NOTE FROM THE CHAIR — STEVE ALGER

Hello Everyone,

I hope that everyone has rejoined the ASA and our section. In doing so you must have noticed on the renewal form that you can now check off Animals and Society as an area of scholarly interest. Also, if you submitted a paper to the Eastern Sociological Society this year, you have observed that they now list Animals and Society as a paper category designation. Additional signs of recognition for our area can be seen in the increasing numbers of papers on animals and society that are being submitted to and accepted by mainstream journals. In that regard, you may be aware that ASA’s review journal Contemporary Sociology has new editors who are looking for reviewers. I would urge our members to volunteer to review books on animals and society on the assumption that the editors will be more likely to accept books in our area for review if they have reviewers standing by.

May I call your attention to the announcements in this newsletter for our two scholarship awards and remind you that, this year, the scholarship award for published work will go to the author(s) of a journal article. Please consider submitting a nomination for one or both of these awards.

Best wishes,

Steve Alger
Chair, Animals & Society Section
ASA Annual Meeting 2006—Animals & Society Sessions

The 2006 ASA Annual Meeting is being held in Montreal, Quebec from August 11-14. Our Section will have the following regular session and section session:

Regular Session — “Animals and Society”
Session Organizer: David Goode (College of Staten Island)

Section Session — “Animals as Societal Measures and Indicators”
Session Organizer: Brian M. Lowe (State University of New York at Oneonta)
This session focuses on the intersection between the sociological study of animals and society and other traditional foci of sociological analysis. The focus of this session will involve an examination of how sociological findings regarding the treatment and perception of animals may be indicative of broader social forces, tendencies and transformations.

The 2006 submissions process is entirely online. The ASA is advising members that papers submitted directly to session organizers, outside the online system, will not be considered viable submissions. The paper submission deadline is January 18, 2006. For submission information, please go to the ASA website at http://www.asanet.org. Click on “Call for Papers 2006 Annual Meeting” for the call for papers and for detailed information on submitting papers.

Report from the Membership Chair—Leslie Irvine

We have approximately 200 members in the Animals and Society section. Our numbers have decreased since the initial push to get the section recognized, as we were all busy enlisting our friends and colleagues and pushed our ranks up to 300. It would be great to see our numbers back up there again. To that end, I have gone through the programs from the ASA and SSSP meetings and contacted those people whose presentations had to do with animal issues but who were not already section members. In addition, I will soon begin contacting colleagues who teach animals and society courses encouraging them to get interested students to join. Finally, I would like to ask you to join me in my efforts to recruit new members. Our membership numbers determine how many sessions the ASA allots us at the annual meetings. If each member could get one new person to join, we could have more opportunities to hear about the exciting work that’s being done in our area. With the growing interest in animals overall, our section stands to be one of the largest and most vital. Please help! Invite someone to join us.
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS — AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARSHIP & DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Award for Distinguished Scholarship

The Animals and Society Section announces its 2006 Award for Distinguished Scholarship. This year the award will be given to the author(s) of a published journal article that makes a significant empirical or theoretical contribution to the sociological understanding of animals and society. The article must have been published in a refereed journal within the 2003 through 2005 calendar year period. To nominate an article (self-nominations are acceptable) please provide the author(s), the title of the article, the journal reference, and a letter (maximum two pages) outlining why you believe this work to be a substantial contribution to the field. An article may be nominated more than once as long as its publication date falls within the appropriate time frame. The deadline for nominations is February 1st, 2006. A copy of the article should be sent with the letter to Dr. David Nibert, 155 E. Limestone St., Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387, ford nibert@earthlink.net

Award for Distinguished Graduate Student Scholarship

The Animals & Society section announces its 2006 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 15th, 2006 and winners will be honored at the Animals & Society reception at the 2006 annual meeting of ASA.

One hard copy of the paper should be sent to Dr. David Nibert, 155 E. Limestone St., Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387. One e-mailed copy should be sent as a word document to ford nibert@earthlink.net


The American Sociological Association Section on Animals & Society Award for Distinguished Scholarship was granted for the book, Animal Rights/Human Rights: Entanglements of Oppression and Liberation by David Nibert (2003, Rowan & Littlefield). The award was presented to David during the Animals & Society section reception at the 2005 ASA annual meeting in Philadelphia.

The award for Distinguished Graduate Student Scholarship was presented to Samantha Kwan and Rachael Neal, University of Arizona, for the paper “Pathways to Meat Avoidance: Doing Vegetarianism and Counter-Hegemonic Politics.” Their award was also presented at the Animals & Society reception at the ASA annual meeting.
SUMMARY OF THE ANIMALS & SOCIETY BUSINESS MEETING - 2005 ASA ANNUAL MEETING

Summary of Animals and Society Business Meeting, ASA Annual Meeting, Philadelphia – 13 August 2005

The first announcement was regarding Clinton Sanders, who is slowly recovering from a significant illness that forced him to both miss this year’s ASA meeting and the forthcoming academic semester. A card was circulated wishing him well and a swift recovery.

Janet Alger then noted the successes of the Animals and Society section: the publication of an ASA teaching manual, and awards given for the best book and graduate paper in the Animals and Society section. The awards were presented at 6:30 on 13 August 2005.

Janet Alger noted that the most significant challenge facing Animals and Society is maintaining membership in the Animals and Society section and expanding it in the near future. The Animals and Society section is currently has a core of 200; a core of 300 would be very advantageous because it would allow us two regular session at the ASA annual meeting instead of our current one, as well as expand our budget. For a point of reference, the Environment and Society section has about 400 members. Ideally Animals and Society would expand, rather then have liaisons with other sections because we would have to give up a regular session meeting. The question was then posed: how can we expand?

Steve Alger suggested that we need to both demonstrate that we are active and vibrant as a section and are generating scholarly material. Then the discussion focused on recruitment techniques used by other sections, including the possibility of a t-shirt (which the Theory section has done), or organizing some sort of tour that would be of interest to those doing scholarship in the Animals and Society area. Possibilities mentioned included a tour in the ASA city (which next year will probably be Montreal) of an animal shelter or an animal sanctuary, and possibly offering this tour in conjunction with the SSSI.

Arnold Arluke mentioned that he has been approached by scholars and activists who are not members of ASA, but are very interested in what is occurring in the Animals and Society section. He asked whether they might be able to join the Animals and Society section without becoming members of ASA (and whether other sections do this). He also suggested the possibility of pursuing working alliances with organizations such as ISAZ (International Society for Anthrozooology) and IAHAO (International Association Human-Animal Organization), both of which are interdisciplinary and consider society and animal issues from a variety of perspectives.

A suggestion was also made about writing an article for Footnotes and/or placing advertisements in other section newsletters in the hopes of attracting additional members.

Leslie Irvine asked how the Animals and Society section members can encourage other scholars to see that “animals work” is within the realm of mainstream sociology, and therefore could be of interest to scholars who do research in areas including emotions, social psychology, and gender.

Janet Alger replied that this was slowly occurring, and suggested that we could attempt to obtain a list of names from social problems in order to send emails with a link to the Animals and Society newsletter.

Another suggestion was made that another potential pool for Animals and Society members would be both graduates and undergraduates. It was also noted that a difficulty with this pool is that undergraduates and graduates may become members, but may not sustain their membership over a period of several years. Another suggestion for recruitment was that a raffle for a prize (such as a vegetarian dinner for two) could be offered for new members. An interested non-member asked how she could learn more about the Animals and Society subfield; she was encouraged to peruse the Animals and Society newsletter and the new teaching manual.

Arnold Arluke suggested other possible venues for Animals and Society related panels, such as a section on teaching in the area of Animals and Society, publishing in the area of Animals and Society, and hosting author and critics section. Arnold Arluke also offered to host a panel on how to write grants to support research in the field of animals and society.

Another suggestion for recruitment for promoting the Animals and Society section was to encourage both publication in the area of animals and society (such as in Humanist Sociology which is seeking themes for special issues) and material for incorporating animals and society materials into other courses (such as Introductory Sociology and Social Problems).

David Nibert suggested that the window of opportunity for recruitment was in September/October when the ASA sends out material for membership renewal. Another suggestion to enhance the profile of the Animals and Society section was to create an edited volume of articles by Animals and Society section members in order to emphasize the variety of research in this area.
Leslie Irvine, University of Colorado at Boulder

Around noon on Monday, September 12, 2005, three staff members from a local humane society and I left for Gonzales, Louisiana, located between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) had leased the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales to shelter animals rescued from the flood following Hurricane Katrina. Because I had studied the response for animals after Hurricane Charley in 2004, and because I had received a grant for follow-up research, I had put my name on a list of people who would go to Louisiana if needed. The woman in charge of the sheltering operation at Lamar-Dixon had once managed the shelter with which I am affiliated. She asked for help in the overwhelming task of caring for the more than 2000 dogs, 100 cats, and numerous other animals housed there at the time (the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine’s large animal program cared for the 350 horses also housed at Lamar-Dixon). Over the next week, I would be doing participant-observation research at the largest functioning animal shelter in the United States.

My team of four had only three hours notice before our departure, but all the things we should have brought were the least of our worries. As we traveled, we compared notes on what we thought we would face. We knew the Red Cross would provide water and food. We knew we would have a place to sleep. We flew to Jackson, Mississippi, where we met an animal control officer from Cincinnati who was driving down in a recreational vehicle that would be our crowded home for the next week. However, concerns about food and shelter paled in comparison to our anxieties about the task ahead. Although we all had experience working in a large shelter, we simply could not envision so many animals and all the work that caring for them would entail.

We arrived at Lamar-Dixon at 8:00 a.m. on September 13, and quickly got to work. Lamar-Dixon had leased five barns to HSUS. The barns had roofs but open sides, with five aisles of 20 stalls each. Most importantly, the facility had electricity and running water. The 10’ x 10’ stalls had three walls and wood shavings on the floors. Three of the five barns were full of dogs. They were all in crates, some wire, and some plastic airline-type. The fourth barn housed horses and the fifth was the veterinary hospital site and cat shelter. We wondered why there were so few cats compared to dogs. We speculated that because cats are more portable than most dogs, more volunteers had taken their cats with them. Then again, we also suspected that many cats were simply hiding. The first evening, rescuers brought in 80 more cats confiscated from a hoarder (or collector). When she had started taking cats in, she probably did not count on a disaster. In addition, one barn had an entire aisle of aggressive dogs, many who certainly were used in fighting. These dogs could not be with the general population. Like the hoarder, the dog fighter with aggressive dogs chained up in the yard never for a moment thought about what would happen in a disaster.

Our crew had the task of managing the barns that housed dogs. Before we arrived, we talked about how each of us would take charge of one barn, implement a system, and whip the entire place into shape. That first morning, we changed our tune. Just cleaning the kennels in one aisle of a barn took until noon. By the time I reached halfway down the line of the 120 dogs directly in my care, more dogs had arrived. I had to get them situated, fed, and watered. Meanwhile, there were bowls and crates to wash, and plenty of heavy lifting. All the dogs got food and water every day, but walks were a luxury available only if we had additional volunteers that day. I have never seen dogs look so tired and stressed. The paperwork on their kennels told the location of rescue. One especially sad dog was rescued out of a house where the other two dogs had died, most likely of heat, thirst, and starvation. There were many, many pit bulls, but most of the dogs were mixed breeds, and most were as sweet as could be, especially considering what they had endured. All were thin. Many were sick. There was a lot of mange and diarrhea. Few of the male dogs were neutered, and many females were in heat. The Lamar-Dixon management insisted that, for security, the lights must remain on in the barns overnight. Consequently, the animals had no natural day and night. The relentless heat and humidity took a toll on the dogs as well as us.

We began work at 5:30 in the morning and worked until 8:00 each night, and could have worked much longer. The facility was so crowded because the state veterinarian would not allow dogs to leave the state until September 13. After that, dogs who had been unclaimed since the flood could be transferred to shelters out of state, while others had to remain within Louisiana. The transfer process added another level of work, as each dog had to receive various vaccinations to comply with health regulations. The empty kennels after the transfers gave us a moment of false hope. Could it be that the numbers would go down? Not quite. Moments after a truckload of dogs departed, new ones would arrive by the dozens from the streets of New Orleans.

After three days, my crew had made some progress. We had moved all the dogs into wire kennels, which allowed air circulation and were easier to clean than airine crates. We had established a chain of command in the barns that systematized the work and gave new volunteers somewhere to turn to learn what to do. We made simple changes like having everyone wear nametags. We managed to locate some box fans, which we place throughout the barns, and the air circulation made the dogs more comfortable. Meanwhile, the HSUS had enlisted help from temporary employment agencies in the area. These workers washed thousands of bowls and hundreds of kennels each day.

As the week’s end drew near, we looked forward to transferring our duties to an incoming replacement crew from another shelter in another state. We wished we could have done more; even the progress we made seemed only a drop in a bucket. The frustration was the worst aspect of the experience for all of us. We saw no end to the numbers of animals rolling in every day. We had no sense of being “caught up.” I had witnessed only three reunions in the entire time there, and each one reduced me to tears—a common sight throughout the facility. The heat and humidity only made a bad situation worse. I succumbed to heat exhaustion and returned home before the rest of my team.

Lamar-Dixon closed its operations in mid-October. Thousands of animals have been transferred to shelters and foster homes throughout the country. Petfinder.com continues to reunite cats, dogs, and guardians. I have begun to write my report to the Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center, which provided me the opportunity to do this unique research. As I put the experience into sociological terms, I want to hold the thought that stayed with me the entire time: this did not have to happen. We can do better. People should not have to leave their animals behind. People should not have to choose whether to give the last space on the lifeboat to a child or the dog. I hope that in some way my work can contribute to disaster plans that include all members of society.
MEMBER’S NEWS

An abstract of FIREPAW Executive Director Joshua Frank’s analysis of research on laboratory animals and its efficacy entitled, “Technological lock-in, positive institutional feedback, and research on laboratory animals”, Journal of Structural Change and Economic Dynamics, is now available to view online: http://authors.elsevier.com/sd/article/S0954349X0400075X. If your institution does not subscribe to the journal or to Science Direct and you would like to read the entire article, please email: DrJFrank@firepaw.org

FIREPAW President Pamela Frank’s painting was recently chosen to be a part of the Animal Images Art Exhibit in Chicago, Il. The painting was later part of a silent auction fundraising event hosted by the Chicago Anti-Cruelty Society, the proceeds of which went to help the animal victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Two current FIREPAW studies are underway: (1) Pets and relocation; and (2) Animal Companions Emergency Disaster Evacuation.

Helene Lawson, University of Pittsburgh-Bradford recently published “The Meaning of Animals” in Sociological Viewpoints, The Journal of the Pennsylvania Society, Vol. 21, Fall 2005. Her co-authors are Lawrence Lawson and Kira Leck. She has also received confirmation that her review essay, “Breaking the Language Barrier” will be published in Symbolic Interaction, 29.3, August 2006. This essay reviews Cat Culture by Janet and Steven Alger, Brute Force by Arnold Arluke, and If You Tame Me by Leslie Irvine.


SOMETIMES FACT IS STRANGER THAN FICTION

These photos are courtesy of Helene Lawson, University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. She tells us that when this automatic car wash failed to attract enough business the owners made it into a pet wash.
CALL FOR PAPERS—SSSP ANNUAL MEETINGS

Please consider submitting a paper for the following session sponsored by the Environment & Technology section and the Teaching Sociology section of the SSSP: “Teaching Justice and Compassion: Learning Through the Inclusion of Animals into our Sense of Community.” Abstracts should be send to the organizer: Lisa Anne Zilney, Ph.D. Montclair State University, Sociology & Justice Studies, 1 Normal Avenue, Dickson Hall 314, Upper Montclair, NJ, 07043 or emailed (preferred method) to lisa.zilney@montclair.edu. The Society for the Study of Social Problems meeting overlaps with the ASA meeting and is scheduled to meet August 10-12, 2006 in Montreal, Quebec. The deadline for abstract submissions is January 31st, 2006.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE ASI POLICY PAPERS

The purpose of the Animals and Society Institute (ASI) Papers Series is to shape the U.S. political landscape by providing elected representatives, government officials, scholars, media and both animal protection and corporate stakeholders with the research analysis and data they need to inform the public policy debate on animal protection.

Through the Policy Papers series, the Institute provides a unique venue where investigators can develop positions on current policy issues related to human-animal relationships. Authors use existing scientific and theoretical literature to present the pros and cons of particular practices involving our treatment of nonhuman animals, framing their scientifically and theoretically grounded analysis and commentary in terms of changes in practice through regulation and legislation.

The ASI invites proposals for the ASI Policy Papers. Authors whose proposals are accepted are offered a $500 stipend to produce a manuscript of not more than 20,000 words. Each accepted policy paper will be published in a separately bound monograph.

The scope of the papers is any topic in the fields of Human-Animal Studies and Animal Science that has policy implications for our treatment of nonhuman animals. Examples include: virtual hunting; cloning animals, animals as property under the law; foie gras production methods; spay and neutering companion animals; legal standing for nonhuman animals; and forced molting.

Proposals consist of a letter of inquiry of not more than five double-spaced pages containing the following information: 1. The author’s name and contact information; 2. Biographical notes and areas of expertise; and 3. Summary of proposed policy paper. Submit proposals by electronic attachment to Ken Shapiro and Kim W. Stallwood, coeditors:

shapiro@societyandanimalforum.org
kim.stallwood@animalsandsociety.org

If accepted by the coeditors, author(s)) are provided with a style-guide and invited to submit a manuscript. Each manuscript will be reviewed blind by two individuals with expertise in relevant subject areas.
TEACHING MANUAL NOW AVAILABLE

The teaching resource manual on animals and society is now available from the ASA Online Bookstore ($14 for members). “Teaching About Animals and Society: A Collection of Syllabi, Projects, Assignments, Web Sites, Articles and Bibliographies” includes both undergraduate and graduate course syllabi. It also includes various teaching resources for people currently teaching Animals & Society courses, such as: print and web resources, relevant films, and articles on establishing and teaching an Animals & Society course. The manual was compiled and edited by the following section members: Janet M. Alger, Tracey Smith-Harris, Shawn McEntee, and Kim W. Stallwood.

WHEN HOMELESSNESS IS NOT LONELINESS

By Michael H. Fox

It’s a cool evening in Portland. A young homeless guy with two pitbulls invites me to share his street table. No I don’t mind the dog sitting on top of the table, and she’s welcome to share my pizza and beer. So where you livin’ friend? “Well, I sleep in the park nearby. Yeah, I work, and I make decent money doing construction, but the down payment necessary for an apartment that allows dogs is pretty high. One day, I’ll get the money together, but for now, it’s the park. I grew up in a home full of domestic violence and I hit the streets at an early age. Sometimes I shared apartments with friends, but sooner or later they got into drugs, and I left. I used to be scared of sleeping by myself, but these guys take care of me.

A night later I come across a guy playing a guitar outside a bar. Nice dog you got there. “Thanks. Yeah, I have been on the streets for some time.” What happened? “My wife left me in 1989. I knew I had some serious drinking to do so I quit driving. And I ain’t never had a DWI.” So where do you sleep? “Oh, we sleep in the park. They don’t allow animals in the shelters. Lemme sing one of my original songs for you!"

Next morning, it’s Starbucks time. I see my friends from last night: man, guitar and dog. So, how’d it go? “Pretty good. I took in 40 bucks.” Well, I write about animal issues for different periodicals. Mind if I get a picture of the two of you? I might want to do a piece about homeless people being denied beds because of their dogs.

Then a voice: “Hey, Excuse me Mister! Are you some kind of journalist? Have you ever been in one of those shelters? They have 90 men in there and you wanna bring in dogs? And some of those guys have pitbulls?”

Gulp. Well, Yeah, hmm, well I suppose you have a point there, even if the guys don’t mind the dogs, the dogs might not like each other, and then...

“Now, just a minute,” the guitar player chimes in, “it’s just not the shelters who make problems for the dogs. Heck, there was one time when I was just minding my business on the grounds of St. John’s Church, and...”

Pandemonium. Opinions. Objections. The street is in mild uproar. I move from person to person like a talk show host trying to hear out the crowd and keep the peace.

All in all, providing shelter for the dogless homeless is a necessary and fine use of tax money. And even those with canine companions cannot expect to be welcomed into municipal facilities anytime soon, one thing is certain: homelessness is never loneliness when you have a dog.

*Please remember to renew your Animals and Society Section membership when you renew your ASA membership. Dues are only $10.00 for regular and low-income and $5.00 for students. Please also encourage friends, students, or associates to join too. Thanks for your continued support!*
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