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ANIMAL RIGHTS: A NATURAL EXTENSION



*... the moaning low of wolves to ears of women and men
first wisdom gained by another's quiet song of meditation
circle of council bound together by their basic power.*

*and quiet way of learning was the food
and spark the hearth of compassion warm
enfolding all others born of earth
in harmony of mutual need...*

from WOLF by Peter Blue Cloud

ANIMAL RIGHTS

Perhaps rights in our society are what humans can extend to animals to begin to create the "harmony of mutual need" which Native Americans learned.

People for Animals Rights (PAR) is a grassroots organization formed in 1982 and working in the Syracuse area on local, statewide and national animal rights issues. PAR is dedicated to radical, nonviolent change to reduce the exploitation of nonhuman animals by humans. PAR is also dedicated to protecting the Earth, which sustains us all. Human overpopulation is a major factor in the extinction of other species. Overconsumption and waste of natural resources, especially by the "OVER-developed" nations such as the U.S., threaten our planet. It is apparent that changes in human thinking, as fundamental as those which abolished slavery, are necessary.

PAR is autonomous but cooperates with several statewide and national organizations. We print and distribute a newsletter and leaflets. (Our literature list is on the color insert in our newsletter.) We do public speaking, hold peaceful demonstrations, write letters to legislators and others, and organize public events such as vegan dinners.

PAR's Earth and Animal Education Committee provides five services:

- 1) accepting invitations from students, teachers and other community people to make presentations to schools, community groups and religious groups
- 2) providing resource lists (& samples) of material on these animal and environmental topics for all grade levels
- 3) providing a lending library of videos, and
- 4) "adopting" teachers so that they receive free issues of KIND News (produced by the Humane Society of the U.S.)

We also produce a TV program called “Sharing the Earth”. Watch us on Time-Warner cable TV (public access channel 98) in the Syracuse, NY area, every Saturday, 10:00- 11:00 p.m.

WILDLIFE

A bias toward sport hunting dominates state and federal wildlife agencies. For example, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) typically spends more on raising pheasants (non-native to NY) for hunters, than it spends on the entire endangered species program. DEC practices wildlife management that encourages a surplus of “game” animals, such as deer, so hunters can have fun “harvesting” the surplus. Favoring “game” species reduces biodiversity of animal and plant life. Much is spent to raise and release trout for sport fishing, even though this may damage native trout populations.

PAR seeks change in the NYS “Return a Gift to Wildlife” program, because many people who indicate on their state income tax forms that they want to contribute to RAGTW don’t realize that some of their gift will go to promote hunting and trapping. PAR thinks RAGTW should be completely free from promotion of blood sports.

NO!
TO BLOOD SPORTS



PAR objects to transfers from the general tax fund to the Conservation Fund to subsidize free and reduced licenses for blood sports. Why should the majority of taxpayers, who do not kill for recreation, subsidize those who do?

ANIMALS IN TESTING AND EXPERIMENTATION

Household cleaners, cosmetics and other products are still tested on animals by some companies. For example, the widely used Draize Test consist of putting a variety of cosmetics or other household products into the eyes or onto the raw skin of rabbits, without relief through anesthesia. This test is subjective and unreliable, and can be replaced by methods that don’t use live animals. PAR encourages consumers to buy household and personal care products which do not contain animal byproducts, and which have not been tested on animals. PAR has joined boycotts of large companies; many of these boycotts have been successful in eliminating or reducing testing on animals.

A wide range of animals, including dogs, cats, horses and primates, are used in experiments. Many experiments involve cutting, burning, electric shock, starvation, sleep deprivation, extreme isolation and prolonged inability to move because of restraining devices. Animals are captured from the wild, acquired from animal shelters (no longer allowed from NYS shelters), stolen from their caregivers, or bred for research. No matter where they come from, each can feel pain, fear, loneliness, boredom and frustration.

This vast suffering is probably counterproductive to helping humans. The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine and the Medical Research Modernization Committee both state that experimentation on animals has swallowed up money and talent which could be better used on modern, non-animal methods of research and on preventive medicine, which would include education on how to stay healthy. More resources need to go into treatment of disease (many people can't even get into drug treatment programs, because there aren't enough programs) and types of research that directly impact human health. Why, for example, subject beagles year after year to cigarette smoke, forcibly inhaled through masks, when it is already proven that smoking is harmful? Instead, spend money on broader public education and smoking cessation programs. Why subject animals to deadly pollutants to gather evidence on the obvious, when what is needed is funding for serious campaigns to clean up our befouled environment?

ANIMALS USED FOR FOOD

The most widespread abuse of animals, in sheer numbers, is in the factory farming system; "veal" calves separated from their mothers at birth and chained for their short lives in narrow crates; pigs kept immobile in small cages to gain weight; thousands of chickens raised in a single building, with each having space equivalent to about 2 CDs. This capital-intensive method of farming also contributes to the reduction of family farms.

Vegetarians refrain from eating animal flesh, whether fish, fowl or other animal. Vegans not only refrain from animal flesh, but also from all animal products such as dairy and eggs. The dairy industry requires lactating cows, whose male babies are killed for veal. The egg industry, even "free range" operations, kills most of the male chicks, as only a few roosters are needed for fertile eggs.

Vegetarianism/veganism not only contributes to human health, but is also a political act which reduces suffering, both of "food" animals and of wild animals killed to provide grazing land for "food" animals. Although animal rights advocates are by no means all vegetarians, there is agreement among most that eating or not eating animals is more than just an issue of lifestyle. We urge people to examine their reasons for eating animals, and to consider eliminating or reducing animals flesh and animal products from their diets as an act of compassion and liberation.

Other benefits of vegetarianism/veganism include improved health, and reduction of world hunger through better use of soil and other natural resources. Consider that 1,300,000,000 people could be fed by the grain and soybeans eaten by U.S. "livestock." By cycling grain through "livestock", 90% of the protein is wasted. It takes 16 pounds of grain and soybeans to produce one pound of "feedlot beef." Twenty vegans can be fed on the same amount of land needed to feed one person who eats animals.

COMPANION ANIMALS

PAR urges people to avoid buying wild or exotic animals as companions. These animals are often captured from their homes in the wild in ways which involve the deaths of many animals, and damage to their habitats. A further death toll is racked up through inhumane transport of the captives.

We encourage people to adopt dogs and cats from animal shelters, because most shelters are forced to euthanize the vast majority of animals brought to them, or to limit the number they can take in. We strongly support spaying/neutering of all dogs and cats to reduce the severe overpopulation of these species which leads to death on the streets or death in the shelters.

-OVER-

ANIMALS USED FOR ENTERTAINMENT

Rodeos, circuses, zoos, films and other forums which use animals for human entertainment are often abusive. Training of the animals typically involves a great deal of physical punishment, including beatings. Often animals are kept in cramped, barren enclosures, separated from companions of their own kind, and bullied into performing unnatural, dangerous and demeaning tricks. PAR encourages the elimination of the use of animals in some forms of entertainment; for example, we advocate circuses with only human entertainers. For some other forms of entertainment, such as films, we advocate legal safeguards, strictly and widely enforced. Whenever possible, we prefer that animals be left in their own habitats rather than capturing them for zoos.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A MEMBER OF PAR?

According to our bylaws, a person is a member of People for Animal Rights, Inc. (PAR) when she/he agrees with our purposes as defined in the bylaws, and has general agreement with PAR's mission statement "Animal Rights: A Natural Extension." As defined in our bylaws, our purpose is to work for fundamental, nonviolent change to eliminate or reduce the oppression of nonhuman animals by humans. We also work to protect the Earth which sustains us all. ("General agreement" with our mission statement doesn't necessarily mean total agreement, nor does it mean that your lifestyle necessarily incorporates every aspect of the philosophy set forth here. For example, we don't expect that all members are or will be vegetarians, even though PAR promotes vegetarianism.)

The second requirement is that the person be up-to-date on dues.

PLEASE CHECK ALL RELEVANT CATEGORIES. DUES & DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

Send form to: PAR, PO Box 15358, Syracuse NY 13215-0358

1) Here are my dues to become a member of PAR: _____ Individual at \$10 per year
(All dues include newsletter) _____ Family at \$15 per year (2 or more people)
_____ Lifetime Membership at \$100

2) Enclosed is a donation beyond my dues (*Gratefully accepted at any time!*) \$ _____

3) I do not wish to become a member at this time, but please send me the newsletter.
(*Newsletter sent with donation of any amount*) \$ _____

4) Please remove me from your mailing list _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone(s) and best times to reach you at each # _____

Email: _____