REPORT

Regional Planning Conference,
co-sponsored by Action for
Life, Animal Rights
Mobilization, and Animal
Rights Network
March 12-14, 1982
Washington, D.C.

The principal purpose of the Regional Planning Conference held
March 12-14 at George Washington
University in Washington, D.C. was to
give participants in the various task
forces formed at the Action for Life
Conference last July (see E&A II/3)
and the Mobilization for Animal Rights
Conference last October (see E&A
II/4) the opportunity to get together
to discuss progress to date, compare
notes, and plan further strategy.
The whole of the third day of the
conference was accordingly devoted to
meetings of these task forces, the
AFL groups (alternative diets, farm
animals, wildlife, humane education,
language, and religion) meeting in the
morning, the ARM groups (media,
animals in politics, bloodsports) meet-
ing in the afternoon. Mobilization for
Animals, formerly the ARM task force
on laboratory experimentation, now
incorporated as an independent entity
(see E&A III/1) also met during the
afternoon.

In addition to these valuable,
work-oriented meetings, there was
time allotted at this conference for
some sessions for which there was no
opportunity at the previous confer-
ences. In these sessions participants
had the chance to communicate informally with one another about strategy,
and to report on their various cam-
PAINS on behalf of animals. These
project and activity reports included:
an update by Nellie Shriver, of Amer-
ican Vegetarians, on the progress of
the international Boycott Burger King
campaign, and the effort to convince
major food chains to provide alterna-
tive vegetarian options; a report by
Daryl Elliot on the current status of
the ARM coalition; an account by
Sheila Schwartz of the humane educa-
tion task force's college outreach
effort; a report by George P. Cave on
Trans-Species Unlimited's campaign to
ban the decompression chamber in
Pennsylvania; an account by Lia Albo
of the Fund for Animals' effort to halt
rabbit clubbing in Idaho; an update
by Ingrid Newkirk and Alex Pacheco
of PETA on the status of seventeen
monkeys removed last September from
the Institute of Behavioral Research
under Maryland cruelty laws; and a
report by Holly Jensen of the effort
to outlaw pound seizure in Florida.

The conference also included a
"Personal Development and Public Per-
suasion Workshop" directed by Alex
Hershaft of the Vegetarian Informa-
tion Service, in which a philosophically
interesting, ideological conflict
emerged concerning the strategic rela-
tion of radical vs. reformist politics.
Tom Hartman, director of Salem Chil-
dren's Trust, in speaking of effective
techniques of persuasion, gave as an
example of a successful strategy for
reducing animal suffering the appeal
to the profit motive in trying to con-
vince fast food establishments to
introduce salad bars, the idea being
that this might reduce the level of
meat consumption by patrons and even
encourage vegetarianism.

Tom McNichol and other members
of Trans-Species Unlimited objected vig-
gorously to this approach, claiming that
such reforms undermine the true goals
of the animal rights movement, by
appealing to the very economic motives
which are ingrained in the institu-
tional structures of a capitalist society
and are ultimately responsible for ani-
mal abuse, and by directly supporting
businesses whose survival depends
almost exclusively on the exploitation
and slaughter of animals. According to McNicol, no effort should be spared to promote, for the short run, reforms which relieve animal suffering, but only so long as such measures in no way interfere with, or run counter to, the ultimate goal of completely liberating non-human animals from man's tyranny and oppression.

George P. Cave, President
Trans-Species Unlimited