

## REPORTS

CONFERENCE: ACTION FOR LIFE, JULY 2-5, 1981, CEDAR CREST COLLEGE, ALLENTOWN, PA.

The recent Action for Life Conference on animal rights and vegetarianism, held from July 2-5, 1981, in the congenial surroundings of Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pa., was the first of its kind. It differed from previous conferences in focusing its attention on educating its participants about animal abuses and vegetarianism primarily with a view to mobilization for effective political action. Consistent with the values represented by the conference, the meals provided for the participants were entirely vegan.

Meticulously orchestrated by Alex Hershaft, general manager and President of the Vegetarian Information Service, the conference moved briskly through its program without wasted energy or futile digressions. The conference began with a series of "issue briefings" by prominent animal rights activists, providing a general overview of the principal areas of animal abuse and of the relations between the animal rights and vegetarian movements. This was followed by a preview of the training workshops, the heart of the conference, which took place during the next few days, organizational statements by the leaders of important animal rights groups, and "international reports" by animal rights activists from England and Canada.

The well-planned program was punctuated by the showing of educational films and informal

discussion sessions which gave participants the opportunity to discuss animal rights issues with one another in detail. Particularly interesting were speeches by Irv Hershenbaum, key figure in the United Farm Workers' Union, Congressman Andy Jacobs, and Broadway and television actress and animal rights activist, Gretchen Wyler.

Irv Hershenbaum, who accepted, on behalf of Cesar Chavez, the third annual Vegetarian Ethic Award, presented by the Vegetarian Information Service, spoke on the United Farm Workers' movement and its ideological links with the vegetarian and animal rights movements. Indiana Congressman Andy Jacobs, who agreed to speak at the conference in the face of considerable opposition, discussed the moral and legal foundations for the attribution of rights to non-human animals. Gretchen Wyler related the trials and tribulations of her largely successful attempt to push a "bill of rights" for animals through the California legislature.

In terms of the aims of the conference, however, the most valuable sessions were unquestionably the training workshops. These workshops, which focused on such key problems as research, personal development, organizing, use of mass media, direct action, and lobbying, were conducted by panels of animal rights and vegetarian activists with a great deal of experience in effective political action. The suggestions offered for effective strategy and tactics were uniformly well-informed and well-developed, concrete, and specific, thus enabling novices to the political arena to gain invaluable practical knowledge and expertise in conducting successful campaigns in defense of animal rights. Consistent with its orientation, the conference concluded with the formation of a

number of "task forces" designed to carry on the practical work of the conference. These included, for example, a campaign to oppose breeding of rabbits for food and planning for the 1983 protest against animal experimentation at the major U.S. primate centers.

Although the emphasis of the conference was on effective political action rather than theory, a number of significant ideological issues and conflicts emerged during the conference which should be of particular interest to readers of Ethics and Animals. The most important was the debate over "purism" versus pragmatic alleviation of animal suffering. To what extent should the animal rights activist be willing to resort to effective arguments from human self-interest to relieve animal suffering? These and similar questions became a focus of debate. The "purist camp" was epitomized by the members of "God's World," a vegan, pacifist cult, who on the whole seem more concerned with avoiding personal contamination than with ending brutality to animals. At the other pole was Michael Fox, Director of the Institute for the Study of Animal Problems, one of the most articulate spokesman of pragmatic political action in defense of animals, who, while not counseling compromise of fundamental ethical principles, rightly deplored the betrayal of non-human animal interests through an affected purism, which would reject effective means of practical reform. Related ideological conflicts emerged on the issue of unity within the animal rights movement and between allied liberation movements. To what extent should radical, grass-roots animal rights groups join forces with larger, more conservative animal welfare and humane organizations? And

to what extent should the animal liberation movement join forces with the feminist, anti-nuclear, and human rights movements? These are extremely significant questions, both practically and ideologically, and though the Action for Life conference did not resolve them, it at least provided a forum for their meaningful discussion. The principal aim of the conference, however, was to provide participants with the practical tools necessary to engage in effective political action on behalf of non-human animals, and this it accomplished very well indeed.

George P. Cave  
Trans-Species Unlimited

ACTRESS GRETCHEN WYLER TO  
PRESENT CHECK TO MEDICAL  
COLLEGE OF PENNSYLVANIA'S  
JOSEPH LEIGHTON, M.D., FOR  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES  
TO ANIMAL RESEARCH

Joseph Leighton, M.D., professor and chairman of the department of pathology at the Medical College of Pennsylvania (MCP), is the recipient of a \$176,000 grant over three years from the American Fund for Alternatives to Animal Research (AFAAR).

Actress Gretchen Wyler, a board member of AFAAR, will present Dr. Leighton with a check for \$33,000, covering the first six-months of the grant, during special ceremonies to be held July 9, at 11:30 a.m. in the Board Room (134/C) at the Medical College, 3300 Henry Avenue, in the East Falls section of the city.

Dr. Leighton's research will

focus specifically on developing an alternative to the Draize eye test, used widely on rabbits to test for harmful chemicals in cosmetics to be used by humans. In the Draize test, the potentially harmful substance is injected into the rabbit's eye sack, causing pain and damage to the animal's eye. Dr. Leighton proposes to develop a test which can be performed on the membrane lining of an embryonated chick egg, an area which has no sensory nerves.

"It is an alternative painless to animals for detecting chemicals which might prove irritating to humans," says Dr. Leighton.

AFAAR is an international consortium of organizations interested in protecting animals for being used in harmful research. Organizations contributing to Dr. Leighton's grant, the largest awarded in the United States by animal welfare organizations for the development of alternatives, include: Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding Fund, the American Anti-Vivisection Society, the Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada, the Muriel Lowry Memorial Fund, and AFAAR. Contributions were also received from a number of individuals.

Public Relations Dept.  
Medical College of  
Pennsylvania

**HUMANE SOCIETIES CREATE  
\$176,000 GRANT TO COMBAT  
CRUEL TESTS CAUSING BLINDNESS  
IN RABBITS**

A research grant of \$176,000, intended to develop a humane,

non-animal replacement for the Draize test, a cruel procedure which, in some instances, causes blindness in animals, was awarded a Philadelphia pathologist on Thursday, July ninth, at 11:30 a.m., at The Medical College of Pennsylvania Hospital (Department of Pathology - Board Room, First Floor), 3300 Henry Avenue in Philadelphia, by AFAAR, the American Fund for Alternatives to Animal Research. Actress and animal rights activist Gretchen Wyler, a board member of AFAAR, will present the first check to Dr. Joseph Leighton, Chairman of Pathology at the Medical College. Leighton explained his research methodology in detail, opened his laboratory to the press and answered questions at that time.

The Draize test, which causes the animal agonizing pain, involves dozens of new chemical destined to be utilized in cosmetics, household products, and for industrial applications which are introduced into the eye of the animal - in this case, the eye of a rabbit - so that the degree of damage (and possible danger to the human eye) may be scientifically observed. Rabbits, by the dozen, are placed in stocks and/or harnesses so that they cannot rub away the compounds that have been squirted into their eyes. Customarily, the lower lid of the animal's eye is pulled out and a measured dose of an over cleaner, hair-spray, eye shadow, lawn fertilizer, paint removed, is inserted into the eye. It is not uncommon to keep the foreign fluids in the rabbits' eyes for three or more days; pain killers are used in isolated cases and the substance being tested often causes severe blistering or destruction of their cornea.

Rabbits are used for the Draize test because their eyes produce less

tears (than other animals or humans) to wash the foreign substance away. In the U.S. alone, approximately 500,000 rabbits are tortured annually for this purpose - thousands more are utilized throughout Europe and Asia. (Anyone who has heard a rabbit scream will never forget the sound).

Dr. Leighton's research will develop a humane procedure which will enable scientists throughout the world to detect irritating chemicals which will not cause any pain to the animal because Leighton's methodology employs the chorioallantoic membrane of the chick embryo. The tissue in this case has no nerve fibers for detecting pain; however, it is capable of rapidly registering inflammatory response to irritants and promises to be scientifically as sound, if not even more precise, than the dreaded Draize test in detecting irritants. It is not insignificant that chick embryos cost less and are more economical to maintain than similar experiments with live rabbits. Dr. Leighton's tests will thus meet the four essential requirements for acceptability.

The largest scientific grant ever awarded in the United States from any animal welfare organization for alternatives, the AFAAR endowment reflects the generosity and combined efforts of a number of animal protection societies whose full commitments to alternatives and willingness to work with other organizations have helped to bring this long sought after contribution to fruition. The diverse groups include: (1) The Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding Fund for Humane Research in Great Britain, (2) The American Anti-Vivisection Society in Jenkintown, Pa., (3) The Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada, (4) The Muriel Lowry Memorial Fund of Canada and AFAAR.

AFAAR also has the continuing function of administering the grant.

The American Fund for Alternatives to Animal Research, AFAAR, has been responsible for grants issued for the prime purpose of creating non-animal replacements in the U.S. since 1978. In Europe, similar grants from animal welfare agencies have been in existence since 1960.

American Fund for Alternatives  
to Animal Research  
New York, New York

#### 1982 MORRIS COLLOQUIUM - CALL FOR PAPERS

The Department of Philosophy of the University of Colorado, Boulder, announces the sixth annual Morris Colloquium, on the topic of "Environmental Policy: Ethics and Economics," to be held March 11-13, 1982. The first two days will feature workshops and lectures by philosophers, economists and policy professionals, including Nicholas Rescher (Pittsburgh), Derek Parfit (Oxford), and Myrick Freeman III (Bowdoin). The third day will be devoted to contributed papers. Contributed papers should be submitted no later than February 1, 1982, to Dale Jamieson, Department of Philosophy, Campus Box 232, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309. A small honorarium will be paid to those who deliver contributed papers.

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