited by law from supporting individual candidates, we can and should encourage the increasing number of voters who care about animals to keep the animals’ interests in mind when deciding which candidates to support.

#### Contact:

Kim W. Stallwood  
Executive Director  
Institute for Animals and Society  
3500 Boston Street, Suite 325  
Baltimore, MD 21224  
(410) 675 4566  
[kim.stallwood@animalsandsociety.org](mailto:kim.stallwood@animalsandsociety.org)  
[www.animalsandsociety.org](http://www.animalsandsociety.org)

“Integral to future successes, however, is the movement’s ability to position animal issues in the arena of public policy”



## COMMENTARY

### *Animal Aesthetics: Remaking Animals to Suit Our Image*

*By Bonnie Berry*

The term “social aesthetics” is one I developed recently to describe public reaction to people’s physical appearance. The readers’ sociological imagination is already turning over many thoughts on how we, as a society, evaluate people based on their looks and treat them differently based on their looks. Notably, the less socially-acceptable, looks-wise, face employment discrimination as well as exclusion from powerful social networks. Conversely, the socially desirable, looks-wise, are given many social benefits such as greater access to good jobs, good marriages, and so on. So far, none of this is novel to you, dear readers, are you are already aware of attribution theory and the effects of physical appearance on social interpretations, as in, for example, the long-held but false assumption that blondes are dumb.

Acceptable or desirable looks are socially constructed, such that “good looks” are basically white, Northern European looks. This is true globally, as I have argued elsewhere (2004), due to homogenization of looks standards via advancements in visual media (TV, movies, advertisements). Worldwide, tall, thin, light-skinned, light-haired, light-eyed people get better jobs, make more money, marry well, and otherwise gain more social power than do dark, short people.

Clearly, race is key to any consideration of social power and looks (Herring et al. 2004). The racial issues become most starkly noticed when one considers the lengths racial minorities will go to in order to appear more white (eyelid surgeries, hair straighteners, skin whiteners, leg-lengthening surgeries, and the like). The reasoning is obvious: given that whites have relatively greater power, racial minorities are encouraged to emulate them, to physically resemble them, in order to accumulate power. Of course, there are gender issues as well, with women being subject to greater pressure than men to adhere to good-looks standards, to strive (no matter the monetary and health costs) for good looks and therefore power. In addition, age is an important factor in the looks-power nexus, with the aged being undervalued in most societies and thus pressured to appear youthful in order to retain social power. Hence, we cover our gray, moisturize our skin, and lift our faces (Blum 2003; Gimlin 2002; Gilman 1999; Stearns 1997; Bordo 1995).

Likewise, nonhuman animals are subject to (human) public reaction to their looks to the degree that some humans put their animal companions through plastic surgery to make them more aesthetically pleasing to humans. There are a number of examples of this, such as the show dog who underwent a facelift in order to appear youthful enough to win a prize. Humans have had artificial testicles implanted in their neutered dogs, with the thinking being that the neutered, testicle-less dogs would be less stigmatized if they had the implants. More commonly, humans apply hair coloring, nail polish, and all manner of grooming techniques to their animal companions in order to enhance the companions’ looks. Plus, humans outfit their animal companions with human-style jewelry and clothing, which may be uncomfortable to the animals but pleasing to the human eye.

Moreover, we tamper with human and nonhuman breeding to “improve” the species. Eugenicists believe strongly that better humans, usually meaning white European humans, could be and should be selectively bred. All others should be sterilized or otherwise not allowed to breed (Black 2003). Similarly, we selectively-breed and mix-breed nonhumans to create hardier, stronger, bigger work animals; to improve the entertainment value of animals (race horses and race dogs); and to develop “exotic” animal companions. As to the latter, the human owners seem to assume that exotic animals are more desired partly because they are unusual. It is as though possessing “special” animals means that the human owners are special.

So we find that some humans put their nonhuman companions through the same looks-conscious rigors that some humans put themselves and their human companions through, going on the assumption that having desirable (human and nonhuman) animals accrues power to the humans who are associated with them. The surgeries, the make-overs, the selective breeding are all designed to mold ordinary beings into desirable and desired beings. The social pressure to apply (to others) or undergo (ourselves) these looks-altering changes, be they hair color and other cosmetic changes, surgery, or ingestion of questionable substances (such as steroids and growth hormones) are sourced in the need for social prestige. Think trophy wives. Think trophy children. Think show dogs and race horses. As to wives, think specifically of the highly-selected beautiful women who marry powerful men; examples are numerous but would include Donald Trump’s wives.

**COMMENTARY CONTINUED**

As to trophy children, think JonBenet Ramsay, the now-dead child beauty queen. And, as for trophy nonhumans, think of famous race horses who win prestigious derbies and how that makes the human owners, by association, prestigious. The interpretation, at least the simple one at which I have arrived, is derived from Mead's (1934) notions of the social mirror. We want to reflect well in the social mirror ourselves and thus undergo the necessary changes to make ourselves acceptable, desirable, and, as a consequence, powerful. Another avenue by which to reflect well in the social mirror, used by trophy-conscious humans, would be to possess and be surrounded by attractive and select human and nonhuman companions.

The reader may well ask, is this bad? In what way is social pressure to be physically appealing and to be surrounded by physically appealing animals dysfunctional for society and its inhabitants? Of course we are aware of the dangers of physical alterations, a prime example would be anorexia. But it would be helpful, socially, to also be aware of the manner in which exclusion of beings based on their looks is not a functional social behavior. Such behavior rejects diversity and disallows acceptance. It encourages prejudice. It discriminates on false premises of worth.

Women wearing high-heeled shoes and dogs having their ears cropped are not just about frivolous games of vanity. It is about artificially constructing stratification and about creating inequality where none need exist.

**References:**

Berry, Bonnie. 2004. "The Power of Looks: An Historical Analysis of Social Aesthetics and Status Gain."

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

### 14th Annual International Society for Anthrozoology Conference

Niagara Falls, New York, U.S.A.  
July 11-12, 2005  
Exploring Human-Animal Relations

Keynote Addresses will be presented by:

David Favre – *Transforming Social Attitudes Toward Animals Into Law*, Editor-in-Chief, Animal Legal & Historical Web Center, Michigan State University College of Law.

Clif Flynn – *Women, Children, and Animals Last: Connections between Animal Abuse and Family Violence*, Department of Sociology, University of South Carolina.

Ádám Miklósi – *Dog-Human Relationships in an evolutionary perspective*, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.

Irene Pepperberg – *In Search of King Solomon's Ring: Cognitive and Communicative Studies on Grey Parrots*, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies and Brandeis University.

ISAZ Members and others are invited to submit proposals for presentations and posters. Suggested topics include (but are not limited to): animal cruelty, human-animal communication, animals and human health, human-animal bond, attitudes toward animals, and humane education. Additional topics (both on and off conference theme) are also welcome. Groups of presenters are encouraged to submit proposals for themed sessions.

**Submission abstract deadline and early bird registration are March 4, 2005.**

Registration forms and submission guidelines will be available on the ISAZ website by December 1, 2004 <http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/CCAB/ISAZ.htm>. You may contact the conference organizer, Kathy Gerbasi ([kcgerbasiphd@earthlink.net](mailto:kcgerbasiphd@earthlink.net)) for additional information. The generous conference sponsorship of *People, Animals, Nature, Inc.* [www.pan-inc.org](http://www.pan-inc.org) is gratefully acknowledged.

**Reaching Diverse Audiences is the theme of the Seventh Annual Humane Education Seminar scheduled for Saturday, March 5, 2005.**

**The seminar is presented by The Department of Animal Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC).**

Presentations will address animal assisted intervention programs, different learning styles, distance learning opportunities, and compassion fatigue. Speakers include Debbie Coultis of People, Animals, Nature, Inc., Bill Samuels from The ASPCA, Lisa Cushing representing NAHEE and Humane Society University (HSU), and Cheryl Weber from the UIUC College of Veterinary Medicine.

First time attendees can attend one or more of the presentations online via a webcast thanks to PETS MART Charities. Online attendees can see the presenter's slides and hear the speaker through the telephone. Online polls and chat space keep the cyber audience involved.

Additional seminar sponsors include The ASPCA Founding Sponsor, NAHEE and HSU, and the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics Canine Flyball and Agility Team. For further information about the seminar, visit the Web site at <http://www.ansci.uiuc.edu/events/companion/humane/>. Questions and brochure requests may be directed to Susan Helmink at 217-244-5141 or [susanh@uiuc.edu](mailto:susanh@uiuc.edu).



## CALL FOR CONFERENCE PAPERS, CONTINUED

### *Society for the Study of Social Problems*

**August 12-14, 2005**

**Philadelphia**

Session 1: Consequences, Solutions, Implications and Impacts of Human-Animal Interaction

Session 2: What About the Animals: The Unintended Consequences of Environmental Solutions on Nature's Inhabitants

Please send abstract to: Lisa Anne Zilney

Email: [lisa.zilney@montclair.edu](mailto:lisa.zilney@montclair.edu)

Montclair State University, Sociology & Justice Studies, Dickson Hall 314  
Upper Montclair, NJ, 07043

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Deadline for submissions: **January 31, 2005**

### **TWO DAYS OF THINKING ABOUT ANIMALS IN CANADA**

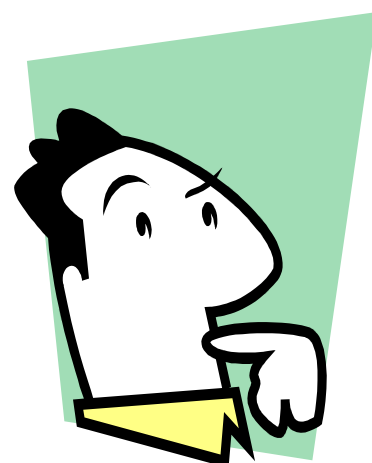
**FEBRUARY 24 & 25, 2005**

**BROCK UNIVERSITY, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO**

Animals play fundamental roles in human society and our relations to them are fraught with contradictions. Although many still believe that animals are our slaves, to use as we please, attitudes are changing. This two-day conference will explore this social transformation, surveying some of the current and historical attitudes and practices towards animals in Canada. The conference is a joint effort of the Canadian Studies Association and the Brock University "Thinking About Animals" project. We welcome participation from activists and academics. The conference is free.

Submissions on any topic are welcome. Please send a one page proposal to:

[twodayscanada@hotmail.com](mailto:twodayscanada@hotmail.com) Deadline for submissions: **November 30, 2004**



### **Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Annual Meetings, Session entitled, "Society & Animals: Environments, Exclusions and Equity"**

**May 31-June 3, 2005**

**University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario**

The disciplines of anthropology and sociology are well suited to study human attitudes towards, and treatment of, other animals. Even though animals can be found in every area of human life, they often remain invisible and marginal. This session examines sociological and anthropological research exploring human relationships with other animals and welcomes papers from a variety of theoretical and methodological traditions that explore the complexities of these relationships. The focus can be on human relationships with domestic animals, animals as companions, and/or human use of animals in technological development and industry. Papers may also explore the ways in which animals are marginalized within human life and relationships or the strong connections between some humans and animals that may lead to more equitable treatment of certain categories of animals.

Please send an abstract and letter of intent to Tracey Smith-Harris: [tracey\\_smith@uccb.ca](mailto:tracey_smith@uccb.ca) by **December 31, 2004**.

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The next issue of the Animals & Society newsletter will be published on May 1st, 2005. The deadline for submissions is April 10th. Please send material to Tracey Smith-Harris.

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