
ALL MY RELATIONS:

**HONORING THE RESCUE & REHABILITATION
OF DOMESTIC & WILD ANIMALS IN THE TIME
OF ECOLOGICAL PERIL**



**RUTH MORGAN, PHOTOGRAPHS
JANET CLINGER, ORAL HISTORIES**

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ALL MY RELATIONS

IS DEDICATED TO THE AMBASSADOR ANIMALS

WHO BY THEIR VERY PRESENCE

PROVIDE HOPE FOR MILLIONS

OF THEIR KIN

ALL MY RELATIONS

HONORING THE RESCUE AND REHABILITATION OF DOMESTIC AND WILD ANIMALS IN THIS TIME OF ECOLOGICAL PERIL

Staff members, volunteers and animal ambassadors from a few select animal rehabilitation and rescue organizations in Northern California provide testimony regarding the ethical questions and consequences raised by our current relationship with the other animals. These warriors speak for the voiceless and give us a glimpse into the lives of our relatives.

We hope those who read their words and view the photographs of our kin will be more aware of the suffering inherent in how humans deal with both domestic and wild animals, and as a consequence take positive steps to change how we view and relate to them.

The first people on Turtle Island (the North American continent) understood that all living beings are related and honored that ancient biological connection. The phrase All My Relations, MITAKUYE OYASIN, is still expressed today among indigenous peoples and is an acknowledgment of that vital relationship. The implication is that the human animal has an obligation to preserve and protect as well as understand our fellow creatures as our future well-being is forever linked. As the ecological balance becomes increasingly fragile due to human activity, it becomes crucial for us to repair that connection and learn from the other species as humans did in the past. The modern Euro-centric concept of animals as property to be exploited stands in contrast to indigenous peoples' view and to the current animal rights perspective.

The conventional sense of human superiority is used to justify the cruelty to animals in 'factory farming'. It is important to remember that the package of meat we buy in the market was once a living being who was not born to suffer for our pleasure. With the rapid acceleration of global warming, the advent of out-of-control wildfires, and the appropriation and destruction of their habitats, wildlife population has plummeted by 2/3 in the last 50 years! It is in our own best interests to break this cycle of horror and learn to live in peace with all of our relations on this planet we all call home.

MITAKUYE OYASIN

Kim Sturla, ED

CO-FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ANIMAL PLACE



Kim with her family of birds

“I want Animal Place visitors to see these animals just as individuals. They are no different, not just from a dog or cat, but no different from you and I. Their personalities are so strong. They feel pain. They feel stress and anxiety. They feel grief. I’ve seen that in a number of animals here when they’ve lost their buddy. I want people to see that we are all sentient beings. Do no harm. I guess none of us can live by that – do no harm, but do the least harm that you can. That is what Animal Place is all about. We focus on farmed animals, but the mission driving the organization is about kindness, about compassion.”

I grew up in Palo Alto. My dad was a newspaper reporter, and my mom was a stay-at-home mom raising four kids. As a result, the house was alive with human and non-human animals. I can never remember when we didn't have a house full of animals -- an integral part of our family. We had chickens, cats, dogs, rats, and other animals.

After graduating from college in the early 1970s, no animal rights organizations existed. If you wanted to work with animals, you could be an animal control officer or animal care attendant at a shelter. Both jobs required you to participate in euthanasia. But years later, I landed a job as a part-time humane educator for the Oakland SPCA, followed by working at the Peninsula Humane Society. The only time I wasn't working for animals was when I was a special education teacher. So it makes sense that I started my animal career as a humane educator. It blended my passion for non-human animals and my teaching background.

I always knew I wanted to work for animals, but equally important for me, I wanted to work with them. That took me to work for shelters, and then co-founding Animal Place. It is hugely important to me to be in the company of non-humans.

How did you transition to the creation of Animal Place?

Zelda was responsible. I was working at the Peninsula Humane Society when I heard this blood-curdling scream. Anybody

who knows pigs knows that they are very vocal. I ran downstairs to find out what was happening and saw an animal control officer holding a squealing pink piglet. She was found running down a neighborhood street. We put her in a dog kennel during her stay at the shelter. I paid her daily visits, always bringing a treat.

The adoption staff couldn't find a home for her. Two people came for her, wanting to fatten and barbecue her. As the Humane Society, we wouldn't consider adopting Zelda to someone who intended to kill her! But, at the same time, we had a fundraising event to help the dogs, and the shelter served ham. Everybody ate Zelda.

I was the only vegan back then; no other employees were vegetarian. That was my mighty AH HA! moment -- realizing the disconnect people have with farmed animals. Zelda came into the shelter as a rescue. We saved her life. So, she had value and life, but not for the pigs they ate.

Zelda was Animal Place's first official rescue. The other co-founder was a veterinary professor at UC Davis, Dr. Ned Buyukmihci. We started Animal Place with funds from selling our homes, and emptying our bank accounts. Then, we bought 60 acres of raw land in Vacaville that didn't even have power, only one dilapidated trailer. That was the beginning of Animal Place. Before building a house for ourselves, we built a barn and fencing. We volunteered and funded Animal Place ourselves for the first 10 years. It was a beautiful sanctuary,

but we outgrew it in 20 years. We ran out of barn space and pastures. Plus my house is where our staff offices were. So it was time to relocate Animal Place.

I searched for a new home for Animal Place for a couple of years. We needed to be close to UC Davis veterinary hospital, and luckily I found the perfect 600 acres in the Sierra Foothills with more than enough space for all the animals.

Tell us about some of the remarkable animals you've rescued.

Zelda had a long life with us in Vacaville, where she is buried. Large pigs raised to be slaughtered don't usually live past their early teens. They are bred to put on weight quickly, so they can be slaughtered at six months when they weigh about 250 lbs.

I have a natural affinity for pigs. They're big, huggable, and very social while also independent – a cross between a dog and a cat. I believe Winston Churchill said, "Dogs look up to you. Cats look down on you. Pigs look at you as their equal." They are really unique, and very indulgent. They love to eat, sunbathe, nap, and rest. They are very tactile, and love to get massages.

I am enamored with chickens, also. However, when I enter the chicken barn, one of the roosters will invariably strut over, and try to attack me. I handle this bad behavior by picking him up and carrying him around as I feed treats to the birds. Most of the roosters are gentlemen with a flock of hens. When I feed treats to the roosters,

they call their hens over to share the snack. They have a distinct call that is very easily identifiable. They will pick up the food in their beak, and the hens come running to the rooster when they hear that distinct call. They will either eat the food right out of the rooster's beak, or he'll drop it down on the ground so the hens see it, and then they'll eat it.



One breed of chickens that are my favorite are those raised for their flesh. Industry calls them "broilers." At Animal Place, we refer to them as peepers because they are slaughtered when just six weeks old – just babies making peeping sounds.

And I cannot forget the turkeys! People see them as foolish animals. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are utterly delightful.

But circling back to pigs, Wilma, our newest pig, came from an FFA student. She is being introduced to one of our many pig herds and is joining Allie and two boys, Bert and Rock. Pig introductions are always challenging. Allie hasn't been very accepting of Wilma. But Wilma is so sweet that she kept trying to make friends with Allie. Rock somewhat ignores her. And Bert is a funny little pig. We've had him since he was a baby; he stayed in my office during the day, and at our animal care director's house at night. Bert was always a handful. When we introduced Allie to him, he was petrified

of her even though it was in his barn and territory, and, he was equally scared of sweet Wilma. They met; Bert bolted away, but kept returning until they became best pig buddies. It's a very precious, sweet little interaction.

Honey and Babe are two 22-year-old female cows who were being sent to slaughter when we rescued them at age 20. What we didn't know was that they were pregnant. Our animal care director, Hannah, observed that Honey's udder looked a little big. She called the vet out, and who said, "Nope." Hannah still had suspicions, so she set up a Honey watch, and ensured we checked her every 30 minutes 24/7. Hannah was concerned that there might be complications if Honey gave birth at her advanced age. Sure enough, one afternoon, Honey gave birth to little Eliot. Then two weeks later, Babe gave birth to Edgar. Two 22-year-old sweethearts. They were excellent moms.

What is the most important message you want the public to know about farmed animals?

I want people to understand how animals are bred, raised, and slaughtered. I want them to know about the cruelty that goes into making their morning omelet or sausage.

At the sanctuary, we have the Museum of Animal Farming. Here people can see the cages and crates animals live in. They learn about how they are treated. And they can compare that to the life animals have

at Animal Place. I want folks to grasp what it means to say pigs or cows are castrated without anesthesia. That statement is too sanitized, and can go over people's heads. I try to personalize that information. If you have a male dog or cat, and you take them in to be castrated, and the veterinarian straps them onto the table fully conscious, and proceeds to cut open the scrotum while the dog or cat is screaming, what would you do? What would your reaction be? Of course, that would be illegal. You know that your dog or cat is suffering immense pain. Why would another mammal suffer any less, like a pig or cow? I want them to understand the cognitive and physical similarities of a pig with a cat or a cow with a dog.

When we give tours at Animal Place, we spend much time just observing, getting a sense of who the animals are as individuals so people can see that they recognize their caregivers, and know their names. Some animals will choose to socialize with you, others not. Many of them come from horrific situations, so their history has to be respected, and some will come around when they want to, and some don't. Some will never trust people enough. It saddens me greatly. But we let them be who they want to be. They are no different from a dog, a cat, or from you or me. They feel pain, stress, and anxiety. They feel grief. I've seen that emotional pain in several animals here when they've lost their buddy. I want the public to know that we are all sentient beings here. The root problem with farmed animals

is that people don't understand them. They haven't had a connection with them. They don't realize they have sophisticated cognitive capabilities, social structure, and emotions, and can communicate. Sadly they see them as food. Our effort here is to educate people about farmed animals, and encourage them to go vegan.

Do the least harm. That is what Animal Place is all about. We focus on farmed animals, but the organization's mission is kindness and compassion. We have rattlesnakes in the country, and we catch and relocate them. We have rats, so we employ an extensive rat birth control program. We do everything we can to not destroy other life forms, including insects and trees. We built all the barns here without cutting down any trees.

All creatures are sentient beings. It is about kindness and compassion for everyone. It shouldn't be just how we treat our families or friends; it should be all species worldwide. At the very least, we shouldn't be responsible for killing animals because they taste good to you!

The farmed animal issue is overwhelming as we are talking about more than 10 BILLION land animals killed every year in the U.S. But, it is also an empowering issue as everybody can do something about it every day. Just decide not to eat them. Take a pledge not to eat any of the stuff that came from an animal's suffering. If you are already vegan, make a delicious vegan dinner for your family. Bring some

vegan baked goods to the office party. We emphasize that there is something you can do that is soothing to the soul.

What do you want to see happen in the future for Animal Place?

We just built a medical center to enhance further the high quality of care we provide to the animals. The remarkable group of donors made that possible. Now we are doing the fun part of ordering the medical equipment, an ultrasound machine, portable X-ray machine. It has indoor/outdoor kennels. It is climate-controlled and essential when rescuing newborns or hospitalizing animals during heat waves. Our animal care director is a registered veterinary technician.

One of the outcomes which none of us anticipated with COVID is how it would affect our labor force. Like most companies and organizations, we've had a tough time hiring staff. Everyone wants to work remotely, but we need folks onsite.

I want to see our rescue and adoption center reopened. Two years ago, we were going into these farms that raised hens for their eggs, saving two thousand a year, rehabilitating them, and then placing them in forever homes. But Avian Influenza put a temporary halt to that lifesaving program.

We've had conferences here at the sanctuary. With COVID, we took it virtually last year. So taking it online, we could reach thousands of people instead of a couple hundred. I don't think anything can

compare to the one-on-one experience with animals, but you do what you can do. Each year, we have a dynamite group of animal advocates, from philosopher Peter Singer, to Miyoko, to animal behaviorist and author Marc Beckoff.

I want to see Animal Place grow by exploring new programs while honoring an animal rights philosophy. I've seen many organizations 'neutralize' their mission, for lack of a better word, as they've grown. Animal Place keeps to its uncompromising mission of emphasizing that non-human animals are not ours to use, harm, or exploit. We do work for incremental change while being forthright about what our mission is and what we stand for. If someone says, "I'm a meat eater, but I will try a vegetarian dish once a week." My response is, "Awesome ... thank you, and let me give you some recipes."

What is important is that we all try to be a better person than we were yesterday. That we educate ourselves about the wrongs in society that need to be corrected, and that we do our part in helping. For those of us at Animal Place, we are focusing on those slaughtered for the food industry. I am not saying being vegan is the litmus test for being an ethical human being, but everybody can help every day to reduce suffering by not eating those with a face.

Does there need to be more legislation to protect animals?

Absolutely, yes! California has laws protecting companion animals, but next to none saving farmed animals. And animals used in research and testing also have few.

I served on UC Berkeley's animal care and use committee for two years. I was the layperson in a room full of male scientists. My job was to review research protocols,

"All these viruses that have surfaced over the last 100 years have originated from our close confinement of animals. If we lived in harmony with other beings, those viruses likely wouldn't occur. We are planetary bullies. It is the "might makes right" belief. If we can use and abuse them, and get something from them, then we will do that. But unfortunately, we have been incredibly exploitative of all. I think Mother Nature is revolting with droughts, fires, and diseases. I wonder when human animals are going to wake up to it. We are flawed animals."

and bring an advocacy perspective. It was heart-wrenching.

So having worked at a humane society, and advocating for those used in research, I decided I must focus the rest of my life on helping farmed animals. If you add up all the animals killed in laboratories, hunted, fished, trapped, and killed in shelters, it comes to about 1 ½ percent of all animals killed in the United States. The remaining 98 ½% are land animals killed to be eaten: chickens, turkeys, pigs, cows, goats, and sheep, and understand this does not cover fishes. These are the animals needing our help.

Interestingly, we need to pass laws to enforce kindness, but we do. California is a bit ahead of other states in animal protection laws which is terrific. Protection for farmed animals is critical.

I am proud that I helped animals legislatively. I wrote two precedent-setting bills that were signed into law. One gave protection to high school students who don't want to participate in animal dissection if they have ethical concerns. Students who don't want to participate in the suffering or death of sentient creatures should be respected, and not chastised by our school system. The other law (also the first in the country) required animal shelters to sterilize the animals before they leave the facility or take a deposit for that sterilization. Sadly years ago, before it was required by state law, most shelters were not doing so. There was a bill in California that a lot of

us worked on that looked to ban the milk-fed veal practice. But, of course, now it is essentially non-existent in California.

Another precedent-setting law I initiated on a local level was the banning of breeding dogs and cats. My message was that as long as we kill dogs and cats by the thousands in shelters, stop breeding them. Go to a shelter and save a life. They are killing healthy, wonderful, beautiful dogs and cats because we have too many. It is insanity. For years I worked on local laws to regulate the breeding of dogs and cats. Another bill that didn't even get out of the first committee that many of us worked on was outlawing specific methods of killing chickens. There was an incident in California where a farm used wood chippers to kill chickens. It was during a virus outbreak. Our bill prohibited killing animals using wood chippers, drowning, and burning. You would think that bill would be a slam dunk, but nope! Agribusiness banded together and stopped it.

Is it ever appropriate to establish a relationship with wild animals?

Indeed, animal rehabilitation centers have to have some contact with wildlife during an animal's recovery, but they minimize human contact. The last thing they want is for wildlife to imprint on humans. What keeps wildlife protected is their fear of humans. There are specific steps to rehabilitate animals appropriately. For the interests of wildlife, I can't think of a time when it would be appropriate to develop that bond.

Why is it acceptable to eat some animals while others are pets?

It is not. The question is, why do some people think it is okay? That is the million-dollar question, and I do not know the answer, perhaps because they have been enculturated to see them as a food source, maybe because they know and live with companion animals, but have never had a relationship with a pig or chicken. What is more perplexing is why don't they stop eating them after learning about the suffering that went into the carnivorous diet.

An Animal Place program I created when I first co-founded the sanctuary was Food for Thought. We reach out to thousands of animal shelters nationwide, and ask them to adopt a board-approved vegan or vegetarian food policy. But think about it, why hold an event, and barbeque a cow to raise money to save dogs? It doesn't make sense. We see dogs and cats as companion animals needing protection, but other species can be exploited.

The essence of the animal rights philosophy is equal protection for all species. Therefore, it is unimportant whether I like a particular species. My connection, or lack thereof, should have no bearing on whether they should have protection.

When people are educated about how farmed animals are raised, you would think that would damper their food choices. It does for some. But for most, it is a slow behavioral change process. Some folks will make an immediate dietary change when you show them a graphic video, but it is a

gradual process for the vast majority. We are here to educate people about farmed animals in the hopes that it will result in increased sensitivity for those farmed animals. Ultimately what I am striving for is behavioral change.

Many folks express distress and sadness at how farmed animals are raised, but they continue eating them. Feeling bad about the animal suffering doesn't help them, but they don't do a damned thing about it. That doesn't help the pigs or the cows or the chickens. I often talk to folks devastated when they learn something and their heart aches. "Oh my god, that's horrible!" But do something about it! That's the beauty of dietary change. Everyone can do something about it. Suppose they are already vegan ... great. Introduce your friends, your family, and your colleagues to that diet. We all eat all day long. To not contribute to the suffering of another being is empowering. They just become more vigorous advocates for others. We need everybody to advocate for those being abused, used, and exploited for our purposes. It must be a global effort, a shift in our consciousness.

Now when I go to the grocery store, all the milk, cheeses, ice cream, meats ... and plant-based options are available. Pre-internet, I'd have to send away for a catalog. Soy milk was a powder form that was so awful. Decades ago, people said they could never be vegan or vegetarian. Now it couldn't be easier.

What is your feeling about zoos? Do you think they should be eliminated?

Yes, I do. Any time you blend profit with life, life loses, and this applies to zoos. Trading and buying animals in zoos is widespread. There is little regard for the relationships the animals develop with one another at zoos. All of us have psychological well-being intertwined with our physical well-being.

Zoos justify their existence with special breeding programs for endangered animals. That is pretty much bullshit. Habitat destruction is the most significant contributing factor to endangered species. Yet, zoos use it as a justification for breeding. Sometimes in the breeding programs, the baby is removed from their mom and goes into a nursery. That nursery is open to the public, and those baby animals bring the people in. Life in a cage or an “enclosure” is no life for wild animals.

Some wonderful organizations rescue wildlife, like PAWS (Performing Animals Welfare Society) in San Andreas. It was founded by Pat Derby (who passed away years ago) and her partner, Ed Stewart. There is so much I appreciate about PAWS. They rescue animals, but they have a solid educational component.

I support turning a sanctuary for domestic animals as a classroom without walls -- as an educational tool. Animals are the best teachers. Most visitors find it challenging to come nose to snout with a pig at Animal Place and then eat a ham sandwich.

How do you define animal rights, and what must be done under that umbrella?

The animal rights philosophy is about extending protection to all human and non-human species. They are their own beings and deserve to live a life of freedom.

***Cross-over virus issue:* How do you see it unfolding in the future? Do you think we are going to learn from that experience? How do we ensure that people understand that the cross-over issue is a fundamental factor regarding our health and that we need to understand it?**

All these viruses that have surfaced over the last 100 years have originated from our close confinement of animals. If we lived in harmony with other beings, those viruses likely wouldn't occur. We are planetary bullies. It is the “might makes right” belief. If we can use and abuse them, and get something from them, then we will do that. But unfortunately, we have been incredibly exploitative of all. I think Mother Nature is revolting with droughts, fires, and diseases. I wonder when human animals are going to wake up to it. We are flawed animals. There are some outstanding qualities that the human animal has, and then there are some other not-so-great qualities. We have caused much suffering and death to trillions of animals a year. It baffles me how we can justify treating other beings that way. I can't comprehend it.



What brings you joy in doing this work?

Saving lives. Seeing animals we rescue become confident and secure. Hanging out with them. Snuggling with the pigs. Giving snacks to the chickens. Playing with the goats. Observing all of them enjoying life and freedom.

Marji Beach

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, ANIMAL PLACE



Marji and Daffodil, the blind cow

“In terms of farmed animals, the connection most people have with them is at breakfast, lunch and dinner. They are so disconnected from these individuals who were once alive. When you break them down into parts it makes it so much easier to harm and marginalize them and oppress them. The more you put them back together as whole, living beings it becomes more difficult to intentionally harm them. When you have a deeper connection you want to nurture compassion and understanding. We just have such an unhealthy relationship with the planet, and with other animals. I think any time we can deepen that emotional connection we become more respectful and conscientious, and I hope we make different choices.”

Growing up, I was always drawn to animals. I did not have any companion animals until we adopted a one-eyed dog named Juju when I was thirteen. From the age of five, I wanted to be a veterinarian. I remember not wanting to eat animals at that age too! When I was thirteen, I met a cow whose big, soulful eyes looked just like my dog's. I wouldn't eat Juju but how could I justify eating the cow? I went vegetarian.

I volunteered at dog and cat shelters in high school and continued to pursue my dream of becoming a veterinarian. I studied animal science at UC Davis. A requirement of the major is to intern at one of the school's animal-raising facilities. Because I love cows, I selected the dairy farm. During my internship, I had a powerful experience that changed my chosen path.

One morning one of the cows was giving birth. She was having a hard time, which is commonplace in the dairy industry. We were tasked with helping her give birth, which involved putting chains around the calf's legs and pulling the calf out. I helped pull this newborn calf out. Everyone was exhausted! I knew it was common to remove calves from their moms right after birth. Our professors justified this separation as "necessary" to keep both mom and calf healthy. But they never spoke of the trauma it causes. I was unprepared. After the mom gave birth, employees immediately start dragging the calf away. The mom and baby are not

allowed to touch or nurse. Still down, the mom struggles to get to her calf. She started to bellow and scream. I've never heard a cry like that before. I felt her sorrow, her sadness. The calf started to cry back. It was just awful.

In the growing space between mother and child, I saw my glass of milk, my bowl of ice cream, my buttered toast. All those forgotten meals came from this horrific moment. I went vegan that day because I couldn't justify contributing to that. The calf was male so a lot of them are used for euthanasia training. I felt guilty because I didn't intervene. There wasn't anything I could do. But I knew what I could do later was make up for all the harm that I contributed to. That moment transformed the path I was on. I didn't want to be a veterinarian anymore.

I did not know that there were places where pigs, chickens, and cows lived without fear of being slaughtered. My mom read about Animal Place in the San Francisco Chronicle. She knew I was feeling depressed and unhappy at college. When my mom saw that and knew I had gone vegan and how much I loved these animals, she thought I should check out Animal Place. I visited and then attended their volunteer orientation. It was a revelation to be amongst people who understood your love and respect for farmed animals. I didn't have to ask if there was meat, dairy, or eggs or other animal products in the food.

I started volunteering at Animal Place in my last year of college. I volunteered so much, they felt compelled to offer me a job. For the first year I helped take care of the animals at our Vacaville, California location. I helped feed, clean, and medicate the animals. But I found I did not enjoy working in the 105-degree weather. I love animals, but the kind of time I wanted to spend with them is not the kind of time you can spend with them as a caregiver. You must administer the medications, give them shots, and they do not like that. You pour a lot of heart and soul into making sure they are healthy, happy and safe, but it comes with a price of not having the kind of relationship you might want with them. I wanted to get the message of compassion out to a broader audience, and educate people about who these individual farmed animals are. I was in the right place at the right time.

When I started working at Animal Place it was a small, grassroots organization. Eventually I was doing the job of six people as the Education Director, and I felt pulled in many directions. It was hard to be effective. But it was still powerful when I watched people on tours connect with the animals, even going vegan. Eventually I transitioned to Development Director, where I inspire people to donate and transform the lives of the animals at the sanctuary. It's amazing to see what our supporters accomplish! It brings me great joy. In my free time, I love visiting

Daffodil the blind cow and the other cows. It is always special to reconnect with the animals at the sanctuary.

My role now is to help make it possible for Animal Place to continue funding its mission and to keep doing good work for animals. I love that. It may seem uncomfortable asking people to donate, but I've found most people want to give. They want to make a difference, and I am happy to help make that happen. It gives me a chance to connect people to the individuals here, and show them what a difference they can make whether they give five dollars or a hundred dollars. We would not be able to operate without people financially supporting us. I really enjoy connecting with people with the sanctuary in a different way. It inspires them to transform their dollars into food and bedding and medical care.

Tells us about some of the remarkable animals.

Cows. The first cow I developed a relationship with was Sadie, a beautiful black and white Holstein used for dairy production. She was horribly mistreated by humans. When she arrived, she was incredibly shy. I would spend time before and after work, feeding her apples and gaining her trust. I didn't have to medicate her. I didn't have to do all the things the caregivers had to do to help her heal. Through the power of food I was able to start shortening up the distance and she

got to the point where she let me touch her butt right at the base of her tail. It is the place to start with a cow. It took months and months before I could eventually start touching her neck and then her face. She eventually welcomed me into her circle. When she died, I was devastated but so glad that she enjoyed seven good years at sanctuary.

I had a similar path with Daffodil, a blind cow Animal Place rescued in 2017. I didn't think she would ever want to be around humans at all. She was so scared. When you would get within fifty feet of her, she would know you were coming and run away. It was really sad. But she loves hay cubes and that is how I won her over. And once she learned humans provided treats, she trusted us more and more. Now she people on tours can touch and interact with her!

After Daffodil and her mini-friend Azalea finished their quarantine, they spent several months in their own pasture. But soon it was time to introduce them to a herd and a bit more space. I was scared the sighted cows might not welcome Daffodil to the herd. Even though cows are generally gentle with each other, it's still hard to know how a herd might react to a blind cow. Many cues cows give each other are visual in nature. But when Daffodil was let into the pasture, she tucked her butt under and ran in fast circles. She was so happy! She was just kicking her heels up, so excited. When Magnolia, a black

and white Holstein, came over, Daffodil lowered her head to be groomed. Magnolia obliged! The two other cows in the herd were also friendly with both Daffodil and Azalea. Although it would take some time, Azalea also warmed up to the herd, but she still prefers to spend her time on her own.

Cows are so welcoming. When a new cow is introduced to a herd at the sanctuary, it's a celebration! Despite being so large, introductions are rarely violent. They are almost always welcoming and fun. I love how gentle they (usually) are with each other. I think about everything we had done to them when I interned at the dairy farm.

When I interned at the dairy farm, I spent time watching them. How they would greet each other and what body language they would use with each other and me. I find them much easier to understand now. Sometimes they can seem more subtle with their displays of affection, perhaps more so than a dog. You have to look for subtle cues that indicate they are unhappy or unwell. For example, a nervous cow will arch her back when you approach. It can also be a display of aggression. But if you know the cow well, once they hear your voice and see you as nonthreatening, they relax. Putting their heads down low can sometimes mean they are not happy or sometimes it means they want their neck scratched. You just have to know each cow individually, or know the context of your

interaction. Some of the signs of being happy they run around and bound and frolic like puppies. If they are really good friends one will come up to the other and position themselves where they want to be groomed. There is a lot of grooming affirming behavior for cows. It's always an honor when a cow grooms you. Nuzzling, grooming, lying next to each other, grazing together, those are bonding acts for them. I think they can be harder for people to read.

One of my favorite stories is about Sadie, who was such a special soul. She never raised any of her babies because they took them away after birth at the dairy farm. When we started rescuing calves from the dairy industry, she would mother them. It gave her an opportunity to be a mother. When we moved up here to Grass Valley we went from 60 acre pastures to 600. We moved them to these big pastures. She was getting older at that point. The boys she had raised would be running ahead and when they got out of sight, she would be so upset. She was bellowing and yelling. Every single time the boys came running back, she would groom them. Just like kids -- you can't be out of sight! They would always come and check back in. It was so sweet.

I'm currently working with our shyest cow, Azalea, who came in with Daffodil. You could not touch either one of them when they first arrived. With Daffodil I spent months giving her hay cubes

and finally we are friends. Now she lets everybody touch her and it is really amazing. Azalea has not done that. Just last week she let me touch her face and clean her ears. Cows love having their ears cleaned. It is a sign of trust when they let you do it. I felt honored to have made that connection. I will keep working on it. It is a slow go. It is sad to see because she is so scared in a place where she should feel safe.

Samuel was sick when he first arrived. This is common in calves from dairy farms as they taken them away right after birth. He didn't receive colostrum, the first milk full of maternal antibodies that provide initial protection to a newborn. Samuel and Hank were rescued by an undercover investigator from a large dairy operation. Much of what she witnessed is standard but there was also a lot of egregiously cruel mistreatment of calves and cows. But even with a follow-up cruelty investigation, the farm is still in operation.

Unfortunately Hank was too sick and he passed away. Samuel pulled through and we rescued another unwanted male dairy calf, Sterling, at around the same time. Today, they are a little over two years old and thriving. It takes cows nearly 5 years to reach full-size so they are technically still "babies". Just really big ones!

Experiencing special moments at the sanctuary is common. One of the most moving happened to me personally occurred after one of our beloved pigs,

Susie, had to be euthanized. We bury all the animals on the property where they lived their lives. I was sitting by her grave, missing her. One of the goats, Flo, came up and just put her head on my shoulder. We both faced Susie's grave. It was a very kind thing for her to do. She didn't have to leave the herd and come over. I needed that physical touch right then and somehow Flo knew that.

What is so special regarding communication with other species?

Empathy creates understanding, even if you can't communicate in the same way. Here at Animal Place many of the animals come from horrible backgrounds and the relationship they have had with humans has been very dysfunctional. We want them to have a healthier relationship full of joy, compassion, and respect. For me, it is so important to try to connect emotionally with the non-humans who come into our care. It is a deepening of a connection, and that is beautiful.

In terms of farmed animals, the connection most people have with them is at breakfast, lunch and dinner. They are so disconnected from these individuals who were once alive. When you break them down into parts it makes it so much easier to harm and marginalize them and oppress them. The more you put them back together as whole, living beings it becomes more difficult to intentionally harm them. When you have

a deeper connection you want to nurture compassion and understanding. We just have such an unhealthy relationship with the planet, and with other animals. I think any time we can deepen that emotional connection we become more respectful and conscientious, and I hope we make different choices.

We have this beautiful facility, 600 acres, which is gorgeous. But realistically we can only save a small number of the animals who need help. They stay here for the remainder of their lives which reduces the number of animals we can intake. It is wonderful to provide that sanctuary, but if we are not doing anything to rectify the harm done to them by teaching others to be more compassionate and kinder, then we are doing a disservice to billions of farmed animals. For those of us who work at farmed animal sanctuaries, education on how to make different choices is so vital. It is important to transform that unhealthy relationship we have with farmed animals. These animals here, like the family dog, are ambassadors for all the other ones who don't end up at a sanctuary. They change so many lives by just being themselves.

Animal Place programs & services ~

We have a variety of different programs. We invite the general public to come to the sanctuary where we take them in with the animals and they learn about their individual stories. We have on-site what I call experiential learning. We have

tours which is a way to connect people to the farmed animals who live here at the sanctuary and to see them in a way than is different than seeing them as food, instead of knowing who they are as individuals. We take them into the Museum of Animal Farming, the only museum of its kind in the world. It gives folks a real behind the scenes look at what animal farming is like.

Many of the animals who live here came from animal agriculture. They were rescued from farms, from slaughterhouses, and from cruelty cases. We are not a glorified petting zoo. We are a sanctuary. We teach visitors about where the animals came from and how the visitor can help. Most of that is through behavior change by adopting a vegan lifestyle. Visitors can pet a pig or a cow or feed a chicken. They get to have that one-on-one experience with farmed animals who are normally kept out of sight and away from people. The ultimate goal for the tours is to have that deep connection to another living being and to recognize that our choices, especially who we choose to eat, have a great impact on these individuals. We all can make different, kinder choices. Being kind is what Animal Place is about, expanding our scope and circle of compassionate care.

We also have a Museum of Animal Farming. At our sanctuary, it's a converted barn and we have a virtual one online. Not everybody can come to Animal Place physically so we made the museum virtual

so anybody around the world can see how animals are treated on most farms. The first room covers the egg industry, the chicken industry, and the turkey industry. There is an interactive component: we have a human size battery cage so a person can step into what life would be like on an egg farm. We have a tablet and headphones so a person can hear and see what it is like inside the big egg farms where thousands of chickens live in cages. There is an outdoor area where we have different types of housing commonly seen in farming. There are gestation and farrowing crates, which are how pigs used for breeding are housed. They cannot turn around. To really send that point home, we also have a human-sized "gestation crate". People can experience firsthand what life might be like to live in such tight confinement. We also have a bank of battery cages from an egg farm going out of business. Each cage would house 5-8 hens for 1-2 years. They cannot spread their wings. Caged confinement is how more than 80% of hens on egg farms are housed. Our human-sized battery cage allows 3-4 humans to go inside and feel what it's like.

Visitors then head back inside, where we have a room to educate people about the dairy industry. We want it to be interactive so people press a button and it lights up a photo and an info tile about what they are seeing in that photo. It takes people through the whole lifecycle of a male calf and a female calf in the dairy

industry. Then we have a wall, hidden behind a curtain, of where animals end up – the slaughterhouse. We put it behind a curtain so if someone wasn't ready to see that, they didn't have to. Then it ends on a hopeful note. In the final room you can ring the bell if you are going to commit

We had a whole day dedicated to fish. Most people don't relate to fish and aquaculture, that being the largest number of animals being killed globally. It is a great way to connect people to the change-makers and leaders. We had four thousand sign-ups for this year's conference. It is just

“One of my favorite stories is about Sadie, who was such a special soul. She never raised any of her babies because they took them away after birth at the dairy farm. When we started rescuing calves from the dairy industry, she would mother them. It gave her an opportunity to be a mother. When we moved up here to Grass Valley we went from 60 acre pastures to 600. We moved them to these big pastures. She was getting older at that point. The boys she had raised would be running ahead and when they got out of sight, she would be so upset. She was bellowing and yelling. Every single time the boys came running back, she would groom them. Just like kids -- you can't be out of sight! They would always come and check back in. It was so sweet.”

to a 72 hour vegan challenge. A chalk board where folks can write what their experiences were in the museum so that other people can see what moved them. It is a really powerful physical space which is going to be a virtual space which will be very amazing.

With the pandemic we had to pivot to more virtual events, and not do in-person events. Last year we did our first virtual conference. This year it was free; anyone could register. I loved this year because we had such a diverse group of speakers.

another tool for us to educate and inspire people to think about their food choices and to learn more about farmed animals and animal agriculture.

We have events throughout the year. We have a wonderful internship and volunteer program. We have interns who come from across the globe who stay at the house up the road where they live for a few months and work side by side with the animal care givers. They go on to become incredible ambassadors for animal rights and animal protection. Our

volunteer program is wonderful and growing. They help with socializing the animals which everyone likes doing. They sit with the animals and interact with them and just be with them. They clean their barns and shelters. We go off-site and table and speak at different events. Schools come out, and we also go to schools. We have different campaigns. We work with coordinators across the country who interface with animal shelters, environmental and wildlife groups to encourage those groups to adopt an animal friendly policy so when they have events they are serving appropriate meals, and not animal products.

There used to be a coalition of 13 or 14 animal organizations in California, and we were a member. Legislation is very labor-intensive and expensive so we decided that is not the route we are going to take right now in terms of how we are going to utilize our funding. It is slower than a snail to get anything through, and legislation is about compromise. It is even worse at the federal level. We support bills, certainly when they apply to farmed animals, to improve their welfare.

How would you like to see our relationship with our fellow creatures change?

It really depends on the animals. The animals we rescue at Animal Place have been intentionally bred and domesticated for thousands of years. There is

great potential for positive, hands-on interactions. So there is a good opportunity to have a healthier, more respectful relationship with them, and by doing so it changes how you see farmed animals.

For free-living animals, I think the relationship is in appreciating their wildness. It is a wonderful experience when you are fortunate to be in their presence in a close way. Don't ruin it by trying to touch or interact in a way that they don't want to interact with you. I put out bird feeders in my yard. It's not like I try to pet the birds. I try to bring them closer so I can watch them without scaring them. I've heard stories of wild animals approaching humans of their own volition without any prompting. They make the decision to interact. I think it would be silly to argue that there has never been a respectful, compassionate, healthy relationship between a human and a wild animal. I'm sure it happens. If a wild creature wants to be near you, it is pretty magical.

My parents live in a somewhat more rural area. There is this family of deer who come through every day. I don't need to be touching or feeding the deer, or interacting with them, but watching them live their natural lives and just appreciate and admire who they are, where they are. I'm not involved in their lives, but in another way I'm still in their lives because I get to see and appreciate them. With farmed animals I wish people were more

connected to them, because it becomes a lot harder to harm them when you start connecting to them on a deep, emotional, and personal level. I would love to be where we can empathize, love, admire and respect other animals without exploiting them.

Why is it acceptable to eat some animals, and not others?

I don't think it is acceptable to eat any animal. I think it is all about tradition and habit and culture. We come up with a lot of excuses to justify what is really indefensible. Detaching from something so normalized is hard. We are acculturated to believe - from day one - that consuming animal products is normal and healthy. To challenge something you do at every meal can feel hard to overcome. In the United States, if you replaced pigs with dogs, you would be horrified if a dog was treated like a pig. In other cultures it could be cows and how we treat cows the way we do. In other cultures people eat dogs. Humans have done a good job of trying to eat pretty much every animal that exists. It is hard to detach people from those habits and traditions. To me there is a lot of moral juggling to try to justify consuming animals. I didn't grow up vegan. But once I knew I didn't have to eat other animals, that they were no different than my companion dog or cat ... it became easy. It is just so strange that we continue to exploit animals when we don't have to.

Is there a possibility of a dialogue with local farmers and ranchers about animal rights and issues around farmed animals?

Yes, absolutely. In our adoption program we reach out to egg farmers in the state, because in California the chickens used for egg production are just gassed and their bodies dumped into landfills. They have no value beyond their egg production, so we offer farms an alternative. We take in as many as we can and find them homes. We got a lot of no's, but we also got some yes's. There was one fourth generation farmer in northern CA who told me that every year when he had to send the birds to slaughter, he was so devastated. He raised other animals to be killed, but he would kill them himself. Sending the birds off to be slaughtered just felt wrong to him. It is so interesting how our cognitive biases develop. How we can relate to animals but still kill them and eat them, then feel bad about it. He got an Animal Place shirt and it was easy to talk with him. We had different viewpoints, but we were also respectful of each other as human beings. After working with us for two and a half years, he decided not to raise chickens for egg production anymore. Through our compassionate relationship he admitted to eating fewer animal products. So at the very least he is causing less harm.

We worked with a farmer who had operated a conventional egg business, that has since gone out of business.

He had three locations with more than two hundred thousand chickens. His viewpoint will never change, but he is still nice. He likes what we are doing. We're not saving him money by taking the birds; it is so cheap to kill them. He will sometimes hold the birds for us for two weeks. It costs more to feed them than to kill them. There is compassion in him. He's a third generation farmer and it is all he knows. It is hard for me to stand on a soap box and be so critical even though I abhor the work that he does because it is horrific. But he is not a terrible human being, not a monster, and he has compassion for the chickens that manifests in allowing us to save some. It doesn't justify all the suffering, but I think if people met more farmers and interacted with them one on one, and communicated compassionately and respectfully, we could come to some understanding.

Working' animals: How do you feel about service dogs who are used as companion animals for people who are disabled?

That is a tough one, because I know a lot of people who have service dogs that are performing a function and job, but they are also really loved members of the family and when they retire they often stay with the family. I have less of a problem with them performing a job as I do with the intentional breeding to produce these dogs. Only 5 to 15 percent

of those puppies become service dogs which creates this pool of animals who then need homes, while there are millions of dogs in need of homes in shelters. That layer I have trouble with because I'm not a fan of manipulating reproduction, but the partnership between dog and human, I don't have a problem with. There can be a wonderful bond between that individual and dog. I think it is hard for disabled people to move through the world. Those of us who are able-bodied make it very hard for disabled people and so if there is a dog who can help them navigate the world that is really special and important.

What is your opinion regarding zoos?

There are always places that have better welfare, better housing, better veterinary care, more enriched habitat. You can find places that cause less harm to the animals than other places, but the same practices happen at the worst zoos and the best zoos. If they have too many surplus animals, they are killed. They treat animals like pieces on a board game. They are not doing the kind of conservation that would make the most sense. They are not restoring habitat, or introducing animals into their former native habitat. Most zoos don't rescue indigenous wildlife so they are not educating people about the animals we see all the time. They are confining "exotic" animals that people want to pay money to see. No matter how big the habitats are, they are still going to be in cages, and bred

intentionally. Unlike humans, they don't get to choose who they are mating with, and if they have too many, then they kill them. I don't see justice in that.

How do you define the concept of animal rights and what should be included?

Generally I think of animal rights as shifting our current relationship on all levels with all animals. It is a really dysfunctional relationship. It is about us being in power over others. I think of animal rights as extending a circle of compassion toward others to cause the least amount of harm. I include humans in the animal rights philosophy, exploitation and oppression in all formats. We don't need to raise animals for slaughter and kill them. We don't need to do research on animals. We don't need keep them confined in little cages for our entertainment in zoos and circuses. We do it because we can and then come up with a variety of reasons to justify it. Farming is the largest scale of suffering: 60 billion land animals every year globally. That doesn't include fishes. My life goal is kindness and compassion and fairness and justice. I think we would have a much better world.

What are the present and future consequences of global warming for both wild and domestic animals?

The way that most animals are farmed

currently will be unsustainable as climate change continues. My hope is we will switch to more sustainable ways of growing our food through plant-based agriculture. For the most part, it is less resource intensive, more environmentally friendly, and causes less harm to free-living and domestic animals. I don't think we can continue to sustain farming in the U.S. the way we do.

Much of our arable land is used to raise farmed animals. We use a copious amount of water for animals, particularly cows who drink a lot. The way we farm pigs, chickens, and turkeys is really intensive. They produce large amounts of manure which is often sprayed onto our crop lands, and into our waterways. The primary polluter of most of our rivers and creeks is manure run-off. It is hard on the land, on the people who live near that land, and on the animals. A lot of fish die-off is attributed to manure run-off from animal farms. The food we grow to feed the animals are usually mono-cultures, vast fields of soybeans and corn which of course degrades the land, and also impacts the bio-diversity of that area. It is really hard on our planet.

Fire season used to be June, July, August, and now it starts in March and goes almost until December. So we basically only have 2 or 3 months of not fearing that fire will happen. That impacts our water usage, and how we store and preserve water here. We aren't in a

position where we can easily evacuate our animals. We have a fire engine and ponds. Fire protection has been the biggest impact, and then water scarcity.

The cross-over virus issue: pathogens from animals to humans. Why is this not getting more attention during the pandemic? How can we raise the issue in order to change how we interact with other species?

I think no one wants to talk about it for the same reasons they don't want to talk about industrial farming, which is a trillion dollar industry. The bottom line is animal agriculture globally is profitable. If we wanted to change industrial farming, and how we interact with animals, we could. Systemically it would be hard, but individually it would be easy for people to reduce their reliance on animal products. That is such an empowering choice that people could be making more. People just don't want to look in the mirror and realize their choices are contributing to harm.

There is a market for cheap meat, dairy, and eggs. As long as there is a market for those cheap products, then farmers and animal agriculture are going to do whatever they can to maximize that profit. When you do that then you have to cram a bunch of animals into a tiny space, and then you often sell them at livestock auctions which is a bunch of different animals coming together from different farms where they are exposed to all sorts

of diseases. You are just creating this breeding ground for diseases, and that is everywhere, at wet markets, and wild animal markets; every time you bring different species together in unsanitary, unhealthy conditions you are just opening the door for pathogens, bacteria, and viruses to come up with new ways to survive. It is frustrating that people don't want to talk about it. I also get it that right in the middle of the pandemic that it can feel very difficult to talk about the source of the pandemic, but we could make changes.

What do you envision for Animal Place in the future?

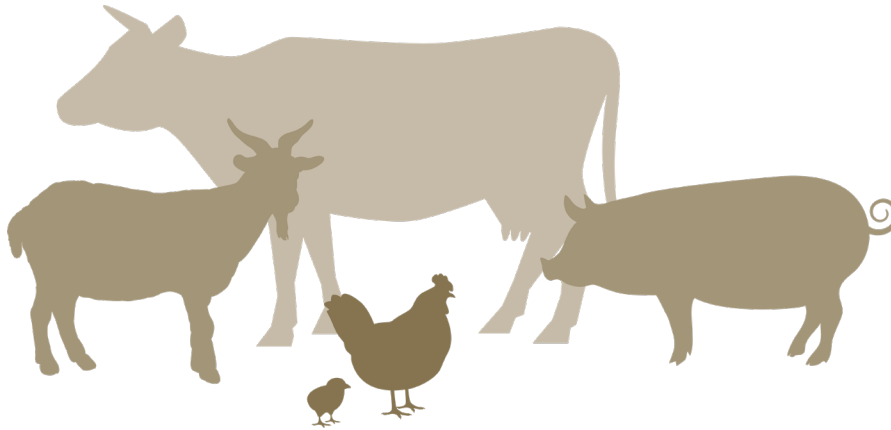
In an ideal world it would just be a place for animals to live, not because they are being cruelly treated or on the way to slaughterhouses or research facilities or zoos. Eventually I hope that we will no longer be needed, but that is not going to happen.

What gives you joy doing this work?

Seeing how the generosity of individuals transform the lives of the animals at the sanctuary brings me great joy. Recently we had a massive winter storm that caused extensive property damage - destroyed fences, downed trees, damaged barns. We sent out one plea for help and people came through, raising more than \$90,000 to cover the costs of damage. It reminds me of how kind people are, how they want

to transform their hard-earned money or savings into something amazing for animals in need.

And of course, the animals themselves bring me joy. When I can, I spend time with Daffodil the blind cow. She knows my voice and will always come over for attention. She grooms me and sometimes tries to play with me. She didn't have to open her heart to humans, but she has. And so it is a great honor and joy to share in communion with her.



Hannah Beins

ANIMAL CARE DIRECTOR, ANIMAL PLACE



Hannah with Angie and Cleo

“One of my favorite animal stories was when we rescued a pig named Angie who was rescued who had been used for breeding. The person who was breeding her would take some of her babies and actually throw them over the fence and let the dogs kill them. For years she had so much suffering. When she came here we tried to integrate her with the other pigs which is very difficult to do. They have strong personalities. It wasn’t working; she was being picked on. She had some medical issues which made it harder for her to breathe when she was really excited and running around. We felt bad as we had rescued her from this horrible situation. We wanted to give her companions and a better life. About a year later we rescued a piglet named Cleo and we put her with Angie. They are just inseparable. They are always together. It doesn’t matter if it is 110 degrees out, they are lying on top of each other. Even as Cleo got bigger, and she is much larger than Angie now just because of the breed of pig she is, they just have so much respect and love for each other.”

Growing up we always had cats, dogs, and the random exotic animals like chinchillas and lizards. We all loved animals in a different way than I see them now. Now I feel like we're equals. My relationship with them has definitely changed. As I grew up I came to understand their lives were equal to mine, and it's not like they are my pets; we are companions.

I was getting to know different species of animals and seeing them in different settings. I went to a festival and got to play with the piglets. Then I realized that they were being sold for meat. I had just never connected that before. Learning that hit me that I didn't want to treat them the way a lot of people treat them, like they were something here for us and not an equal. That was a time that really helped me make that connection.

My first time working with animals was volunteering at an animal shelter in Virginia when I was sixteen. I did that for a couple of years and then I wanted to do something more. I applied for internships at farmed animal rescues. I did a three month internship at a rescue in New York and then a three month internship here at Animal Place and never left.

In May 2021 I graduated from college with a degree in veterinary technology and then I just recently received my Registered Veterinary Technician license; other than that all my training has been on the job.

I'm the Animal Care Director so I'm responsible for overseeing the care-giving

team, making sure that all of the animals are getting the care they deserve. I'm responsible with a couple of the other directors determining when we can intake animals, working with veterinarians to make sure they are getting veterinary care, and implementing protocols and policies as different situations arise. Being out with the animals is my favorite part rather than being in the office making new protocols and training people.

Tell us about your new medical center on-site.

When I got my RVT License Kim thought now we can do some more medical stuff on the sanctuary. We actually have an X-ray machine that we use when local vets come out. We can X-ray the animals here rather than taking them off-site. Transportation is really stressful for them. We have an ultra-sound machine. We have an oxygen cage so when we rescue some of the birds or young lambs or goats often times they will have pneumonia so the cage is really helpful for that. We've talked about doing some minor surgeries here as we do have an anesthesia machine. The vet could come out and do the surgeries with us, again just to cut down on having to transport the animals.

Remarkable animals -

When I first started there was a goat named, Noah. I just fell in love with him. He would come up and lick your face

and bite you on the nose. He was a little naughty. He passed away a few years ago. There was a cow, Nicolas, who I loved more than anything. He was one of the older cows and had some health issues. We were constantly in with him doing laser therapy treatments and giving him different medications. He was such a sweetheart and loved getting scratches and brushed. He was also so patient and cooperative for his treatments. He passed away last December. I don't have a current favorite. Some of the newer goats Miles, Dante and Oliver are just pretty silly; they are still growing up. One of them is starting to remind me of Noah. He will come up and lick me. He is just really sweet. They play fight with each other and go off and flirt with the ladies. They are just being silly boys.

We rescued twelve lambs earlier this year who were only a few days old. We were only planning to keep two of them and the others were going to be adopted out as we didn't have space for twelve lambs, but we knew we could keep them temporarily. It was cooler and the lambs needed to stay warm so we had them in one of our buildings. The caregivers took turns sleeping overnight with them. I slept with them for the first four nights which was pretty cool. They were right up on me and one of them actually got in my face and give me little kisses like he'd stick his little tongue at me. He grew out of that, but it was super cute.

When we first get a lot of the animals if they are babies or the weather's bad when they get here, we always worry about them over night. One of the cows, Shelby, when we first rescued her it was pretty cold out so we put her in the barn up here in the front so I slept with her for the first couple of nights too.

Rita was rescued by Animal Control in 2015. She jumped off of a truck and was picked up by Animal Control. That night she gave birth to 14 piglets; nine of them survived. We took all nine of them and Rita up until she passed away from a heart attack. We still have some of those piglets here. Brian was one of them and he was the biggest one. I don't like to pick favorites but of the piglets he was my favorite. He was here until just a couple of months ago when he passed away. He was bred to be so big. These pigs will be 250 pounds by the time they are 6 months old, whereas in the wild pigs they are usually around 250 pounds full-grown. They are bred to just get bigger and bigger so they can be slaughtered at a young age. Those pigs' organs will give out because their bodies are too big. Brian constantly wanted food so we put him on a very strict diet. Their bodies get so big and their little feet and legs can't really hold them very well so they usually will develop arthritis and abscesses. They have a lot of hip problems. That actually happened to Brian so we took him to Colorado for treatment, but he didn't make it. It was just too much

for his body.

Some of the animals have such fun personalities. We rescued a pot bellied pig Lulu, who ended up coming with 3 tortoises. One of the tortoises is very shy and hides in the corner. While one of the other ones has a very bold personality. He will actually come right up to you and run straight into your legs. We have a senior turkey that we've had for about 8 years now. She is a double-breasted turkey so she has a lot of mobility issues. She is a little grumpy sometimes with the other turkeys. We have a rooster who chooses to live with the turkeys. At night time he will go up to her and crawl under her wings and sleep under her wings the entire night. The first couple of times he did it we thought he was missing. I was walking around the yard trying to find him, and saw a little feather poking out from under her wing. It is one of the cutest things I have ever seen.

One of my favorite animal stories was when we rescued a pig named Angie who was rescued in Washington. She had been used for breeding. The person who was breeding her would take some of her babies and actually throw them over the fence and let the dogs kill them. For years she had so much suffering. When she came here we tried to integrate her with the other pigs which is very difficult to do. They have strong personalities. It wasn't working; she was being picked on. She had some medical issues which made

it harder for her to breathe when she was really excited and running around. We felt bad as we had rescued her from this horrible situation. We wanted to give her companions and a better life. About a year later we rescued a piglet named Cleo and we put her with Angie. They are just inseparable. They are always together. It doesn't matter if it is 110 degrees out, they are lying on top of each other. They just have so much respect and love for each other. Watching that relationship grow and seeing how happy Angie is now, just out of all the relationships the animals have with each other, those two are the ones that move me the most. I've been here for 8 years and have seen lots of animals build relationships with each other, but those two just amaze me.

I don't have one species that I'm most drawn too, it's more like this one cow, this one pig that I like more. It's really about the individual animal. I do have a couple of pig favorites. Spencer who is really sweet is one of them; he lets me lie on top of him and cuddle with him.

I feel that I'm definitely learning patience from them. I prefer working at a fast pace but with animals everything is on their terms. If they don't want to cooperate, you have to take a step back, really work with them and be patient. They're definitely teaching me that for sure. I think their way of being in the world is a lot more simple. They have their special structures and their hierarchies,

and how they go about their days, but with people there are so many extra layers that you have to break down. There are so many different things that people argue or disagree about and with animals it's not really like that. It's more get out of my food, or that's where I'm sleeping, or I don't want to be around you right now. But it's not complicated.

How would you like to see the relationship between humans and animals change?

I would like to see people treat them more as equals as we're all living on the planet together. I don't believe that humans are superior. I feel like we're all equals and we're all living here and we should all have space and ability to live our lives without being forced to do one thing or another. That would be the best case scenario.

How do you define animal rights?

Again, I think we need to see animals as equals, and that is every species of animals. There is not a species that is lower than another. I feel like we are all, humans included, on the same level. We all feel pain, enjoyment, love, anger, and all of the emotions. I don't see how you can support animal rights when you are eating the animals. I wouldn't eat a human. I wouldn't support their suffering or murder, and I wouldn't do that to an animal.

What is your view about performing animals? Do you think it's appropriate to train animals to perform for people?

I do not think it's appropriate. My policy is for animals to do what they want to do.

I don't think we should try to make them. They do have to cooperate enough for us to be able to give them proper care. If they need medication or need special feed we have to deal with that. But if they don't want to do something else, like if they don't want to be around people, if they don't want to be scratched right now, I just let them do what they want to do. With performing animals it is making them do something that's going to please us and I just don't think that is right.

Some of the pigs we clicker trained, but only if they seemed to be enjoying it. We had one pig who just wasn't enjoying it so we weren't going to make her do it. Some of the other pigs got really excited and seemed really into doing little spins and sitting down. We felt like they were enjoying it and so until they stopped enjoying it we did that with them. It was a bonding experience. I just feel like they should be able to do what they want to do and not what we want them to do.

What about animals that are trained to rescue or assist humans?

I am sure there are animals out there who have really bonded with the person that they're assisting and have a good

relationship with them and in certain situations I'm sure that animal's happy with what they're doing, so I don't have a problem with it. I think it's situational.

What do you think the role of government should be in regulating how animals are treated?

There should be more laws protecting animals. In California eggs that are sold here can't come from birds that are living in battery cages. That is great. Birds have lived their entire life in a cage and when they're not laying enough eggs any more they're killed. A lot of farm animals don't get the protection that they really need.

Do you think zoos should exist?

I know there are people who would argue that a sanctuary is like a zoo because they keep the animals in certain places and let people come in and look at them. But I don't agree that sanctuaries are like zoos; I would prefer every zoo be replaced with a sanctuary. It would be great if there were more sanctuaries, because there are so many animals that need a place to go after being rescued. It should be set up in a way where it's for the animal, and so again if they show that they don't want something then you respect that. They should be getting more space too. I think it's really important to show the animals respect and let them live their life as they choose.

Why is it acceptable to eat some animals and not others?

It's not acceptable. There are some countries and cultures where it is acceptable to eat dogs or other species that Americans typically don't see as food animals; it's just how people are raised. When you're little it's like this is chicken and this is food, and that's your dog and that's your pet. I think you're caught in what's acceptable and what is not. Hopefully it changes in the future and more and more people realize that it's not appropriate to eat one species of animal or another. A lot of change has to happen before that happens.

The consequences of global warming currently and in the future on farmed animals and wild animals is immense.

What do you think the role of factory farming plays in climate change?

I think factory farming has a huge role in climate change. Anytime that we're over-taxing the earth it's going to create negative effects. We breed so many animals for food production, and were cutting down forests to grow more food to feed these animals so that we can kill them for food. We're over breeding just to slaughter to feed people. That has a huge impact on climate change.

We always worried about fires the whole year, especially from the end of March until the end of November. We actually have water storage tanks in a

lot of the pastures so we can flood the pastures if we need to. We have a really detailed evacuation plan. We always have two caregivers during the summer on-site to be on call throughout the night in case there is an emergency. We have a fire engine on the sanctuary that we can use in emergencies. But not in any way would we fight the fires ourselves. It would be that we could potentially from a distance maintain until the fire department got here. We haven't had to use it yet. It is always on our minds. Every single day we talk about fire safety.

What is your future vision for Animal Place?

I would love to see Animal Place continue to grow its advocacy and outreach programs. As important as the hands-on animal care work is educating people on why our animal residents were rescued is what makes a huge impact on not just the animals at Animal Place, but all the animals who unfortunately aren't able to escape the animal agriculture industry.

What brings you joy doing this work?

Knowing that I'm making a positive difference in the lives of the animals who call Animal Place home is what keeps me going and brings me joy. I couldn't imagine doing anything else.



Hannah and Cleo

Jodi Sato King

VOLUNTEER, ANIMAL PLACE



Jodi with Milkshake (The Queen)

“I don’t feel I have the right to condemn people for not being vegan, but I feel I do have a responsibility to the animals to be their voice. Some animals may be here to be consumed. None are here to be treated inhumanely, especially by the factory farming industry. I want every animal that is used for consumption to be given the respect of being seen and appreciated for their sacrifice like the Native Americans did. If everyone looked into an animal’s eyes before killing them, how much do you want to bet that the world would change for the better? It’s too easy for us to purchase the packaged parts of the cow or the pig or the chicken at the grocery store without even a thought to who that animal was and what they had to go through to get to the B.B.Q. And not a second of appreciation for the animal for being the food on the plate, often wasted because there is too much food. I find it ironic that cat and dog animal fundraisers have cows, pigs, chicken and fish as meals to raise money to buy food for the cats and dogs. Strange world we live in.”

Did you have a connection to animals when you were a child?

Yes, since I was a baby. My aunt gave me a picture of me lying on a blanket next to a big fluffy farm cat. My grandmother used to feed the feral cats. A series of stray cats would show up at our home, and mom would adopt each one. Her last cat was especially close to her. She would stay up all night if needed, waiting for the cat to come inside. It wasn't until I was in high school that I had a pet of my "own". I was really introverted and wouldn't make friends. I felt uncomfortable going to school that didn't have much diversity, and as much as I wanted to disappear, I was an anomaly, and at times a target of ridicule and harassment by the bullies. My parents let me have a bunny rabbit. She became my closest friend. I brought her to show and tell at school. The kids were curious about her and wanted to pet her. Bunny broke down some of my barriers and made it comfortable to make new friends.

How did you get involved in volunteering with Animal Place?

I used to volunteer at a horse rescue for about seven years prior to being at Animal Place. There was a cow named Milkshake that I went to be with nearly every day. My whole schedule evolved around being with her. We would go for long walks on the 600-acre property, and even on the roads in the rural neighborhood. I loved that cow more than anyone in my whole life. Maybe

it seems strange to most people, but we connect in a deeper way than with words. We understand each other. She would rather be with me than the other cows, and I would rather be with her than the other humans. Milkshake knew when I was driving up the long dirt road before she even saw my car. She would "moo" really loud, and gets the other animals excited. Eventually, the rescue closed. There were circumstances that I won't go into that were devastating. The rescue was closed to volunteers and eventually the county Animal Control Enforcement took over. "No trespassing" signs were posted, and I was no longer allowed to visit my best friend. My heart was aching so badly. I wanted to volunteer somewhere with cows and found Animal Place on the internet. Animal Place is the most beautiful, peaceful, kind place for all living beings. I didn't eat hooved animals at that time but had no conflict with consuming dairy and egg products. After learning about the horrific and unimaginable treatment of the dairy cows and chickens by the industry, in good conscious, I became vegan. Kim reached out to the founder of the rescue to pick up Milkshake, along with 2 steers, goats, sheep and chickens that were being neglected. She even had staff drive there with a huge trailer to transport the animals to be given medical attention and a safe and caring home at Animal Place sanctuary. But they were told to turn

around and “go home”, with an empty trailer. Being at the Animal Place got me through a very rough time and influenced an even greater appreciation for the lives of animals, especially our farm animal friends. It was Milkshake the Cow that lead me to be at Animal Place.

Did you have any formal training working with animals?

Not exactly “formal training”. Milkshake had two young steers with her. I got them, along with a ram who was quite ornery with most everyone to put their heads into the halter and walk along side with me. This worked out great for all of us until a professional trainer was brought in to standardize the way we handle the animals so that every animal would be trained according to specific technique and instruction. Gavin the steer wanted to walk on my left, but the new rule was that all the horses and cows must be on the right. Maybe this works for horses, but it did not work for the cattle. I tried it twice. Gavin became agitated, and I felt very uncomfortable. The best training I have had is from the animals themselves. When we are present in the moment and focused on the animal, they will let us know what they need. Invariably, it’s “TRUST”. Once we trust each other, we can communicate, and in trust and communication we can enjoy the training. It goes both ways... animals train us too! The cows have taught me that mostly, they don’t like to be pet on

their faces. Most animals want us to get their permission to touch them if we are new to each other, and to give them the option of saying “no”. Just taking the time to sit quietly with them and to have the blessing of being accepted in their space creates trust. I’m especially glad that Hannah, the lead caregiver here, and Kim both appreciate the value of just hanging out with the animals. Lately I have been sitting with the potbelly pigs and the small goats. There is great joy in being surrounded by a herd, content to just be. They are teaching me to just let go and be in the joy of the moment and each other.

Tell us about Milkshake, and how you connected with her?

I love this question. Milkshake is beyond description, but I will try. She can be stubborn, aloof, and ornery until you take the time to get to know her. She has a gregarious side to her that is affectionate and loves to be the center of attention, when she is in the right “mood”. Sorry, couldn’t help myself with the lame pun. Anyways, Milkshake seems happiest when she is with me or eating fresh hay, oats, carrots and other treats. Sometimes she will eat apples, sometimes not. She will not take food from the hand of someone she doesn’t like or is upset with. Sometimes, she will take it and pointedly spit it out on the ground and give you “the look”. When she is very upset she will let you know by pushing you with her large head. When

she is joyful she will sway her head from side to side, with her neck stretched out. She loves to be pet, but she is picky about who has the honor of petting her, and I think I may be the only person who can pet her on her head. She is a loyal friend. There was a lady back at the first place where I met Milkshake who didn't seem to like me. Milkshake was protective and would not allow her near me without headbutting her. I believe Milkshake and I were friends in another life. It was instant connection from the first time I laid eyes upon this beautiful, amazing being. As it turned out, most of the staff and volunteers didn't want to be around her, and I don't blame them because she did have quite a reputation for being difficult. But she never ever was with me. I would tell her that she is a Queen. I called her "Queenie". She is an old soul who prefers being with select humans more than the animals. She did make close friends with several bovines, but different circumstances separated them. I think she may have had her heart broken several times. It hurts me to think about it. But she seems happy now. She's probably going to depart out of her body soon, but I have peace knowing that she is at a good place, and that I get to be with her several times a week.

It's quite a miracle how The Queen and I got to be reunited. My two dogs that I adopted from the horse rescue became my constant companions and filled some of the void that was deep inside of me when I

could no longer be with Milkshake, passed on days apart from different causes. A year later, my mom who was my best human friend passed on, and then Ellen, my only sister, passed on soon after my mom. And then our cat passed on. I never really had affection for cats except for our cat, Lion King, who showed up at our house so didn't intend to have another feline resident, but a new friend I used to run into on walks along the river asked me to help feed a couple of feral cats a few times a week. We met at the site where the stray feral cats were. Oh my gosh! It was literally a "catastrophe!" Sorry, another stupid pun...anyways. There were about 30 cats! It was overwhelming. They needed to be spayed or neutered ASAP. We had no idea how to go about doing that. However, with the help of an experienced "feral cat trapper", I was able to humanly trap my first cat client. As instructed, I brought the cat into the SPCA to get fixed. I was the 11th person in line. Finally, I got up to the window, and was told they only take 10 feral cats per day. I don't know what came over me, but I broke down and cried. People were kind. I said that "my cat just passed away last night, and I was hoping I could make a difference in this cat's life. I don't know what I am going to do with the cat now. It took me all night to be able to trap it". A kind person asked, "Is this the first cat you have trapped?" I said it was. She said she would house the cat for two days until I could get the cat in to

get neutered. She showed me how to set up a large cage with a litter box, water, and food for future cat clients.

I think it was the same day, my friend texted me with a picture of Milkshake! She said that she saw on Facebook that Milkshake ended up at a cat sanctuary in Lincoln! I headed out to the Feline Field Haven as soon as I could that same day, but when I got there, they were closed. So I went the next day and I saw her on the other side of the pasture. It had been 5 years since I last saw her. I was so nervous, wondering if she would even remember me. I called to her, “Milkshake!” “Milkshake!!!” several times and not even an acknowledgment. “QUEENIE!” She stopped grazing, looked up and sniffed in the air, then went back to grazing. “QUEENIE! IT’S ME! I’M HERE!!!” The connection was made, and she slowly walked over to me, a bit cautiously. Then as she got closer, she got really excited and began leaping and humping another cow! I had never seen her hump another cow before. Finally, she came over to the rail and let me pet her. It was as if we were never apart. Time could not diminish our love for each other. I went to see Milkshake a few times a week. Because she would charge at people, only the caregiver was allowed to go beyond the fence inside with the cows. While I was sitting next to The Queen on the other side of the rail, a beautiful kind lady asked, “How do you bond with a cow?” We sat

together with Milkshake, who rested her head on the lady’s head. So unusual for Milkshake, so I knew that this person was of especially good energy. It turned out the lady was Jen who headed the feral cat program. I told her about the situation with the feral I needed to get fixed. She told me about the process of Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR). Jen showed me how to use a drop trap and gave me some carriers. She also arranged for the cat I trapped to get neutered. Today, all the cats have been TNR’d, and I have since TNR’d, adopted, found homes for, or released back to their respective colonies about 350 cats. Feline Field Haven has been a wonderful resource to this day. The Divine’s timing is *purrfect!*

Do you have pets at home?

Oh gosh, too many. I hate to have to return cats that are friendly back to the colony because being in a home where they are loved, and fed with safe comfortable shelter is way better for most cats that are friendly. Thankfully, many of the cats are now in good homes. But there are some that I could not adopt out, and so they are our pets. Fortunately, my partner, Lee, loves them as I do. He is amazing with the cats, especially the feral ones, turned friendly because of Lee. We also have 2 dogs. Our dog Muppet is a little Yorkie Terrier mix. While I was in line at the clinic with a cat that needed to be fixed, a man was there to surrender a dog. He said

the dog is “older than god”. He said the dog was not housebroken and was “not too aggressive”. I told him if he surrenders the dog they will most likely put him down. The man said the dog was his mother's and she had Alzheimer's so he put her in a memory care home and needed to catch a flight to Seattle in a few hours. I took the dog home. He didn't tell me the dog was also deaf and was VERY aggressive. Took me about 2 months before I could pet the him. I wore boots, thick gloves, pants, and a long-sleeve shirt and a hat whenever I went in the room where I had him housed because he would come screeching out of the carrier and try and bite me. Eventually, I was able to gain Muppet's trust. He is a very good snuggly sweet doggie. I love being with him.

We have another dog named Deja, who belonged to my elderly friend and neighbor, Gail. She had health problems, and was not expected to live much longer, so she asked if I could take care of her sweet Pit bull, Deja. Deja was difficult to walk on leash, and not very obedient, but super sweet and happy. We were concerned that she would not do well with our other animals so I worked with Deja by taking her on daily walks. It's ironic that when Deja stayed at our home, our two outdoor feral cats migrated to Deja's house which was 3 houses down the street! So we ended up with Deja and Gail ended up with our cats. Lee goes there twice a day to feed the cats. What a blessing Deja is! Through

Deja I feel connected with Gail. Deja is, as Lee says, “The perfect dog”. She is tolerant of the cats, and even sleeps with them. She's also excellent on a leash, is mostly obedient and a great travel partner.

We also have 2 roosters and a hen, rescued from the Fair Oaks Village where people dump them. King Benny, my Big Red Roo is very aggressive. He has a nasty habit of attacking anyone who comes near him, and he doesn't get along with other roosters. But he can be very sweet. Every night I pick him up and bring him inside to his “mansion” (actually, it is a large crate). In the morning I put him in our gigantic custom outside cat enclosure with the Bengal brothers. They all get along well. I love King Benny and accept him as he is. I know he loves me too. He likes me to hang out with him, and is pretty gentle, but he still attacks every morning when I put him outside. Just how he is.

Our home used to be spotless clean and tidy. Now it has literally gone to the dogs, and the cats, and the chickens. But you know what? Our home was also sterile and to be honest, boring. Now it's vibrant and full of joy! We don't have people over that don't like animals, or understand that cats need to have litter boxes, and there will be cat hair on the furniture. I don't even know if our home smells because I think I am immune to the “offensive” odors. It's OK. I have never been as happy as I am now, nor felt as free to be myself. I have been meeting friends who share the joy of being

in our home, especially the “cat sanctuary” where we drink wine and enjoy the animals together. Our entire conversation usually involves the latest about an animal.

What have you learned from working with animals?

Patience, acceptance, to be peaceful and content. To be in the stillness and tap into the Infinite Mind. I learned to allow myself to feel the joy within and to share this joy with others. The animals taught me to tap into the strength of the Infinite Creator, and that I don’t ever need to control, especially when it comes to them. They taught me to be aligned with the pace of creation.

Milkshake lives at a wonderful ranch in Grass Valley now. I am there twice a week to feed her and the other cows, horse and donkey.

I used to be intimidated by horses after I was thrown from a horse and ended up at the hospital. After that I was frightened by them, and they probably sensed it because they usually tried to nip at me. Milkshake was housed with two horses, so I needed to learn how to be with them. I asked Marigold the extroverted horse to please teach me how to be with them and what she likes. She showed me where to pet her, and how to move slowly, and confidently. Not to fake it, but to be aligned with the calmness within. There was another horse named Xenia that recently passed on that had a very strong assured presence. All

the animals respected her. Even the Queen bowed down to her. Xenia was not pushy, but she was able to maintain a sense of order amongst the animals. It took awhile for her to trust me enough to allow me to groom her. We became very close. I respected her more than most anyone I have ever known. On several occasions, the cows broke through the fence and were at large. I was the only person there and needed to get them back into their pasture. Each time, I didn’t control, but was lead at the right time what to do to get them back. When I tried to control I would get stressed, but when I get into the eternal space that the animals are in, I am shown what to do. I ask the animals, the angels, and good fairies for help. It’s, “open this gate”, “put food there”, “finish filling the water bins and they will return to the gate”. And they do! It’s usually not that specific and not in words, just a knowing. The animals teach me to communicate by being present. It’s difficult to explain. In order to communicate with animals, you’ve got to shut down everything that’s all about ego and stuff in the head, and just be in the moment.

The most important thing they taught me was knowing who I am. I grew up as a Baptist and was active in the church leadership until about maybe 10 years ago. But I really never felt I knew who God is. I could never do enough or be enough to please this demanding being who would send me to hell if I didn’t behave the way

I felt I should. It was being with and getting to know the animals, that I found my connection with myself, and God. We are one in the same. The animals, us humans, God, the trees, and angels. We are all eternal beings created by our Divine Creator, God. We are One. There is no difference between the animals and us really. Just our bodies. We are all infinite beings who love, have joy, feel sadness and want to belong. With the animals, I am truly worshiping the Divine in songs that have no tune and no words.

What would you like the public to know about animals?

Every animal is here on this planet with us to teach us about ourselves. They are so much more than just a commodity. I want the public to know that we will never have peace until we show respect and compassion for all animals, human and non-human. Until we embrace all forms of physical beings, including the variety of animals, insects, birds and reptiles that we share this earth with, we shall not have peace. When we collectively commune with each other respectfully and joyfully, give and receive love, and value the animals for what they have to offer, not as a species but as individuals, we will be able to do the same with each other. And then we will have peace.

How would you like to see the relationship between people and animals change?

I want for people to stop using animals as commodities. But I know that may not be realistic because there are places where people need the bodies of the animals to survive. So, I want for people to be “planet-based”. I want for our purchasing decisions to be what is best for the environment. Being vegan is not enough. We need to also support farmers that cultivate organic and non-GMO foods. And not purchase the production of foods like palm oil and soy that are devastating the rain forests. We need to support the farmers who are cultivating crops that are conducive to sustainable practices. I would like to see us value the lives of the animals, and their environment more than our pocketbooks.

I don't feel I have the right to condemn people for not being vegan, but I feel I do have a responsibility to the animals to be their voice. Some animals may be here to be consumed. None are here to be treated inhumanely, especially by the factory farming industry. I want every animal that is used for consumption to be given the respect of being seen and appreciated for their sacrifice like the Native Americans did. If everyone looked into an animal's eyes before killing them, how much do you want to bet that the world would change for the better? It's too easy for us to purchase the packaged parts of the cow, or the pig,

or the chicken at the grocery store without even a thought to who that animal was and what they had to go through to get to the BBQ. And not a second of appreciation for the animal for being the food on the plate, often wasted because there is too much food. I find it ironic that cat and dog animal fundraisers have cows, pigs, chicken and fish as meals to raise money to buy food for the cats and dogs. Strange world we live in, huh?

The other thing I would like to see in our relationship with animals is to allow the animals to show us what they need and want. And to allow them to be themselves. So much emphasis is on being able to control their behavior and to show them whose boss. I guess that we have different ways of working with our animal friends. For me, it doesn't work to try and control them. I don't see myself as "boss" or the animal as "boss". I have no illusion that I can control an animal that is five times my size. It is so much easier and fun, at least in my experience, for us to build trust and communicate, and then both of us will enjoy the training process. I am not a good "trainer". I have not "trained" any of the animals in my care, yet they all are well behaved, with the exception of Benny the Rooster. But even Benny has become a lot easier to handle. He used to run away and then repeatedly attack me when I picked him up in the evening. Now he sits and waits for me to scoop him up without any problem. Every night I kiss

his crown. I can tell you many instances of my experiences with "difficult to handle" animals that were not "adoptable" because of their behavior, that have become obedient with my non-training training ways. LOL! I would like to see a shift in the way we work with animals to focus on building trust and communication first, and especially to see each as an individual who responds to different ways of training that suits their own unique personality.

What do you think the role of government should be in regulating how animals are treated?

Make it illegal to breed animals for the use of consumption. I know this is not likely to happen, but at the very least, make it illegal to factory farm animals. This will not happen until government cuts ties to the corporate gods. Factory farms are cash cows in the literal and figurative sense for not only the agricultural industry, but also the pharmaceutical industry that makes billions annually on antibiotics for the animals. Also, the government needs to prioritize the migration of wildlife before building roads and walls. It seems every time I drive from Fair Oaks to Grass Valley I see another animal, dead on the road, obviously a victim of being hit by a car. It seems the speed limits are getting higher and higher and more animals are being killed. The welfare of the animals needs to be considered in every regulation.

What do you think should be included if you were going to write up a bill of animal rights?

Every living being, regardless of form has the right to thrive in their natural environment.

What is your view regarding performing animals in circuses or other venues?

I don't agree with the use of animals for our entertainment, unless they enjoy the process and are treated with respect, are free to move about and of course loved and well cared for at all times.

How do you feel about zoos?

I hate seeing the wild animals captive. Sadly, because we are destroying their natural habitats, zoos are becoming their only options. I don't agree with the breeding of captive animals, even if the species may be extinct. I see animals as individuals, and find it to be cruel to raise yet another wild animal in captivity. Perhaps it's more humane for a species to become extinct than to have to be captive because they have nowhere left to live. I would rather we work toward cultivating their natural environment.

What about working animals, like herding dogs or rescue dogs?

In my experience, rescue dogs seem to enjoy their work. They are of much benefit in saving lives. Herding dogs seem

to enjoy their work too, but it does not appear that the sheep or the cows enjoy the process. On the other hand, they aren't being hurt, and it is better than having robots doing the herding. I guess if the animals mutually benefit from their roles, it's a good thing.

What do you think about the present and future consequences of global warming are for animals both domestic and wild?

We are experiencing a sharp decline in wild animal, bird and insect populations. In addition to the focus on greatly reducing carbon emissions, we need to eliminate the use of the many toxins that harm the environment. Also, few people realize this but there is massive spraying of toxins, including graphene in the air everyday that is causing climate change and weather catastrophes. This needs to stop. We can do something about the future consequences by being knowledgeable about what is going on in our skies as well as the ground and by boycotting or at a minimum cutting down on the use of products that are manufactured by the corporations causing the pollutions, including food choices.

As a volunteer at Animal Place, what would you like to see in the future for the organization?

I would like to see them expand and to work with others to manifest more "Animal

Places” throughout the world. Animal Place Sanctuary is what I imagine heaven to be like, and it is also a harsh wake up to the reality of how farm animals are treated. I have had several friends who have either become vegan or consciously reduced their consumption of animal products after touring the sanctuary. There are three people who I consider to be heroes in my life and Kim Sturla is one of them. It was her vision and compassion that created this beautiful place where the animals are seen as individuals, respected and very well cared for. Hannah and the staff take good care of the animals every single day. Marji does a great job as an advocate for the animals. It was because of her speaking about the chickens and dairy cows that I stopped eating eggs and dairy. I think expanding the passionate and compassionate leadership for more sanctuaries whose mission is to connect people with the animals, and to advocate for their treatment will make an even greater difference. I know it’s a dream, and a lot of work. I hope to buy property, when the time is right, to have a sanctuary like Animal Place, but quite a bit smaller.

The virus crossover issue, like the pandemic that we still are dealing with is probably a result of our bad interaction with animals. Those viruses cross over from one species to another, especially if they’re crowded up in cages and under stress. Why wasn’t there more attention paid to that as a probable cause of the pandemic?

It’s all about the money, isn’t it? That’s why there are still wet markets, why birds are crammed in cages so small they can’t even move around, why pigs and cows are flooded with antibiotics because they live in such cramped spaces. Vast numbers of people are suffering from chronic illness as a result of eating animals loaded with toxins and still there is silence.

What gives you joy doing this work?

The world seems so busy and there's so much noise around us. When we first moved to our home in Fair Oaks, we went to sleep with the sounds of crickets and frogs. We woke up to roosters crowing, the dog barking, then the donkey braying and the horse whinnying. Every morning they sang their songs. Now all we here is traffic, tree cutting machines and leaf blowers.

When I come to Animal Place I feel like I am at home just being in natural surroundings with the animals. I love working with Trish and the donkeys and sitting with the goats and potbellies. Nothing else matters but being where I am, in the present moment. I feel blissful when I am with Milkshake, and the other cows and animals at Mira Sanchez's ranch. Sometimes, I stop and marvel at being able to be there, reunited with my best friend who happens to be in a cows' body, at this peaceful ranch with the ponds and the oak trees. And when I'm at home, I go to bed with two cats and a dog purring and snoring on top or next to me. Feeding the feral cats in the colonies brings me joy knowing they are all fixed and healthy. I feel God's unconditional love when I am living my purpose of sharing this little time we have on earth together with the animals.

Linda Tuttle-Adams

BIOLOGIST, AUTHOR, ILLUSTRATOR,
EDUCATOR WITH WILDLIFE REHABILITATION AND RELEASE



Linda with Kramer, the raven

“I believe that humans are not “owners” of an animal. When we have an animal in our care, whether domestic or wild, we become keepers, caregivers. We become a member of their pack, their herd, or their family. The relationship with the animal can be a partnership, one of companionship, or one that fosters mutual respect. Sadly, when wild animals are kept illegally, they can be mistreated, ignored, improperly cared for and may suffer lives in cages where they have been cast aside and eventually ignored. Some wild animals have been released or escaped after their imprisonment and become a nuisance because they have not learned how to survive. Parents who think it’s a good experience for their child to raise a wild animal should do more research and soul searching. What was thought to be a good idea can become completely inappropriate, can result in the detriment of the animal, and the child’s experience is no longer positive.”

My dad was a science teacher, and my mother was a horse trainer. Both gave me gifts of music, art, and a good sense of what is right and balanced. So I guess it came naturally that I would study, draw, and paint animals. I was born in Hollister, California and grew up in Salinas. Since we lived near the ocean, I loved exploring tide pools from Big Sur to Mendocino, watching sandpipers, otters, and pelicans, and collecting sand dollars and other shells along the beaches of California. As long as I can remember I felt a deep empathy for animals that were persecuted for their fur or tusks, or simply because they were considered ugly or terribly misunderstood.

People tend to use anthropomorphic words when they don't understand an animal. Vultures for example, have been unsuitably described as vicious, remorseless, greedy, and even vindictive. These kinds of misunderstandings provoke unwarranted killings. During high school I became aware of the plight of the California Condor and Peregrine Falcon due to DDT. The experiences I had with animals during my childhood would guide me along paths I've taken in life, to become a biologist, artist, and writer.

My first relationship with a horse was with my mom's buckskin 'Smoky' who lived in Iowa with my grandparents. When I was three my mom put me on Smoky's back. He was large and gentle, and I loved going with my Grampy to give Smoky apples and sugar cubes. That experience grew into

a deep, life-long love for horses. Between the ages of eight to twelve, I developed a special bond with a very tall Thoroughbred gelding. My mom never knew that I would take 'Big Red' to an old racetrack near our stables, remove the saddle, and while bareback, I'd let out the reins and let him run as fast as he wanted. I learned that becoming a good rider was about creating a partnership with your horse. Being gentle, kind, and patient was much more effective than trying to dominate an animal using fear and force. These concepts would help me later in life.

My relationship with birds is more complicated than it is with horses. When I was a little girl, I remember picking up baby birds off the sidewalk so they wouldn't get smashed. Everyone thought they were ugly, but I grew to adore them. Nestling birds went into a little shoebox in my "zoo" of a bedroom along with containers of polliwogs, lizards, and snakes. In the mid-60's there were no rehab places to take baby animals, so my mom taught me how to feed the animals we rescued. Out at the horse ranch there were all kinds of birds. One day after riding my horse, I hiked up to a pond and sat in the grass. A mother quail arrived with her chicks that were no bigger than my thumbnail. When she realized I was sitting there, she gave an alarm call and the chicks instantly disappeared. I stayed still for what felt like hours. I didn't know where the chicks were and was afraid

to step on one. Then I looked down and hiding right next to me was a tiny baby quail acting invisible. It just melted my heart. The mother gave her “safety” call and they popped up out of the grass and skirted off. Those kinds of memories, the one-on-one moments I’ve had with animals, have stayed with me all these years.

After high school I attended junior college and took classes in wildlife biology and animal behavior. I attended the University of California, Santa Cruz, in the early 1980’s and completed a bachelor’s degree with emphasis in Ornithology and Mammalogy. During that time, I became involved in elephant seal behavioral studies. My job involved tagging dead pups within the harems and documenting seals with shark attack injuries. The relationship I had with seals was one of complete respect and maintaining a safe distance. My senior project involved studying the breeding biology of the American Kestrel. I trapped and banded several pairs on the campus and nearby areas in Santa Cruz. Studying kestrels was one of the highlights of my life. They are the smallest North American falcon, but just as fierce as the Peregrine. Later, I would come to meet a kestrel that became an education ambassador with our rehabilitation group. He had been kept illegally by someone. He was seen in a small cage in the person’s garage and was reported to Fish and Wildlife

who confiscated the bird. This “person” had cut off his talons and one wing at the wrist causing permanent injuries and undoubtedly pain and suffering. Our group named him Braveheart. I felt a connection with little Braveheart that brought me full circle to the days of my field work with kestrels.

I’ve been a bird watcher and studier for over 50 years. I’ve explored every habitat from the Oregon-Washington border to the California-Mexican border. Some of the most unusual bird behaviors I observed were in Suriname, South America. In 1984 I traveled to Suriname as a field assistant with an ornithologist who was studying lek breeding species. The rainforest is a magical place full of unusual animals that can be entertaining as well as dangerous. My work entailed helping set up mist nets to capture the birds we were studying. We were in dense forested habitat thick with liana vines. Once the nets were set up, I would monitor the nets for hours. During that time of sitting still in one place, I experienced some extraordinary encounters with hundreds of birds, mammals, insects, and amphibians. Except for monkeys, I was not a threat to the animals, but part of the landscape.

Like many kids, I always wanted to be a veterinarian. I finished two years of college in my hometown of Salinas. Then I worked for six years for a construction company, saved up some money, and decided to go back to school. Field

trips with UCSC's ornithology classes were incredible experiences. Our trip to the Mohave Desert was particularly memorable. One morning I woke up early and just needed some time to get out by myself. The day before I had seen a Verdin, a tiny yellow desert songbird that was building her nest near a pond. So, I took my journal and hiked to the area. I was sketching the Verdin when suddenly I heard a "plop" in the water. I noticed the reeds moving and saw something try to climb up a reed, but it fell in the water again. I picked the baby bird up in my hand. I had never seen one of these before. Its body was "furry" like a bat and the wings were longer and more pointed than a swallow. The legs were very short with four strong toes pointed forward unlike a songbird. The wet bird sat in my hand and stared at me with large dark eyes. When it was dry and warm, I gave it a gentle boost, and up it flew. Through a process of elimination, I decided it was a fledgling White-throated Swift that took its first flight from its nest in the high cliffs. That connection with the baby swift was an inspiration to writing and illustrating a guide on baby bird identification: *Baby Bird Identification: a Guide to North American Birds*. Part of the reason I wrote the book was to show how miraculous life is by observing the development of a baby bird. Those of us who have a bird nesting on our porch or outside the kitchen window are fortunate. Most people see

finches, robins, and bluebirds, a few species that nest near our homes. But some birds' nests, such as warblers, are so well-hidden the nestlings are rarely found.

During my time at UC Santa Cruz, I was able to participate in several field studies of birds and mammals. The university's predatory bird research facility was helping to bring back California Condors that were on the brink of extinction. I was fortunate to see condor eggs that were being incubated. The facility also was working on breeding studies of the Peregrine Falcon, and I was able to participate in that work as well. The first Peregrine I saw was in Paramaribo, Suriname. A pair of peregrines were catching bats at dusk and storing them on a very large tower, presumably to feed to their young. I have yet to see a wild condor fly. Someday.

As a wildlife rehabilitator since 2008, I have had the honor of having many relationships with the birds in my care and the care of others that I have helped. Each bird has a story of what happened to it that caused it to end up in rehabilitation. When you have a bird in care for a long period, and you hold it to give medications and treatment, you form a close relationship with the bird. You must understand that no matter how tame the bird appears, a wild bird never wants to be held, cuddled, or talked to like a baby. The tasks of a wildlife rehabilitator are very difficult, especially when you are a home rehabber

working alone. You must have the utmost strength to make tough decisions, to know when enough is enough, that the bird cannot be saved. They say that euthanizing a bird that cannot be released, is the kindest thing you can do. But it is never easy. One way I've been able to cope with multiple losses is to study the bird. That way, its life and death, was of some value. I've taken thousands of measurements and photos to study and use as references for painting.

There's a presentation that I have given several times called "Our Backyard Birds". We can learn a lot about our environment by paying attention to the animals in our own backyard. On my 20 acres in the Sierra foothills, my backyard birds are a variety of woodpeckers, owls, Green Heron, quail, turkey, and over 50 species of songbirds. We have been visited by a pair of recently weaned mountain lions, a pair of young bobcats, a family of coyotes, numerous rabbits, squirrels, skunks, raccoons, possums, and too many rodents. It is fascinating to observe the interactions of many of these animals with my horses

and donkey. My donkey is a special guy. One early morning he had a fight with a mountain lion or possibly two. Although he had 20 claw marks on his rump (*he was ok*), we believe the cats may have ended up for the worse. In the mud, we could see claw marks from a cat being drug backwards by its tail. By the hoof

and paw prints in the damp soil, we could see it was a ferocious fight. Unless a donkey is old, it is capable of killing a lion with its teeth and hooves.

During migration hundreds and hundreds of Sandhill Cranes and Turkey Vultures fly overhead. One year over two hundred turkey vultures landed in the trees surrounding our property. They stayed for the night and the next morning. It took them a few hours to

warm up in the sun. Then one-by-one, they would fly to the ground, run along the top of a big mound of dirt, and take off like little planes on a runway. Small groups would fly in circles until they caught a thermal that carried them far away. A pair of Great Horned Owls has nested on or near our property for years. When the young owls first fledge, they look like

"Having a non-releasable wild animal in captivity comes with an incredible amount of responsibility to ensure the animal's safety and happiness. Respecting the fact that each animal has traits that are innate and cannot be removed is truly caring for the animal. With my education ravens, I nurture their wild behaviors. The relationship I have with ravens is one of respect and trust."

large moths as they are very awkward and flap their wings slowly. Sometimes one or two fledgling owls perch right outside our bedroom window at night and make their screech begging call for food. They hatch in February or March, and they stay with their parents until late fall learning to hunt. They have one of the longest dependencies on their parents than other birds. What I learned from this pair, and further research, is that these owls must remain in care until early October. This is how long they are with their parents, learning how to catch prey and survive.

My love for birds is not just because I enjoy studying and painting them. I appreciate them because they tell us and other animals, things about nature: when storms are coming; when a predator is nearby; when the air is not good to breathe. Birds told us that DDT was dangerous. Their eggs were thin, and they did not hatch. DDT drove condors and the Peregrine to near extinction. I feel the same about frogs and other amphibians. Their skin is more permeable than other vertebrates, so amphibians can develop maladies because of what is happening in the air and water. Birds and amphibians are telling us that change is happening.

My experiences with ravens: The reason I have ravens in an aviary in my backyard is because they are unable to be released in the wild. Their stories are similar. Both birds were found within two weeks of each other, on the ground and

unable to fly. Unfortunately, it took several months while their damaged feathers grew out from the injuries they sustained, to learn that they would never fly well. During that time, I unavoidably formed a bond with the birds. It is nearly impossible to not form a kind of relationship over a long period of time when you are caring for an intelligent animal. Historically, many ravens that have been raised by humans, have eventually been freed and allowed to come and go. Some have found mates and may bring their young to visit their people. This was my hope too, but it was not to be, so they were placed on state and federal permits and now educate the public about why it is not a good idea to raise a wild bird as a pet. Ravens do not make good pets. They are destructive and messy. Ravens do what they do because they are a raven. They do not love you. You form a different kind of bond than you would with a dog or cat. A relationship with a raven is one of constant trust-building and reinforcement as they are fearful of everything. This is how they survive. Sometimes they are just not in the mood to be messed with. You just walk away and try later. I have learned a lot from my ravens which has helped the birds I have in rehabilitation. They have taught me how their wild counterparts work in the wild so I can provide proper treatment. When I receive a young raven, I make sure it can see and hear the adult ravens so it can maintain its wildness, learn to vocalize, and have social

interactions with its own kind.

My relationship with horses today: There is a level of respect that we must have for an animal to keep ourselves safe (from what the animal can potentially do with its teeth, claws, hooves, etc.) and get what we want from the animal. A 500-pound donkey can kill just about anything. If you choose to “argue” with a donkey, you will lose. If you treat a donkey with respect, let him feel he has a choice in the matter, then he will cooperate willingly. All animals survive by their fears and understanding what the animal fears, whether real or imagined, is important in getting them to cooperate. Donkeys are very gentle and even show affection when they are treated with understanding and love. Horses are very different than donkeys. Horses like attention and can even show affection, but they usually want to be fed first. My two Morgan mares are half-sisters. I had not had a horse since my mom sold Big Red when I was 12. Having horses again in my life was another completed circle. My mom suffered from undiagnosed depression. She died when I was 38 from alcohol-related liver disease. For years I was angry with her because my four children missed out having a grandmother. My horses helped me forgive her because they reminded me who she was before she became ill and everything she taught me as a child. When I bought my horses, it was apparent I needed a lot of help. It had been many

years since I’d had a horse. I became involved in Cowboy Dressage in 2009. It is a discipline that combines the elegance of classical dressage with western tack, attire, and lifestyle. Kindness, partnership, and soft feel are some of the principles that attracted me. These are the ideas behind truly respecting and loving the horse. The cruel ways to make a horse behave a certain way to win a ribbon or money must end.

My horses are often my therapy. It’s been said that horses know when people are being dishonest, are sick, or have a disability. There are studies that show that a horse can hear the heartbeat of another horse or human. When a horse puts its muzzle up to your face and gently breathes on you, something magical happens.

Why did you become involved in wildlife rehabilitation?

In 2008, when I first started wildlife rehabilitation, I found that there was a lot to learn about helping a wild animal. My background in biology helped with the natural history of the different species, but I did not know how to care for them in captivity. My experience as a birder, helped me understand needs of adult birds, but baby bird care proved to be challenging. Songbirds can be the most difficult to rehabilitate. For example, in the area where I live there are over seventy breeding species of songbirds. Each one has a different diet, a different way of life,

a different way of behavior and you need to set up housing that replicates how they would live in the wild. I started attending classes to learn more. Then I started teaching others to improve the standards of care.

At first, I had doubts about wildlife rehabilitation, that what we were doing was making a difference. Or were we just interfering with nature? Some biologists believe that saving one bird at a time really has no effect at all on the whole population. But many biologists see the value in wildlife rehabilitation. I've seen the results of people trying to raise wild animals without being educated. They find a completely inappropriate diet off the internet. I find it interesting that these people manage to find a rehabilitator after a bird becomes sick, rather than when they first found the bird. What most don't understand is that because baby birds grow so quickly (from egg to flight in as little as 9 days for some), even a day on an incorrect diet can cause a weak skeletal system and susceptibility to disease and accidents after they've been released. Wildlife rehabilitation has a valuable within the community. People need a place to take an injured or orphaned animal.

I went into the field of wildlife rehabilitation because I wanted to do something of value within my field of expertise because there weren't any avian biologists in our local group. It didn't take long to realize that the field was still

growing and that I could contribute to many areas of knowledge. I feel the most important role of wildlife rehabilitation is that it gives an individual (volunteer) a feeling that they have given back the animal's freedom, that they have reversed a human-caused harm. For those animals that could not be saved, they've been given the freedom from suffering.

When I see what is happening to birds on a global level and what happens when a bird is raised by someone ignorant of its requirements, I realize that saving one bird is worth it. We feel helpless when we see a starving polar bear floating on a single piece of ice because we can do nothing about it. But when we release a bird that was a victim of a cat attack, we have given something back to nature, and that one bird may reproduce. That is a gratifying thought. We have contributed to something good. When we fix a broken wing from a collision with a car, that is one more bird that has a chance. That gives the person helping the bird a feeling that they are doing something.

Wildlife rehabilitation plays many roles, not just in saving animals but in education and contributions to science and veterinary medicine. For example, a Turkey Vulture was admitted because it was weak and could not stand up. With vultures that show these symptoms, I suspect poisoning. His x-ray showed 3 lead pellets most likely ingested from something the bird ate. Turkey vultures

have acid in their stomach that can digest nasty diseases. Unfortunately, when lead is in the stomach the acid acts quickly to dissolve the lead that gets into the blood system. I ordered a very expensive medicine that had to be compounded at a lab. In the meantime, he was given fluids and activated charcoal. However, he ended up passing away before the medicine arrived. Heartbroken, I wanted to know exactly why he died. I heard about a study with UC Davis testing birds that died of poisoning in the forested areas. They were happy to include the vulture in their data, so I performed a basic necropsy and sent the organs on dry ice. When I opened the bird up, I noticed blood in areas of his bones that it wouldn't normally occur. When the report came back, the vulture was not only positive for lead but for rodenticide. Rat poisoning is what caused the bleeding in the bones. The UC Davis study found owls, hawks, and mammals in deep forested habitat with poison in them. Illegal grow areas contribute to some of this, because traps and bait are set out to protect the plants. But that is a whole other subject.

One thing I discovered early on and have worked continuously to improve is being able to identify the bird. Identification of a nestling with very little plumage is very difficult without understanding the taxonomic family to which they belong. Identification requires practice and experience seeing different

species. So I have put together all my years as a birder, biologist, and wildlife rehabilitator into the book I've written and illustrated. It is my legacy and I'm sure there will never be another guide like it.

What is your concept and view of animal rights?

Animals have rights. They have rights to humane treatment and protection from harm. Unfortunately, by some perspectives, animals get in the way of human projects, progress, and consumption. Wild animals are supposedly protected through conservation and preservation, which is (shockingly) subject to change according to who the U.S. president is at the time. Between 2017 and 2020, the rights of wild animals were in the most danger since Roosevelt began measures to establish their protection in the early 1900's! Organizations such as the Audubon Society and others have fought hard to protect the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act that went into law in 1918.

I feel that most living things serve an important role in the ecosystem. However, I've wondered why mosquitoes, ticks, and other disease-carrying organisms exist. I have no problem killing them. But have a belief about some animals, maybe it's a karma sort-of thing, but I don't kill spiders or rattlesnakes. Once when I was homeschooling my children, I put a black widow spider in a jar with her egg sac and let her have her babies in the jar and then

released them. I let everything be unless it would be a direct danger to my family or pets. I don't use pesticides and everything that goes into my soil is organic. I don't deter the birds. I just grow extra. I have a peach tree and let the bees and birds get all the top fruits. It's disturbing when I hear a gun fired in my area. One neighbor down the road shoots anything that comes in his yard because they kill his cats. I've tried to reason with people who let their cats outside. Again, we moved into areas that once were populated with wild animals, including mountain lions and bears. Small livestock (goats, sheep, mini horses), pets, and chickens need to be locked up at night.

Wild animals have the right to be free. Very few make good wildlife ambassadors. They take an enormous amount of time to keep safe, healthy, and content being captive. It might seem really cool to have a wild animal as a pet. However, a wild animal is always wild, and when they become destructive, expensive, aggressive, and too difficult, the animal is turned loose without having a clue how to survive. Wildlife rehabilitators receive reports of owls begging for food from people and other animals that seem unusually tame. When animals have been improperly raised by humans, the animal will seek out humans if they have not learned to find food on their own or when food becomes scarce.

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our care, whether domestic or wild, we become keepers, caregivers. We become a member of their pack, their herd, or their family. The relationship with the animal can be a partnership, one of companionship, or one that fosters mutual respect. Sadly, when wild animals are kept illegally, they can be mistreated, ignored, improperly cared for, and may suffer lives in cages where they have been cast aside and eventually ignored. Some wild animals have been released or escaped after their imprisonment and become a nuisance because they have not learned how to survive. Parents who think it's a good experience for their child to raise a wild animal, should do more research and soul searching. What was thought to be a good idea can become completely inappropriate, can result in the detriment of the animal, and the child's experience is no longer positive.

What would you like to see happen in the future regarding our relationship with animals and our shared environment?

We have a responsibility to care for the land we are sharing with others. We've built our homes in their backyard, in their home. A good steward of the earth uses methods for farming, gardening, and building that reduces the carbon imprint, that enhances and preserves what was there before we came. Birds are the barometers of the health of the

environment. Birds and other animals (bees, bats, and frogs) are telling us that our world is unwell. It may be too late to change some things. If we don't listen, scientists estimate in thirty to fifty years, we may see hundreds of species go extinct.

In my state of California, millions of acres have burned over several years now. This year reservoirs are drying up. Life has drastically changed since I was a child. I worry about what the world will be like for our children and their children after we are gone.

What gives you joy doing this work?

I am very happy when I can share information that helps people understand the importance of conservation and protecting the wild animals we share the earth with.



Linda and her horse Lola

Kim Franza

BIRD OF PREY EXPERIENCE



Kim with Sasha, the Great Horned Owl

“The most important thing to teach the public is how important raptors are in our environment and how devastating poisons are to them. Secondary poisoning of raptors happens way too often. The consumer has no idea the damage being done to our raptors and other wildlife when the rodent being poisoned is then eaten by an animal in the wild or a domesticated pet. The commercial pest control companies tell the public verbally and in their printed material that their company does not use poison that can kill a second time when consumed by another animal. Generally not true in my experience. RATS (RAPTORS ARE THE SOLUTION) is an organization worth looking into for more information.

The presence of raptors in the wild serves as a barometer of ecological health. Raptors are predators at the top of the food chain. However because threats from pesticides, habitat loss, and climate change have the most dramatic impact on predators, they are a strong indicator species. Raptors also provide important benefits in our environment. They hunt and kill large numbers of rodents helping to reduce crop damage and other problems.”

My mother said my first word was bird. I was born at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida and our home was on the Gulf of Mexico. Five hundred species of birds live in Florida. As a child all I wanted to do was be outside watching the activity of the hundreds of birds on the beach.

How did you get involved in doing this kind of work?

We had a concrete and paving business. I was retiring in 2003 and wanted something to do in the way of volunteering my time. I attended a meeting at the library in Nevada City where they were asking for volunteers to help with local wildlife: songbirds, mammals, amphibians, raptors, a little bit of everything. I thought, “Oh, I could learn to care for songbirds. That would be fun.” Little baby peeps. So I went to the meeting and listened to the songbird presenter who was teaching the group about the care of orphaned songbirds. She said, “Now, when you have little baby songbirds, and you might have four or five different species at one time, they require being fed every 20 minutes from sunup to sundown.” I would be just feeding songbirds all day long! It’s only for about four weeks, but still. So I thought, “Okay, I’m going to go check out raptors.” I moved over to the raptor table and the gentleman teaching about them said, “Did she get to the part about every 20 minutes?” I said, “Yes.” (*laughs*) He said, “Well, we don’t feed raptors every 20

minutes. Have a seat”. That was the day I met Mike Furtado who became my mentor in the rehabilitation of birds of prey. As soon as I was able to get over my fear of birds of prey I continued for the next twenty plus years rehabilitating them.

They are powerful, beautiful creatures that can cause severe injuries but so worth the risk to rehabilitate with the goal of returning them to the wild where they belong. (*Kim looks at Sasha the Great Horned Owl, who is taking in the interview process with her trademark calm demeanor, and says to Sasha, “I know you are!”*)

That’s how I ended up working with raptors. It gets to be time-consuming from February to November in rehab because of the young ones that have fallen out of the nest for various reasons, adults struck by cars, electrocutions, tangled in barbed wire, secondary poisoning from consuming rodents that have been poisoned by humans, window strikes and shot. We try to re-nest the young birds if the nest can be found and is still intact. If it isn’t possible to re-nest them, then we bring them to the clinic and raise them for eventual release back into the wild near the same location they were found as chicks.

Sasha, an adult female great horned owl, was most likely hit by a car in May of 2008 on Highway 20 near Marysville, CA. We received a call at the clinic about her sad situation and soon retrieved her still



Sasha and her orphans; photo by Kim Franza

standing but semiconscious on the side of the road. If you see a raptor on the ground and you can walk up to it, something is very wrong. Call your local wildlife center for assistance in getting help for the bird. We gathered her up and took her back to the rehab clinic.

We had a fabulous veterinarian at the time, Dr. Brooks Bloomfield, who examined the great horned owl and determined that her right wrist was severely fractured, suffering from head trauma and a fractured lower mandible. Dr. Bloomfield

performed two surgeries on her fractured wrist in an attempt to make it possible for her to fly again so she could be released. Unfortunately, it was not to be. Since Sasha was never going to be released due to her injuries taking away her ability to survive in the wild I applied and received federal and state permits to keep her as an educational ambassador. The only other choice the government permits in a case like Sasha would be to have her euthanized.

The clinic volunteers initially named

her Marshmallow when she came in because she was just so calm and tolerated so much more than great horned owls will normally tolerate due to her head trauma. We could reach into her cage where she was spending her rehab, lift her standing on her perch, put her on the table, clean the cage and place her back in her cage. This is extremely unusual for a great horned owl. We were still very cautious with Sasha (*aka Marshmallow*). A great horned owl has 300 plus pounds of pressure per square inch at the end of each talon. Extremely dangerous and worthy of great caution and heavy elk leather gloves.

Sasha has a job ... raising orphaned great horned owl chicks. This gives her real purpose. The chicks need to imprint on their own species, not a human hand feeding them. A chick that has imprinted on a human is not releasable into the wild as per federal law. The California Raptor

Center at UC Davis will send from one to five chicks to me for Sasha to raise. She completely takes over their care and raises them for several months until they are ready for a flight cage. The fostered chicks will stay in care until the middle of October and then be released. The reason they are in care for so long is that in the wild the parents stay with their chicks protecting and training them to hunt until the middle of October.

You do a lot of presentations. What is the most important thing that you want people to know, about the birds?

During my presentations with live raptors it is easy to see how absolutely beautiful and intriguing they are. Teaching the public about their survival skills, hunting techniques, reproduction and how they attempt to avoid being injured are all important. A Master Falconer taught me years ago that raptors think about just three things ... find something to eat, don't get hurt and reproduction. Raptors require a rich, vibrant ecosystem to thrive. The most important thing to teach the public is how important raptors are in our environment and how devastating poisons are to them. Secondary poisoning of raptors happens way too often. The consumer has no idea the damage being done to our raptors and other wildlife when the rodent being poisoned is then eaten by an animal in the wild or a domesticated pet. The commercial pest control companies tell the public verbally and in their printed material that their company does not use poison that can kill a second time when consumed by another animal. Generally not true in my experience. RATS (RAPTORS ARE THE SOLUTION) is an organization worth looking into for more information.

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from pesticides, habitat loss, and climate change have the most dramatic impact on predators they are a strong indicator species. Raptors also provide important benefits in our environment. They hunt and kill large numbers of rodents helping to reduce crop damage and other problems.

Do you think that there should be a bill of animal rights? If so, what should be in it?

There should be a bill of rights for all animals. I think of it as two different sections: domesticated animals and then the wildlife. It seems that it's easier to protect our domestic animals because other people can see if a horse or a dog is being mistreated, not all the time, but often. Humans are living closer together so they keep a better eye.

Wildlife is totally different because people, who are bothering them or wanting to capture or kill them for their fur or feathers, are doing it in pretty remote areas. So it's hard to catch them. The fines and jail sentencing should be much, much heavier for both mistreatment of domesticated and wildlife. I don't think they're fined or punished enough. There should be state and federal prosecution.

What do you think the role of government should be in protecting animals?

I would like to see the rules we have now stronger, the fines larger, and actually jail time for crimes against cruelty and death. The rules we have now, if they would enforce them, would be strong enough. It is very difficult to enforce them as I've learned over the years. If I turn somebody in who is doing something really horrible to wildlife ... poison, shooting, trapping, anything, to the game warden who himself is under pressure and rules, it takes months for that to get up to maybe the third or fourth boss at the top. If you complain enough you will get there, but you have to stay with it. It's our job to stay with it and make sure that they follow through.

How do you feel about zoos?

My parents took me to a zoo when I was six. My dad said I cried because I felt sorry for the animals because I thought they were sad. I'll never forget that. I still feel the same way.

Why do you think it's acceptable to eat some animals and not eat others?

Very touchy question! The type of animals chosen to eat or not eat I believe is based on habits from upbringing by parents. It could be based on tradition or religious belief. At some point like reaching adulthood it is a personal choice on eating types of meat or not eating it at all.

What are the consequences of global warming especially for birds, and the ones you're working with?

I don't know enough about global warming to know how it's been affecting them. But I do know a drought is going to affect them, because it cuts down on the food source. When there's a drought, mammal breeding is diminished which means raptor food source is as well. Most raptors clutch only once a year. Barn Owls may clutch three times a year, but if it's drought conditions they have been known not to clutch at all. Many mammals respond in the same way.

What gives you joy doing this work?

There is great joy in caring for, observing its progress to recovery and saving the life of a magnificent raptor. Eventually the day comes to plan its release back into the wild. No greater joy for me or the raptor as the bird is tossed gently up into the air and released, flying high and away for a second chance at life and freedom.

Educational presentations are very gratifying as well. I have never had a disinterested child or adult in my presentations. My goal along with educating the public about raptors is also to light a spark in someone to carry on the work of protecting and saving raptors.



Sundance, Harris Hawk

Len Ramirez

FOUNDER, RAMIREZ RATTLESNAKE REMOVAL



“Rattlesnakes and snakes in general, actually are very beneficial, because they help control rodents that carry diseases such as Lyme disease. They keep rodents in check and they do it naturally where some people use a pest control service. Everything deserves a chance to live, a chance to survive. For rattlesnakes in general it’s better if I catch them, because somebody else will usually take a shot at them and want to kill them. I see a lot of that. I’ll capture the snake alive and release it in a remote, undisturbed environment.”

“It would be nice to see people be a little gentle, a little more forgiving and a little more compassionate before they decide to take matters into their own hands and eliminate a threat. If a bear or a mountain lion wanders into somebody’s yard, rather than just shoot him or take his head off with a shovel, call a professional to take care of it. The first reaction is not always the best reaction.”

Growing up I watched all The Nature Planet shows. I loved dogs, cats, horses ... all animals. When I was 14 it started with a red T-shirt that said Rattlesnake Search and Rescue. It planted a seed from right there. I would find a snake and be genuinely interested in it. Some people have ophidiophobia, a fear of snakes. I didn't have that fear.

I lived in Los Gatos in 1985 when we had a fire in the Santa Cruz Mountains that went on for two and a half weeks. That was really my official start-up dealing with wildlife. I was on the front page of the San Jose Mercury News with my big boa, which I had for probably ten years. I also had a couple of rattlesnakes. I'm actually self-taught. I watched people on TV. Everything was trial and error. I founded Rameriz Rattlesnake Removal in July 1985 in the Santa Cruz Mountains although it was many years later before the business really took off.

I've always been into conservation. It is something very grounding for me. I like doing things that other people don't. I like to protect an underdog. I don't like people taking advantage of wildlife, hurting them, using them.

When you have snakes you risk being bitten; there's always a chance. Besides doing rattlesnakes, sometimes I do impounds; when people leave snakes behind in an apartment or house, and I have to collect it. One time there was about a 19-foot anaconda that was left in

a crack house in Sacramento. The snake was so vicious while I was restraining it by holding it from behind its head. It was completely wrapped around me while I was trying to get it out from inside the apartment. We bounced off the walls and it was a real struggle for both of us. I eventually placed the snake inside the cab of my pickup. After this I called a towing company and they placed my truck on a flat bed and delivered it to my home.

Every single one is a different experience. My friend suggested I climb underneath his house to remove a rattlesnake. I explained to him it was in a breather vent. He said, "How could you know that?" I said, "This is what I do." It was very easy for me to climb underneath the house, and remove the snake safely. I've done it a thousand times, probably more. To me it's elementary but I don't ever want to become complacent, because it's real easy to make a mistake. In my line of work, if you make a mistake, the consequences aren't good. A snake is wildlife. It's not a family dog. You can't trust a snake. Some people will pick them up with their hands, and make it look easy when they have raised it in captivity. It's mind-blowing. It's all business for me. I collect them and then relocate them.

I am still learning about snakes. I found out very early, rattlesnakes in general are pretty easy to understand once you figure out that they're temperature dependent; also food, water, concealment,

and reproduction are the key factors for rattlesnakes. It's a never-ending struggle of balance for them. If they're too hot, you put cool air; if they're too cool, you put warm air. They emerge in the springtime; in the fall they start to disappear. On hot summer days, they seem to be wandering in people's yards. Snakes are not out to get anybody. They're not going to chase you. That's a myth. If you leave them alone, they usually will retreat. We're talking about rattlesnakes, which is mostly what I know about. Being venomous, if somebody has one and they're not equipped, trained or uncomfortable with having them, they should actually have a professional take care of them.

Right now it's leading up to the season and the ones that I have will be restrained before I re-introduce them because the weather has changed. They are temperature dependent. If it is too cool, and you don't have a good place to cover them, they will die. I have them in a tank before I can release them.

Rattlesnakes and snakes in general, actually are very beneficial, because they help control rodents that carry diseases such as Lyme disease. They keep rodents in check and they do it naturally, where some people use a pest control service. Everything deserves a chance to live, a chance to survive. For rattlesnakes in general it's better if I catch them, because somebody else will usually take a shot at them and want to kill them.

I see a lot of that. I'll capture the snake alive and release it in a remote, undisturbed environment.

How would you like to see the relationship between people and other animals change?

It would be nice to see people be a little gentler, a little more forgiving and a little more compassionate before they decide to take matters into their own hands and eliminate a threat. If a bear or a mountain lion wanders into somebody's yard, rather than just shoot him or take his head off with a shovel, call a professional to take care of it. The first reaction is not always the best reaction.

How do you view the idea of animal rights?

I've always been into conservation. I promote all living things. There is a place in each and every one of our homes for domestic animals. As far as wildlife, there is a place for them in our lives as well. Often people are uncomfortable with having mountain lions and rattlesnakes on their property. They need to have somebody remove them and introduce them someplace else further away from people.

There should be some protection for some species, absolutely. I don't try to get real political in that area. People are going to do what they're going to do.

I try to make a difference by removing

snakes alive and safely relocating them, so that way they have an opportunity to re-establish. But a lot of people just go at them. They are being killed, or taken out all the time. I'm into conservation. I'm a big supporter of live and let live.

Do you think there should be legislation to help protect animals?

Animals definitely need to be protected. As far as legislation, how it's going to take place, I don't know. But I'm a big fan of conservation. I would like to see more wildlife protected. There are laws that do protect certain species, but not all.

If you were making the laws, what would you want to include in that?

That's a tough question. I think that would take some deep thought. It's a good question for me. I'll come back to that. If you have any thoughts about this, please write a short explanation here.

Why is it acceptable to eat some animals while others are considered pets?

I love dogs, and would never eat one. It would never even enter my mind eating a dog. When I see something like that in another country, people farming dogs for eating, it makes me sick to my stomach. I can't even comprehend that.

Have you ever thought of being a vegan?

Not full vegan, no, I've never considered that before, but I am definitely changing my diet, as we speak. (*laughs*)

Do you think zoos should exist?

Zoos that have professional staff, including vets, and have an environment, suitable for whatever is in captivity, that might be a good thing in certain cases. Perhaps something that has been injured, and can never be rehabilitated ... then telling the story of this wildlife and educating people. It would be better in captivity, living out its life. There's a wildlife sanctuary near Santa Rosa called Safari West that's a sanctuary zoo. Also if you're going to have a zoo and animals in captivity, they need space. If they don't have space then it is inhumane. There's nothing sadder than seeing a chimpanzee sitting in a corner by itself. I'm a supporter of zoos that are professionally designed for the safety and welfare of the wildlife.

I get calls for all kinds of wildlife: bears, skunks, possums, raccoons, mountain lions, peacocks, every wildlife you can imagine. When I get these types of calls, I have Gold Country Wildlife Rescue to refer to. Even though I'm just a snake guy people think I do anything. Sometimes I'll do other snakes but I specialize in rattlesnakes. I removed a cobra that was loose in the Sheriff's department in Dublin, in Contra Costa

County on Valentine's Day about nine years ago. Three years ago I removed a Black Mamba from a FedEx cargo container in Roseville, shipped in from South Africa. That snake had to be destroyed, unfortunately. I just try to stick to what I know. I try to be good at one thing rather than everything.

What is your view regarding animals that we use to perform for us, or work for us?

As a child, I enjoyed the circus. But as I became older, and saw the abuse to wildlife, then I just gave it a total turnoff. I'm not a fan of seeing a bear juggling in the circus, and also other performing wildlife like monkeys.

Do you think it's ever appropriate for humans to establish a bond with wild animals?

If somebody is rehabbing an animal and they are sincere about it, a bond will naturally take place. You couldn't very well do your job if you couldn't develop a bond. There definitely needs to be some type of line to draw. It would be relatively easy to get attached to a bear cub, but knowing it's in the best interest of the bear cub that it's going to have to be released back out into the wild, you've got to think of the welfare of the bear. You don't want to be real friendly, or he will think everybody is a friend. He needs to be a bear, and be respected as a bear. So you have to draw the line.

What are the present and future consequences of global warming for animals, both wild and domestic?

Definitely the changes that are taking place, whether they are man-made or natural, affect all living things, and that includes us. Some of them are more harmful than others. Pollution is harmful to all living things, people and wildlife.

The last two years have been interesting because we had so many fires that have displaced lots of wildlife including rattlesnakes. Also, rattlesnakes and other wildlife were destroyed in the fires. There are so many variables with the amount of development taking place, people encroaching on wildlife areas where they live, and building houses. Everything is being affected.

Do you feel that people are building houses where it is not appropriate?

People are building houses in unincorporated rural areas where wildlife live. A lot of people who move there say, "I don't want this in my backyard. I paid for this house!" They forget a deer doesn't know that's called a road. "Oh, it's a road; you're not supposed to be here." They were here first really. They probably deserve to live longer than I do from all the stunts I pulled.

You've got to be compassionate, that might be the solution. Maybe put out a water bucket for wildlife if they're used to drinking out of a reservoir that's no

longer there. People know that wildlife can be moving around because of what has taken place in all these fires. Encounters with wildlife are becoming more and more common. The devastation from the fires is moving wildlife around, because it changes particularly their hiding places and their food. A lot of wildlife could potentially starve as a result of not being able to secure a meal, because of the fires. That really includes snakes and everything else.

Drought conditions, fires, lack of hiding places due to development affect wildlife. Snakes in the springtime emerge from hibernation, and in the wintertime, they go to sleep. Now if you're talking about bears or deer or other large game, they're affected. They're being pushed into suburbia, and we are forced to co-exist. The last five or six years these fires all through here have just been relentless. It's hard on people and on wildlife absolutely.

The crossover virus from animal to human has caused past pandemics, and it looks like it probably caused the one we just went through. Why there wasn't more attention paid to the fact that our interaction with wild animals in particular is dangerous health-wise?

There are a lot of great journalists out there who absolutely could have brought more attention to this, who didn't step up and do their job.

What gives you joy doing this work?

I just want to live my life, be of service to others, try to be a good human being, learn some things, and be part of the solution rather than the problem. My pay back to society is to contribute by putting the welfare of others ahead of myself, moving snakes that are really a threat to make sure nobody is hurt including the snakes. And re-introducing snakes so that way they can live out their existence and I can come around and do it again.

J.P. Novic, ED

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CENTER FOR ANIMAL PROTECTION & EDUCATION



JP with Remy & Renegade

“Our mission, our niche is that we rescue animals who have special needs, who are disabled or old, and basically have no other options for a safe place to go. We’ve placed over 2,500 animals and most of them have had special needs.

I think all the rescue groups have the same hope which is for everybody in the public to view these animals as sentient beings. They all want to live. They all have the ability to suffer, and experience pain. They are all very different from us, and to treasure and cherish that. What we want to see is, “Look at that chicken. Look at that beautiful animal. She has a life. She cares about her young. She can vocalize, and has personality.” My hope is that every human comes to that revelation.”

I think deep-down in my heart, I always wanted to do something for animals. I have always loved them. I grew up in the Bay area, and we had a cat who was my buddy, and as I got older we had a dog as part of our family. I just loved our family members so much. That is when that bonding, that realization starts that these animals are sentient beings. However, we did eat animals when we were growing up, because we were uneducated.

I was very practical as a young person. I knew I needed a job in order to support myself. I actually trained as an occupational therapist. It was a great career choice because you are helping people, but by the time I was in my mid-twenties I realized that my passion was to work for animals. At the time I was working at Stanford Hospital on a very special case, a little boy who had Von Recklinghouse Disease which caused benign tumors to form all over his body. He was flown up from Mexico to come to Stanford to have the tumors removed, and plastic surgery so he could live a normal life. He didn't speak any English. I learned from his mother that he didn't go to school because of his disease. She told me that his whole life is centered on the animals in their home. My goal was to see if the hospital administration would let me bring animals into the hospital. I went to the powers that be, they said yes, and I went to the Peninsula Humane Society which is where I met Kim Sturla in 1982. I said, "Here's the deal, I have this patient. Can we borrow some of your animals to

bring into the gym at Stanford?" Kim, who became my mentor and best friend, said, "Yes, of course. Why don't we start a program and start bringing animals into all the hospitals?" Long story short, five animals were brought into the gym. Not only was the little boy very excited, but everybody in the gym, people in their wheel chairs, people on walkers and crutches, came over to see the little animals. Everybody wanted to hold them. There is so much beauty in having animals in our presence. Kim and I developed a program called Hug A Pet. We went into dozens of nursing homes with lots of volunteers. That was way back before pet therapy was a popular thing. That was the beginning of the transition.

Kim was my mentor. She got me connected with the Palo Alto Humane Society which was looking for a humane educator. So for several years I was working half time at Stanford and half time for the Palo Alto Humane Society doing education programs in the schools. I'd finish at Stanford and then ride my bike over to the Humane Society, these two different worlds. Eventually I went full time at the Humane Society and became very involved in advocacy for all animal species. When I look back, Kim was definitely at the top of the list of people who changed my life.

During the 80's there was a lot of changes and education happening about the rights of animals, about not eating them, not experimenting on them. I met my husband who at the time was a medical student at

Stanford, and who served on the ethics committee. He was the one dissenting vote about animals being used in vivisection. I love this guy! I met all these people who became very instrumental in my work.

We formed Center for Animal Protection & Education (CAPE) in 1992; our board of directors is a very strong, diverse group of people –veterinarians, medical doctors, and animal advocates. Except for two people we've had the same board for 30 years which tells you a bit about the stability of the organization. We started off mostly rescuing dogs. We were doing some education programs and showing some films. Back in the early 90's a lot of films were being made about animals. It was just slow, gradual growth. Now we have a staff and a sanctuary. We now share a shelter for rescued dogs in Santa Rosa. We have a very large social media following. We've come a long way.

We also produced a film festival in 2013 through 2019. People were inspired in different ways because the films were all so different from each other. We learned so much about animals in different parts of the world. For example, I didn't know what pangolins were. There are so many great films out there and it is such a wonderful way to learn, and to bring people together. It was a really huge undertaking, and we really hoped that some other organization or a film company would take it on. We are a grass-roots animal protection agency, and not film festival producers, but we did it for six years. It took a toll on us as it

was so time consuming, and used up a lot of our resources. We decided to still use film as a tool, but to do it a little differently. Now we do a lot of things online, and have smaller events right here at the sanctuary. We just built an education center on the sanctuary where we will be screening films every month, and inviting people to have a discussion afterwards.

A few years ago we produced a film about Rootie, a pig who was in our care for 16 years, and was incredible. Affectionate. Loving. He had a big following on social media. The film is about him and his life, and how he inspired so many people to not eat pigs. The film about Rootie has gone viral. There are thousands of people who are reacting to him. It allows people to meet a species that they don't normally get a chance to recognize as a sentient being. We are going to keep his memory alive. Rootie's film was shown at a film festival in South Dakota, and different places around the country. It won an award and we are very proud of that. It is a really sweet film and an ode to him.

Our mission, our niche is that we rescue animals who have special needs, who are disabled or old, and basically have no other options for a safe place to go. We've placed over 2,500 animals and most of them have had special needs. My occupational therapy training has flavored what we do.

We've gotten very good at rehabilitating animals. We spend a lot of our time and resources so that the animals get the best

care. We look at the individual animal and determine what we can do to make the rest of their lives peaceful and fulfilling. They get the best of everything. We celebrated our thirtieth anniversary in 2022. We are very proud of the number of animals we have been able to help.

I do love my job even though I'm usually covered in dirt and slobber. I'm always reminded of the suffering. Each animal represents a bigger group of animals who didn't get so lucky; either they are going to



Penelope and Papa Antonio

be slaughtered or they are put in a cage and treated so horribly. Every animal at the sanctuary is a reminder of all the work we need to do to end that cruelty.

The burros and horses go through a horrible thing when they are rounded up by the Bureau of Land Management. They use low-flying helicopters to break up the herds. They do this so that they can get them off public land so that the land can be used for cattle grazing. They take away the land that

really belongs to those horses and burros.

At the CAPE Animal Sanctuary, we try to replicate what their natural life would be. However, there are certain things we have to teach them for their own safety. For example, for evacuation purposes, we've taught them using a system of shoots how to get in and out of the trailer. They are just smart and affectionate. I feel honored that we get to have them in our presence.

Papa, our most recent burro rescue, is very old, in his mid-twenties. He is what they

call sale authority. After they round up the mustangs and the burros to get them off the public land, they put them in holding pens. Papa ended up going to a prison in Nevada to be "gentled". They have those programs in the prisons to help get more animals gentled and ready for adoption. We were told that nobody wanted to work with Papa because he was one angry

burro. Well they took him from his family that he had lived with for some twenty odd years. He was mad. They had him alone in a pen. After we rescued him from the prison, we took him to our vet who works with wild mustangs and burros. She compassionately worked with him for a month, and then he came to the sanctuary. He is so happy now. He has a new herd, and follows us around for snuggles. It's about building trust.

Of course I love dogs more than life itself. I do love donkeys and burros as well. They totally speak to me. They've got so much going on in their hearts and souls. When we bring a new donkey to the sanctuary, the other donkeys welcome them to the herd. And they are so funny. I can pretty much identify the bray of each donkey, because they are all very different. They are very communicative.

Donkeys are very different from horses. Horses are a bit more fragile. They get sick more often. I worry about their guts all the time, and what they are eating because they can colic so easily. They are just a bit more complicated in their constitution. They also have very different instinctive behaviors. I've seen it here at the sanctuary, if something is off, or there is a predator around, horses have more of a flight reaction ... "I am out of here!" Donkeys, no. They will stand up to anything to protect their herd. I think that is where they get the reputation for being stubborn. They're not stubborn, but they can have a mind of their own. If they see a predator, they stop, look, listen, and decide, "What am I going to do to protect myself and my herd?" They are brave and their constitution is strong.

We spend a lot of time at the CAPE Animal Sanctuary working with the vets caring for the equines. Donkeys and horses are prone to Cushings disease, a metabolic, endocrine-driven disease. We have a horse who has Cushings, a mustang who was at one time wild and was adopted from the BLM and

lived with that person for 18 years, and then that person died. He had nowhere to go; nobody wanted him so he came here.

Remy was an ex race horse, and we knew that because he has a tattoo on his upper lip. They tattoo them so they can identify each horse. Thank goodness, Remy survived the horrible treatment he received as a race horse. He is so sweet. He was skin and bones when we got him at a farm animal auction. He was in such terrible shape, that I thought we were going to have to euthanize him when we brought him to the sanctuary. Our vet came the next morning and said, "I think we can save this guy." Thoroughbreds have these big, tall bodies and often have problems with their legs and hooves. He wears these big boots and clomps around the pasture in great comfort.

It's also so fun getting to know other species such as the pigs, goats, and chickens. They all have these big, interesting personalities. We house different species in different areas of the sanctuary, and we know that there are some animals that know how to open doors, so everything gets buttoned up. I was on duty one Sunday night. The hay barn door was open, and I just checked it so that was weird. I started feeding, and it was open again. This was very strange. I spied to figure out what is going on. I shut the door again and hid behind the trailer. In a minute one of the donkeys walked up to the latch, put her prehensile lips on the latch and very carefully opened the door. Then all her

friends came. They are so smart.

Sometimes we will come to the pasture, and there will be multiple donkeys scratching each other's backs. They are very affectionate with each another. And the goats are comedians ... like naughty dogs. Some of the chickens are so sweet and just want to be held and cuddled. They touch my heart, all of them, in their own special way.

What would you like to have the public know about the animals you work with, and why it is important to protect them?

Almost every species that we share our planet with has human-caused issues. Even our companion animals, dogs and cats ... humans have allowed them to breed which has led to an unfortunate surplus of these animals. There are too many animals, and just not enough homes. With our companion animals ... dogs, cats, even rabbits, the problem is the surplus. People, please, do not allow them to breed. There is all kinds of help out there to get animals spayed and neutered. If you are going to adopt an animal, go to a shelter, a rescue group. You will find a companion, and have done something to alleviate the pressure of over-population.

I have been working with animal welfare issues for the past forty years. The number of animals we are euthanizing in the U.S. has gone way down, which is something I'm very happy to say, because 25 /30 years ago we were euthanizing close to 18/19 million

animals a year who ended up in shelters, and did not have a place to go. Now there are rescue groups and affordable care, including spay/neuter. There are so many fabulous rescue groups including CAPE.

One of the things to be extremely aware of are the 12 billion animals who are killed in this country every year. They have no legal protection. A lot of people have never met a pig or a chicken or touched a cow. All they see is the packaged meat in their grocery store.

I think all the rescue groups have the same hope which is for everybody in the public to view these animals as sentient beings. They all want to live. They all have the ability to suffer, and experience pain. They are all very different from us, and to treasure and cherish that. What we want to see is, "Look at that chicken. Look at that beautiful animal. She has a life. She cares about her young. She can vocalize, and has personality." My hope is that every human comes to that revelation.

You can't kill something that you understand is sentient. Most people don't want to be cruel. When we do events I've asked this question to large groups: "What was it that made that shift?" What is very interesting is that every person will say something different. That is why every organization offers some of that hope and revelatory content. There are so many reasons that people decide, "I'm not doing this anymore. I'm not going to eat these animals." That is often what happens when

people have the wake-up call. There are many young children where the light switch goes on, and they are refusing to eat animals. The children are very sensitive to that. We have gone into high schools and elementary schools, and talked about sentience. When my daughter was young she was that voice in her classroom. She never had a piece of flesh in her mouth. I can't tell you how many other kids got it. She was a role model. She opened her lunch box, and had these wonderful things to eat. So a lot of those kids that she was surrounded by did end up becoming vegetarian.

What do you envision for the future of CAPE?

I would love to have CAPE go on in perpetuity. The work we do is very much needed and pretty unique. My hope is that the issues animals face start to reduce more and more so they would need less of our effort to turn things around. In some ways it is happening, and in other ways not. There is much more of an awareness about the animals in the food industry and the suffering there. More and more people are becoming aware of that, and making changes in their lifestyle so that they don't contribute to the suffering of animals. If you look at animals used in entertainment, like circuses that use animals, are now becoming a thing of the past. We are seeing the fruits of our efforts paying off. Children are more educated. The plant-based food revolution is becoming more and more in the public eye.

We have a long way to go, but we'll never stop until animals are no longer being allowed to suffer.

What do you think the role of government should be regarding the protection of animals?

Doing legislation is a grind, really hard. We just need to have more laws on the books when anybody harms an animal in any way shape or form, they are breaking the law. I tip my hat to the people who are trying to create laws.

Why is it acceptable to eat some animals and other animals are companions?

It is interesting because when you look at different cultures, the animals that are eaten are different than the animals in our culture that we see as food. Children are taught at a very young age what is food, and what is not food. If we taught children that all of these beings are sentient, have awareness, can feel pain, and feel love for their babies, if that were the message that we were imparting to our children, it would be such a different world. It is interesting to me that people are horrified at the thought that some cultures eat dogs. I find that equally as horrifying, but why is it okay, or considered acceptable in our culture to eat cows, and pigs, and sheep? They all are sentient. Humans are not carnivores; we are omnivores. We have the choice of eating animals, or eating plants. I think you could say spiritually taking the life

of another being for the pleasure of eating their flesh is just ethically and morally wrong. When you have a choice of survival without harming another being, why would you choose that when it is not necessary?

Where do you see the animal rights movement heading at this point?

The community of animal rights advocates has really grown, and there are more and more actions. I personally feel that it is one of the fastest growing movements. Most people know about it as plant-based. There is a little bit of difference between plant-based and vegan. We call ourselves ethical vegans; we don't eat animals, wear them or eat their by-products. What my daughter is doing is plant-based focused around nutritious food, how to feed the world, how to protect the planet. That whole plant-based movement is growing by leaps and bounds.

Are you against the existence of zoos?

Yes. The animals are taken out of their natural habitat for us to look at. And the way animals are obtained, by stealing them from their homes in the wild, is just wrong on so many levels. I think zoos are very sad places. Children, and adults can learn all about animals, their behaviors and habitats by studying computer models and video productions.

What are your thoughts about working animals and those used in entertainment?

I personally don't like to use animals in a utilitarian way. I don't want to force an animal to do what they don't want to do. We interviewed some people for a show once who were doing rescue with dogs trained to help in emergencies. That looked like a wonderful program. The dogs live in their homes, and not stuck in kennels when they are not working. It was really fascinating how they were trained to find lost people in the woods, using their natural skills. So I can't say I'm against all aspects of asking animals to work as some jobs they probably really do enjoy. Those dogs who are working on rescue missions are not put in any danger. Sometimes we use animals just for our own benefit and I don't like that.

The cross-over virus issue: between humans and the other animals does not get enough attention. What are your thoughts on this major health issue for all species?

Again, it all goes back to people consuming animals. It has become pretty clear at this point, that that is what happened. It was passed on from a wet market. They raise these animals in confinement. There are wet markets here in the U.S. and the way we raise animals on factory farms are just settings for these very scary viruses to propagate. They've dismissed the idea that Covid came from a lab. I do think that the animal rights

groups should be uniting. It just goes back to the fact that we as a species need to stop eating animals completely. It is not that hard to do now. We as a culture have worked really hard now to create food that humans will enjoy, and that is nutritious. I've been told by people who were hospitalized at our local hospital that they were offered a plant-based option. I think other hospitals are going to take suit. Enough data confirms that a plant-based diet is the most nutritious and easiest on the planet. It also addresses the issue of climate change.

One thing that is often left out of that equation regarding climate change is the contribution that animals used in the food industry create with the methane gas. It is an enormous percentage from the production of farmed animals. Climate change and the fires and the melting of the ice caps, are all connected to that. If people could make the decision three times a day to choose not to have animals on their plate, that would make a huge dent in the causes of climate change.

We will have more pandemics if we keep interacting with animals in an improper manner. People have to take that step to stop eating them whether they are wild animals, or animals in the animal markets as in Oakland and SF. It is not just in under-developed countries. We have to start connecting the dots. Obviously my main concern is how animals are treated. Nobody should harm an animal ever. But also there are other reasons to stop eating animals,

such as the workers in slaughter houses; it just goes on and on and on.

I work with the best people in the whole, wide world. There is a lot of communication that goes on between sanctuaries and advocacy groups. We all support each other for the most part.

What brings you joy doing this work?

I am a very hands-on person so when we take an individual animal that has been injured or harmed, and we watch that animal become rehabilitated, and for that animal to feel joy in life, that is my joy. We have a couple here that we thought we were going to have to euthanize, and then with our vets, staff, and volunteers we just brought them back to life. That brings me joy.

Jackie Leigh Howard

ANIMAL CARE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR ANIMAL PROTECTION & EDUCATION



Jackie with Charlie & Apollo

“The work in itself is quite joyful. It’s physically and emotionally demanding, but it makes you feel so strong. I love taking a break after all my sanctuary chores are finished to sit with the animals and enjoy the sounds and sights of animals thriving. I love seeing Papa Antonio, a burro who was once terrified of everyone, down in the pasture with the herd of donkeys ... his family. I love seeing Charlie root around the sanctuary until he finally plops into his beloved mud puddle. I love watching the goats, who all came from separate histories, enjoying their life filled with peace and free from suffering.”

There is something you receive from animals that you don’t receive from humans. I don’t know if it is just a purity or an ability to not hold anger or resentment. They just are extraordinary. I really hope that people have the opportunity to get to know another species. In fact I challenge them to volunteer somewhere or do whatever you can to connect because in turn, you get so much. My life is so full from the care I provide.”

I grew up in the central valley so I was pretty familiar with farming, although I had never met a pig or a cow before. I was bucked off a horse when I was quite young and was scared of them most of my life. I had dogs and cats growing up, and loved them dearly. When I became an adult I adopted my first rescue. Zoey, was an emaciated, scared pitbull with beautiful, brown eyes. She changed my life and brought a huge passion for rescue animals.

Tell us about your transition to working with and for farmed animals.

I spent ten years in the restaurant industry as a chef. At the end of those ten years I began to feel that a shift was needed. I was no longer feeling that it was my purpose, so I took a break. I was doing website design and social media management for awhile. My mom knew JP Novic, the director of Center for Animal Protection & Education (CAPE), and we got connected. It has been an organic process.

I am now the Animal Care Director. I also do all of the social media and website design for CAPE. I manage all of the daily care – feeding, cleaning the stalls, administering medications, taking medical notes of each animal, vet visits, just all around care for the animals. We practice evacuation drills year round to help alleviate worry during fire season. I’ve learned a ton in the five years with CAPE. I also work very closely with our vet who has taught me many things. I trim all of our goats’ hooves, and have provided

intense care to several of our animals in hospice. I’ve loved the hands-on learning of this job!

Is there one group of animals that you really feel connected to?

It usually depends on how much care I’m giving at the moment. I love all of the animals dearly. Donkeys are especially funny and pragmatic. They are very loyal to one another. I love watching the transformation when we rescue new animals and see them integrate into the family. That is incredible to watch. I do have a soft spot for sheep. They are very intelligent. Pigs also. Pigs are often considered dirty by people. They are very intelligent, and are actually quite hygienic. All of the pigs at the sanctuary keep their “rooms” very neat, and are potty trained. We have a donkey, Angel, who we just rescued several months ago, who has severe hoof issues, so we’ve been giving her a lot of care. We’ve been soaking her foot several times a day, and I’m really bonded to her right now.

Renegade, a wild mustang, was adopted about thirty years ago. When his guardian grew ill, his dying wish was to find Renegade a place to live. He has Cushings disease, and is severely arthritic as he is quite old, about 33. As I mentioned before I was quite scared of horses, but we now have a deep bond. I have a very soft spot for him. He has absolutely transformed from the horse he was ... moody, unpredictable, and clearly uncomfortable from untreated medical

issues. He has softened through the years, and he is deeply devoted to our other rescue horse, Remy. They are the best of friends. Every day I give him a series of medications. I hold his head, and kiss his face and he just stands there lovingly. You would have never expected that from the horse that he was when he arrived. Here was this wild mustang with bad behavior; it was very daunting. I can't pinpoint why we built a bond, but we certainly have. He lets me do things that he doesn't let other people do. It is pretty extraordinary. He is very special.

I surprise myself every day. I learned to maneuver around horses, and learned how to listen. They all have a language. It just takes a little bit of care, trust, and time to learn that language. To me that has been one of the most extraordinary parts of my job is realizing that I have some innate connection with animals. Renegade to me was a big part of that transformation. We both transformed together I guess.

Body language is a huge one, especially for equines. I'm constantly cleaning around them, feeding them. I'm right in there with them and so just really slowing down, being in the moment, just listening to them, knowing how to respect their space when they are asking for it, not bringing any of my personal stuff into it, and having clear energy each time I'm with them. It gives me the space to hear what their needs are. I'm not preoccupied with my own internal monologue. I'm really evaluating where they are, and for this job, it is critical. One

minor mistake, you or the animal can be injured so being really present in every moment allows me to do the job with them, and also trust myself in close spaces with very large animals. I can usually note when they are sick or not feeling themselves. I am with them so consistently that a minor shift in their mood or energy I can notice pretty quickly. Most of our animals are quite charming and social so when their personalities shift just slightly, we note it.

We work really closely with Dr. Mayfield who is part of Bureau of Land Management Training Program which helps gentle wild horses and burros to then get placed into adoption. She has helped us build rapport with several rescued burros. First we work on building trust with caregivers, and then we work on building trust with the herd. Usually, we will introduce them to a couple of donkeys through the fence. Then we will allow a friendly donkey, usually Billy who is very social, to come in and share a small pasture together. Eventually, they become integrated with the whole herd. As far as building trust for us, a lot of it is just touching, feeding, and brushing them. A lot of them have spots where they like to be scratched. We like to call it "Paying the toll". When Papa Antonio came he was very wild; he did not want to be touched, but we found a spot under his belly that he loved to be scratched. That is how we initially gained trust with him. Now he will let us hold his head, massage his ears and face. It is a process, and it takes months sometimes

before we have a breakthrough.

Each species has their own level of naughtiness. Like when you arrived the goats were ransacking our tractor. The goats are very food-driven. We can't leave anything out because they will get into it. The donkeys like to check your pockets, touch your hands, and push you around a little bit. You can't leave a cup of coffee out because they will find it and spill it. We have to be really conscious of our doors being locked. Donkeys have very pliable lips. Penelope learned how to open the hay barn door, and let all of her friends in. They had a hay party. Luckily we caught it quickly. Now there are three locks on the hay barn door. They've yet to figure those out, but I'm sure it is just time. They all have their own personality and some of them are much naughtier than others.

As far as goats, Apollo is definitely the naughtiest. He is a Boer goat and is probably between 200 and 250 pounds. He will rear up on his back legs when he wants something, and that boy probably stands 7 feet tall. He is very snuggly, but extremely food driven. If he thinks you have some food, he will sprint his beautiful, large body from another pasture to see. Billy once pulled my cell phone out of my back pocket while I was cleaning the pasture and cracked the glass, dropped it, and did everything he could to destroy it, and did a very good job.

How would you like to see the relationship between people and animals change?

We had a beloved pig named Rootie who was sixteen years old and at the later stages of his life became a paraplegic. He was about 450 pounds and so the caregivers at CAPE really stepped up. We supported his every need: standing him up, helping him go to the bathroom, bathing, walking, and all the things that we support humans in the later parts of their life. It was one of the most life-altering things, because I witnessed some moments I will cherish for the rest of my life. Rootie would express his gratitude by greeting me with pursed lips, and happy sounds. He would rest his snout on my cheek gently and lean into me for hugs. We would sit in his stall for hours, enjoying the sounds of the sanctuary together. There is something you receive from animals that you don't receive from humans. I don't know if it is just a purity or an ability to not hold anger or resentment. They just are extraordinary. I really hope that people have the opportunity to get to know another species. In fact I challenge them to volunteer somewhere or do whatever you can to connect because in turn, you get so much. My life is so full from the care I provide.

Tell us about some other remarkable animals in your care.

We rescued a six week old lamb this past year. Mando had a severe cleft palate. I talked to a couple of animal surgeons before we agreed to take him who said that was the most severe cleft palate they had seen. He also had a completely deformed lower jaw so it did not meet his top jaw. We already knew he would have major dietary needs. He was bottle fed as his mother rejected him. His previous guardian bottle fed him eight times a day. Once he arrived, we built this contraption where he can drink himself to create some personal autonomy. We started to realize that he probably had some underlying neurological health issues. We had to bathe or wipe him daily, because all the milk would dribble out of his deformed jaw and get all sticky. I called it his spa day. I would bathe and brush him. He would get nebulizer and coupage treatments to help prevent pneumonia. We absolutely did everything we could to see him thrive, and unfortunately at a certain point it became clear that he was not growing in the way he should. His rumen wasn't forming in the way it needed to. We made the conscious decision to help him along. How lucky I was to provide this lamb with more love, tenderness, and hope. He lived to be about nine months old. At that time, we were also caring for Rootie, the paraplegic pig. He actually bonded deeply to Rootie, before he passed. Here was this giant pig next to this tiny, deformed lamb, snuggled up

snoring together. Those are those magical life moments that I'm incredibly fortunate to witness. It changes you. You have that juxtaposition of deep sadness over the loss of a favorite animal which is tied to the gratitude for what you are doing. It is complicated. It messes with your emotions, but I wouldn't change it for the world.



Mando and Rootie; photos by Jackie Howard

What would you like people to know about these animals, and what can they do to improve their lives?

More than anything, I would like people to realize that these animals are incredible, sentient beings. They have a will to live, and a will to connect with other beings. We need to move forward in this life with the idea of protecting these majestic animals. There are so many places to be active, and become animal activists. You can find a way to advocate in whatever way you're capable of doing. If you can go out into the field and protect, wonderful. If you can get online and sign a petition, fantastic. There are so many ways to protect and preserve the incredible wildlife, farmed animals, and domesticated animals. We can all make a huge difference.

There is so much intelligence that exists within these animals, but if you don't have the opportunity to meet a chicken, a goat, a turkey, a donkey, a horse, or a pig it is easier to assume they don't have the emotional intelligence, and ability to form relationships, and express emotion. It is often easier when you don't know these things because it's painful, but knowledge is power. We share a lot of educational information through CAPE about how these animals suffer, and about the emotional intelligence of a pig or a chicken. Knowledge is what changes us all. I only hope as we continue to grow a plant-based world that people understand why we're encouraging this way of life.

I went vegan ten years ago, mostly for

health reasons, but I will never go back because of the animals. Working this kind of job, you get to see things that the average person doesn't get to experience.

I understand true gratitude from animals and how they express it. It birthed something within me when I realized that animals are poorly represented and need more help. I don't believe in any sport that supports animal exploitation. I don't think animal products need to be in my food, my wardrobe, or my household products. My relationship with animals makes my willingness to fight for them just that much greater. I also realize that all these horrible things that are happening to billions of animals every year is a hard pill to swallow. It is hard to feel like you can make a change or be part of a movement, because it is such a substantial number. Billions of animals are being slaughtered for a meal that you may soon forget.

How do you make a difference? To me the easiest and most profound action is to go vegan. That was something I chose way before my relationship with pigs and donkeys and goats. It has been a gift in my life as well.

Holiday videos

We do Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas time of year videos. We work very hard to present this vegan feast like we would with family members. We present it to the animals on this nice table with a tablecloth, cloth napkin, plates, and

silverware, and glasses full of water. We served each of them their own plate. They destroyed it within seconds! The scene is complete destruction. (*laughs*)

For Halloween we carved a bunch of pumpkins and put them all out and they just went to town. It is just the delight that you get in the animals' presence, true laughter and joy. A whole head is in a pumpkin trying to get a piece that they see. They are just very funny. To have a plant-based day of gratitude is a no-brainer. We celebrated with all of the animals. It was quite fun.

Why is it acceptable to eat some animals and others are considered pets?

We grew up in households that certain things felt okay, like eating a cow or a goat or a lamb. But culturally in America if you think about eating a horse or a dog, that is just unheard of. Really what is the difference? A dog or a goat or a cow or a horse all have that same will to survive. It is about breaking patterns that we've all learned in life. I encourage people to do research. Find out what the reason is to make a change. For many years I've loved plant-based nutrition. As I've changed and grown my relationship with animals, my passion for veganism has grown. I've been vegetarian, then vegan, since I was eighteen and I'm now thirty-four. It is much easier to be a vegan now. There are tons of fast-food chains and grocery stores that are supporting vegan food. We have a long

way to go, but I do feel we are heading in a good direction. As far as why people think it is weird to eat a dog, but not a pig, I can't really tell you. I don't know why that is socially accepted. I hope that people start to understand pigs. We rescued a pig named Charlie who reminds so much of my dog, Zoey, because he is funny, pushy, tests your boundaries, and goes potty outside.

With more people using their voices for animals in need I believe there is hope. There are millions of people who love animals just like us who haven't quite found their voice yet. As we encourage our friends and families to take the vegan action, it is like a ripple effect. If I just rise up every day and choose to be compassionate and kind and speak out, I hope that there are some seeds planted. I talk to a lot of people about veganism. I do feel I inspire people to reconsider. I grew up in a meat-eating household. I don't think at a young age I would have considered that this would be my life now. I just think we need to continue to use our voice, because unfortunately that is the one thing that animals do lack is a voice to represent themselves.

Animal rights, would you like to see it codified in some way?

Absolutely. Lawfully they are not protected. There are many factory farming issues. There is absolutely no protection. On a federal level there should be much more going on for animals. For them to not be protected federally is a huge problem.

There is a large grey area that exists, and unfortunately animals suffer because of it.

What are the climate change consequences for animals?

All of us have seen the climate crisis where the polar bears are suffering, but personally we have watched wildfires rage through California burning millions of acres, and within those acres there are a ton of ecosystems with deer, bears, foxes, and all the wildlife who live there, and are affected by that. CAPE started a financial aid system called Wildfire Animal Assistance Fund (WAAF). For example, we helped Gold Country Wildlife Rescue with a couple of bears and foxes. I think at this point the climate crisis is right in front of our eyes as we witness floods, fires, tornadoes, earthquakes and other emergency situations. It has become a very real part of my life, because not only do I have to make a plan for myself, but I'm also a part of evacuating thirty to forty large animals here. I'm constantly thinking about how to protect them, and how to do better.

I know sometimes it is hard to relate what we eat to how we exist in the world, but animal agriculture is one of the biggest wastes of our fossil fuels, our energy resources, and if we can just eliminate some of that, maybe we can start to heal some of the damage that has already happened. To actually live through the climate crisis, it changes the way you think about life and priorities. There is an awareness that it

requires now about the choices we all make, the way we spend our money, the way we shop, the way we exist. You have to see that it is right here in front of us. There is no plan B. We must all do our part. It is very scary to rely on other people to make choices, but just like my encouragement to go vegan, it is becoming more aware of what you can do to make a difference. I see a lot of young people, even generations after me, that are making really cool, innovative changes in their lives. Until our muscle memory is less destructive and less wasteful, how do we do this in a way that is not supporting the destruction of our resources, our land, and our animals?

Cross-over virus issue: Do you think we are going to learn from that experience? Why hasn't it got more attention?

The next pandemic could be right around the corner. There are still wet markets happening. There are still rituals where they are slaughtering chickens out on the street on the east coast. There are just so many issues. Humans have to worry about a lot of stuff ... our financial stability, our families, and our lives. I think part of that is we can't be bothered to think about one other thing. It feels so global that maybe it is too extreme for people to wrap their heads around. For me the idea of where this was derived from is a no-brainer. We cannot be exploiting and abusing animals the way that we do. But that being said,

there are all these cultural issues around it as well. People can grasp things with small steps forward, but to be in a pandemic and know that it is caused because of our abuse of animals is hard for people to wrap their heads around it. It is like what Linda McCartney said, “If slaughter houses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegan or vegetarian.” We are so removed and detached from so many aspects of the food that we eat, the clothes we wear, the entertainment we seek. It is complicated. That is why we are in the place where we are experiencing climate crisis and a pandemic. We have created the system that has broken us down, and so in order for us to make substantial change we have to rethink everything that we’ve been taught. That is hard. Our dollar is a vote. Every time we go to the grocery store, we vote. People just need to make a conscious effort to care more, to live like it matters. I think detachment is a huge part of it. There were a couple of really good news articles that came out early about the animal relation to the pandemic, but there wasn’t enough for people to truly grasp why we are going through this. That is unfortunate. We have to learn how to adapt and change and grow. That is hard for the human race. For the first time in my life I really consider that maybe we have done too much damage. That is where the hope comes in. Maybe if I just do what I can every day and cause a ripple effect, that’s really where I try to live, but on the other side of that, there is a whole lot

of emptiness, sadness, and darkness. We don’t even know if we’ve got time. I hope it will push people to change, to make more conscious decisions.

What is your view regarding performing animals, and also working animals including those trained to assist handicapped humans and to rescue humans?

Through education and working with animals, I have realized that animals have no place in entertainment of any kind. As a child, I would visit Sea World and be in awe of the giant orcas performing “tricks”, but as I have aged, I realized that is no life for any animal. Once you really take a step back and think about all the ways we have seen animals in entertainment, whether it be rodeos, state fairs, theme parks, circuses, carnivals, etc., you realize that it has been our conditioning to believe these animals are happy and healthy. They often, in fact, are neither of those things, and once you really see that, you can never unsee it.

Should zoos exist? Are there ‘good’ zoos? If so, what makes them good?

I would prefer to see zoos transform into large scale sanctuaries that offer animals the space they deserve to roam. You can see good models with the Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee or the sea-sanctuary in Iceland for beluga whales who previously lived in captivity. The difference between them and zoos is that the main priority is offering the

animal the highest level of care or quality of life. My hope is that one day we can use innovative ways, like holograms and 3D printing, to educate and inspire people about how amazing animals are without them having to live in captivity.

What brings you joy doing this work?

The work in itself is quite joyful. It's physically and emotionally demanding but it makes you feel so strong. I love taking a break after all my sanctuary chores are finished to sit with the animals and enjoy the sounds and sights of animals thriving. I love seeing Papa Antonio, a burro who was once terrified of everyone, down in the pasture with the herd of donkeys ... his family. I love seeing Charlie root around the sanctuary until he finally plops into his beloved mud puddle. I love watching the goats, who all came from separate histories, enjoying their life filled with peace and free from suffering.



Christi Camblor, DVM, ED

CO-FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMPASSION WITHOUT BORDERS



Christi with Priscella

“I would like to see people widen their circle of compassion to other animals. Although we work with dogs and cats, I’d really like to see people include farmed animals in their care, concern, and righteousness about how they should be treated. I’d love to see people become more respectful of wildlife and protect their habitat and understand our impact on the planet. When it comes to their own animals, seeing the animal as its own being and understanding how they can best be of service to their animal rather than how their pet can make their life better. So maybe putting the animal first.”

I'm from Mountain View, and went to school in Palo Alto. I have the classic animal lover story when from the minute I could walk I just always loved animals passionately. We lived in an apartment and couldn't have animals. We would go on vacation, and I wouldn't want to leave the hotel if there was a cat or a dog in the parking lot. I wanted to stay with the animals. Starting in second grade there was a veterinary hospital on my way home from school. I could see that they had cats in the window, so I wandered in and started petting those cats, and slowly got invited to help pick out their boarding animals. So from second grade on, I went to that particular vet clinic, and it was that community where I really discovered my love for veterinary medicine.

In my family I was the sole animal lover. I'm also the first person in my family to go to college, so I think initially there was some concern about not just getting a job, and moving on with my adult life, but now they're very happy that I found my way to where I am today.

I was living at Animal Place while doing my undergrad, and they were pulling dogs from over-crowded shelters, housing them there, and bringing them to Marin Humane Society. I was the one that was pursuing that program. I always knew that I wanted to be a veterinarian, but I was working, and trying to keep my grades up. I felt like I wanted an academic breather between undergrad and vet school. So I decided to look for opportunities to travel, and work

with animals in Spanish-speaking places. I first found an internship on the island of Vieques which is off of Puerto Rico. I thought that I had seen everything about animal sheltering, and knew some of the rough shelters, but I really wasn't prepared for what I found in Vieques, just very few resources, too many animals, and a really high euthanasia rate. I thought that was pretty grim, until I went to the next place. I was supposed to go to Belize to help a humane society there, but that project fell apart at the last minute. The cheapest place I could find a ticket to was Mexico City. I ended up there at a large animal shelter that had 2,000 dogs, 1,200 of whom were completely loose, and the other 800 were packed very tightly into cages. That was a rude awakening.

Every day I first had to take the subway, and a bus to get to this shelter. I was just seeing all these dogs, suffering, mangy, starving animals all over the street; it was everywhere. Then I would go to this shelter, and just be really confronted with a very graphic display of how bad the problem was in Mexico. I'm not kidding; I walked into just a sea of dogs. I had to part the dogs to get through. One of the neat things about the shelter, actually, was that I had a pack of dogs that were my friends, and would follow me around everywhere I went. I realized that one of my very favorite dogs wasn't there. He was gone. I knew what that meant, because he was a very macho dog, and sadly, dogs there that got into fights

often got killed, because there would be a pack of them. Sure enough, Seraphim had been killed, and I was really, really sad. I ended my shift that day where I always ended it, in a makeshift infirmary, which very sadly was a place where the dogs went to die. They didn't have any veterinary care. I knew a little bit about veterinary medicine back then, so I would try to do what I could, or at least offer a little bit of comfort. When I went in there, another one of my favorite dogs, Chacha, was in a cage, and was very sick. It was pouring rain outside. There was this very, very distinct moment when I sat down on this filthy floor. From where I was sitting, there was a little window, and I could see the 2,000 dogs, trying to find shelter from the rain, and there was no shelter. Chacha was behind me, and I was just so upset, and feeling like, "What am I doing here?" Given the magnitude of the problem, what could anybody do? What could some American do who just got way in over her head? Then, without realizing what I was doing, I walked over to where Chacha was, opened the cage, and took her out. I got her veterinary care, and had her at home. It was just that single thing that I could do in that moment.

It was there that I met my husband. We ultimately went on to co-found Compassion Without Borders. Everything just sort of blossomed from that experience in that shelter. That was 20 years ago before I started vet school.

It was actually with Chacha and my

experience at the Refugee shelter with the 2,000 dogs when I was waffling. I wasn't sure if I wanted to dedicate my life to farmed animals, which I'm also very passionate about. But it was that moment, that sad experience, when I realized I really, really wanted to be a veterinarian so that I could provide care to animals like Chacha when they're sick and ailing, and needed care, but also so that I could prevent animals like her from ever being in that position, and to work really hard at the root causes of animal homelessness and suffering. I've always wanted to be a veterinarian, but wasn't totally sure after I finished undergrad, but I came back to it pretty firmly in that experience. So then I came back to California and went to UC Davis. I lived at Animal Place for a few more years, and graduated in '07.

How did you create Compassion Without Borders?

The first thing we did was to start to bring dogs from that shelter in Mexico City to Animal Place where we were living at that time, and housed them there, and CAPE, the Center for Animal Protection and Education, would adopt out the dogs. They actually funded the first few airlifts for us, to bring dogs from Mexico. So we started rescuing dogs, and then started to do spay/neuter clinics for the community down there, brought U.S. veterinarians and volunteers to work with local Mexican veterinarians and volunteers to put on big

sterilization and veterinary clinics. Then we got a stationary clinic in Mexico. We left that big shelter in Mexico City and had our own shelter in Juarez. We needed to do a humane education campaign. It was just all unfolding, really, rather organically, as we were growing. We would do one program and another opportunity, or another need would surface so we would move to do that.

Once I graduated, we started to do programs here in the United States too with low-income and under-resourced community members, and other shelters in the states that had great needs.

Where we are now, Muttopia, our facility in Santa Rosa, is thanks to the Center for Animal Protection and Education. It also was thanks to them that we first started rescuing dogs in Mexico, because like I mentioned, they funded and placed some of the dogs. We continued to rescue dogs, and they continued to place them. CAPE got a bequest from Lisa Landi, who was a big dog lover, and said that she wanted it to be used specifically to save dogs. CAPE said to us, “We know if anyone will save as many dogs as possible with this money, it’s you guys. So let’s do this joint venture together. We’re going to give you the gift to purchase Muttopia.” That’s how we were able to get this space which is three and a half acres. Right when they made us this incredible offer, this property came on the market. It all just happened very serendipitously. It’s been quite a big journey having Muttopia. We’re so grateful for the opportunity of

having our own shelter. Before, we would bring the dogs up from Mexico, and adopt them out through partner shelters. But the shelters really wanted dogs that they were able to move pretty quickly. They didn’t want all these ‘project’ dogs that needed help. Having this space means we can take anyone we want, give them the time they need, heal them, and find them a home. We really are a safety net for the most at-risk animals. We have two sides to what we do. We have the rescue and adoption side, and that’s primarily dogs, although we do some cats; then we have the access to care side, which hopefully prevents animal homelessness: free spay/neuter, free veterinary care, trying to keep the animals healthy, and in the homes of people who love them. The rescue tends to be more dog heavy, but the access to care is for cats as well.

My husband is the designer and creative face behind the scenes. He designed the rescue van, but also does everything. Like any nonprofit, everybody does everything. He’s fine with it, including our own nine dogs; that’s why we got married. (*laughs*)

I’ve worked in shelters all my life, and been in some of those really nice fancy ones, that cost a lot of money to build, and they look really good from a human perspective, but then the animals are housed by themselves, in very sterile habitats, with no windows and no access to outside. I think if I were the dog, I’d rather be here where I can go in and out, and smell the outdoors, and dig in the dirt.

Tell us about some of your personal relationships with animals.

We just recently had a dog in our life named Daniela who was found on the street in Sonowica, a border town. When I say skin and bones, I mean skin and bones. You could just see every rib, and every bone, and she had this really painful venereal disease. She was blind; her eyes were all scarred over. Sadly, that's not unheard of. We get a lot of animals like that. We took her into our shelter in Mexico. She wasn't really responding well to our normal treatment in Mexico, so we brought her here, so that she could get more advanced medical care. Daniela had her own life. She wanted to be with you, but she was just a very dignified, old soul, a really beautiful spirit that was just her own being. She loved you, but on her terms. She was just a mess, physically, but the most dignified being. We brought her into our home, and she started not to do well. The venereal disease she had, which is a very common in Mexico, causes tumors; it had spread to all her internal organs. We tried for months to treat her. She had some really good time with us. She was just my constant shadow, and she loved to come to work with me. She would sit on the passenger seat of my car, and liked to hold hands while we were driving. She would let me hold her paw. She was just lovely. She was very comfortable in the house, and playful, funny, and just fully blossomed into everything that she could be, and everything that I hoped for her. It was just this really

brief moment in time. Then she started to feel bad, and let us know that it was time to go. When I was saying goodbye to her, she was in our bedroom, and Moncho was on the phone, and my son Diego was playing, and being loud, and the dogs were playing -- it was just all the sounds of the house. She seemed so happy, and it was this very comfortable environment that she had fully integrated into. It was her house, and we

“Animal rights should include all animals – farmed animals, exotics, all species, not just companion animals that most people concern themselves with. It is really about respecting them as sentient beings, doing all we can to minimize their harm, not causing them suffer through mass production and not eating them. When we are interfacing with wild animals, we should try to be as unobtrusive and respectful as we can.”

were her people. She was so at peace, that we were so sorry to lose her, but so grateful that we had this brief time with her, and got to know her. We wish we could do that for every dog. Sorry, it's just been a recent loss. She has been so heavy on my mind. (We were all in tears at this point.)

When I first started volunteering at the shelter in Mexico City there was a separate area where they had the smaller dogs.

I came in one day and saw this really cute little scruffy terrier, with these three adorable puppies. They looked like little teddy bears. I thought that they were darling, of course. I knew the puppies weren't going to survive in the shelter. Each day I would come in, and sure enough, one puppy was gone, and then the other puppy was gone. I was making really good friends with the mama. Sophie was her name. I came in one day, and Sophie was in the corner, and didn't want to come out. I realized it was because the last baby had passed away. She was guarding it. I very gently took the puppy away from her, and promised her that on the very first airlift out of that shelter, we were going to get her on it, and find her a new life. She was on our very first transport ever, which CAPE funded, and actually placed the dogs for us. They brought Sophie to a veterinarian who fell madly in love with her, and adopted her. At that time he was dealing with some chronic illness and pain. He got Q fever from helping with a goat cruelty investigation. He was so depressed that he was suicidal. He credits Sophie for saving his life. He trained her to be a therapy dog. They visited people in the hospital and she ultimately ended up being a hospice therapy dog. They would visit people in their final moments. That's a really neat story with a ripple effect. You help this one being and then that helps another being and then they go on to help more beings. It's just a really nice story about adoption, how kindness can

spread like that.

What I'd like the public to know about the work that we do is that it is a huge group effort. From our staff in Mexico to our staff up here to our donors to our volunteers it is a huge, huge collective effort to make this work happen. If anyone is interested in being a part of it, there is a place for them. There is some way they can contribute. The only way we are able to do the work is because so many people do pull together. So it is very collaborative and it is a real opportunity if people want to get involved.

How would you like to see the relationship between people and animals change?

I would like to see people widen their circle of compassion to other animals. Although we work with dogs and cats, I'd really like to see people include farmed animals in their care, concern, and righteousness about how they should be treated. I'd love to see people become more respectful of wildlife and protect their habitat and understand our impact on the planet. When it comes to their own animals, seeing the animal as its own being and understanding how they can best be of service to their animal rather than how their pet can make their life better. So maybe putting the animal first.

What is your concept of animal rights, and what should be included?

Animal rights should include all animals – farmed animals, exotic, all species, not just companion animals that most people concern themselves with. It is really about respecting them as sentient beings, doing all we can to minimize their harm, not causing them suffer through mass production, and not eating them. When we are interfacing with them, we should try to be as unobtrusive and respectful as we can.

What is your feeling about performing animals, or working animals?

When you ask me about performing animals, I feel pretty clear that I'm not in favor of that. I don't think that an animal should be put on display for entertainment, especially because it makes me think of exotic performing animals, which I'm completely opposed to. When it comes to a herding dog, I guess my feelings are a little more nuanced. If you've been around herding dogs, you know that's what they live for. Maybe it's not herding sheep, because should we really be raising and eating the sheep? But give them some outlet for that intense drive they have, whether it's agility or some other activity. My feeling is if you're allowing an animal to express the behavior because it's in the animal's best interest, then I'm in favor of it, but if it is in the human's best interest, then I'm usually not.

How do you feel about zoos?

In general, I'm not in favor of zoos unless it can be more of a sanctuary setting, a place for injured wildlife, or wildlife that have been born in captivity and are unable to be re-released. Like we were talking about with farmed animals, to allow people to have that contact, to see them, to know how majestic they are, and to want to protect them, but they should not be bred specifically for that reason. They need to have a habitat where it's in their best interest first, and they're not forced to be on display for everybody, and they can retreat if they want to retreat. I'm more favoring sanctuary and rehabilitation centers, but maybe that's where zoos could move to in the future.

What do you think the role of government should be to protect animals?

The answer varies by species. When it comes to companion animals, I feel like here in the States there are good laws in place, but not so much in Mexico where we also work, or in other parts of the world. There are relatively good systems in many communities to enforce those laws. Those animals are pretty protected. But then when you look at the biggest group of animals that we use as humans, which are the farmed animals, the laws that are in place are a joke. Cruelty is the norm. It's institutionalized. If we could get better laws in place for those animals, that would be my greatest dream, and then other laws to protect wildlife, and

prevent over-hunting, over-fishing.

I definitely think that there is a strong case for laws and legal enforcement to protect animals.

Why do you think it's acceptable to eat some animals and not others?

I personally don't think it is, but the reason it is the norm, is because people are indoctrinated from a very young age. It's what you learn and grow up with. It's what everybody else thinks is acceptable. It's the way the animals are portrayed ... the dirty pigs. It's the way we are so detached from the entire process. We can just go to the supermarket and buy our plastic-wrapped hamburger, and never think about what happened. It's the contacts that people have with companion animals, which allows them to see them as individual beings, and have empathy for them, and understand their complexity. Whereas the average person, at least here in the States, doesn't ever really get to be around a farmed animal, which is why sanctuaries are so fabulous, because they give people the opportunity to see farmed animals, and to connect with them as individuals, and to put a face to the hamburger on their plate. It's interesting, because we rescue dogs from China from the meat trade, and there is such moral

outrage about how people could be eating these dogs, and can you believe this is even happening? For all the reasons I've mentioned, I understand that. But if you just take one step back, it's so easy to say, "Well, why is it okay to eat that pig?" It's an equally sentient being with equally complex interests and needs. Any opportunity to break those indoctrinations, and try to get people sensitized is so important.

The proliferation of non-meat products has really expanded exponentially in the last few years. Do you think that will continue?

I think it will continue because of global warming and the need to rein in agriculture. More and more people are moving to plant-based diets for their own personal health. I'd like to say it's largely because there is a growing presence of compassion for all beings on the planet, and let's all hope that is true. But also there are other things that are driving people: their own health, and the health of the planet. It's all coming together. It's really exciting. We were driving to Mexico all the time, and could never find anything to eat anywhere. Now, Beyond Meat is in every store, and there is vegan this and that. That's very encouraging. That whole sector is really booming.

The cross-over virus issue: Why didn't it get more attention at the height of the virus epidemic? Do you think we're going to learn from that experience? How do we make sure that people understand that the cross-over is a real factor in our health and we need to understand it?

I think our best angle is that it's in our best interest. I feel a little bit pessimistic about it, like maybe it's going to be like climate change, in that people will be preaching from the rooftops about it, and then the whole planet's going to not notice until they absolutely have to. Here we have this pandemic, and you would hope it would force people to notice. Not everybody has made that link. I think it's just bound to happen again. The interface between wildlife and humans is so grotesque and abnormal right now. More viruses are going to cross. There will be more pandemics. I don't know where you hit that tipping point where people can no longer have their blinders on. I sadly think that that's what's going to have to happen before it'll be really acknowledged. I still think there should be people preaching from the rooftops at any opportunity, trying to educate and engage people in conversations, trying to force lawmakers to recognize the importance of it. That's our responsibility.

What are the effects of climate change, on both wild and domestic animals?

It is absolutely devastating across the board. From wild animals losing their habitat, and having changes in that habitat due to climate change, disrupting ecosystems, and causing massive species die offs, to fires in communities that cause animals to die and be displaced, and people to lose their homes. Then they can't care for their animals and they have to surrender them. It is just across the board a devastating impact. There isn't a single group of animals that have not been horrifically affected by climate change and what we have done to the planet.

We had this devastating fire in 2017. Santa Rosa was ground zero for those fires. Since then we've steadily had fires all around us so just the sheer terror of those fires. We've loaded up to evacuate two different times during that first set of fires. Then the air quality was just so poor that people couldn't walk the dogs, and it was terrible for the poor dogs to even get out. Recently we had one of our redwood trees collapse and it crushed the fence and part of the kennel from the years of drought. It's everywhere. It's nothing we can avoid; it is just here. We're all trying to navigate the best we can. We are in deep trouble.

What do you envision for the future of CWB?

I would like us to stay true to our mission to help the animals who most need us on both sides of the border and help those communities with access to low cost vet care. I would like to see it on a larger scale, taking the model we've already put into place and replicating it in other communities.

What give you joy doing this work?

The thing that brings me the most joy is the direct hands-on interaction with the animals, especially the ones we rescued in really tough shape, and being able to be such an intimate part of their journey to feeling better. It is very healing for me to be able to lay hands on them and heal them, and watch them progress. There is no greater joy seeing those animals thriving and getting adoption updates years later where they are just having the best possible life. It is amazing. All of the grunt work is worth it.

Juan (Moncho) Camblor

CO-FOUNDER, COMPASSION WITHOUT BORDERS



Moncho with Coyota

“All the dogs we get are special one way or the other and have all been through a lot. If you put any human being through what some of these animals go through, we would not have the grace and the elegance of how these guys navigate this suffering. They are just always forgiving. They are always looking forward. They try to enjoy a new beginning. It is just really humbling working with animals because they are very incredible teachers. It’s sad that humans cannot take their egos a little out of the equation and just see the beauty of nature as it is. We could learn in every moment and just see them for what they are, not for what we think they should be ... a hamburger or a pet or entertainment or work or money. When you really start opening your eyes, it’s hard not see they are all special. They are all unique.”

My dad really liked animals, and had animals in my house all the time. He was really into birds. We had two big Macaws who were on the loose in the yard. They would just make a mess. They would take all the buttons out of the clothes in the hamper. They were just terrorists, and real funny. I had a really good relationship with them.

Every time I would bring my friend home one of the Macaws would chase him. He would run and they would just be chasing them – then they would just stop and laugh, like ha, ha ha, ha, ha! (*bird cawing sound*). The bird would laugh. Also one of the phones in the house was close to the yard so every time somebody would leave a message the Macaw would say, “Bueno!” They would go, “Hello?” He would go, “Bueno!” So every time the phone would ring the bird would say, “Bueno!” If they were not answering, he just yelled “Bueno! Caw! Caw!” It was just funny.

People don’t realize that just as we have a unique personality, all life is as magical like that. They all have a unique sense of humor, a unique way to appreciate the world, and a unique way to interact with problems. We are all having that magical experience.

When I was younger, I was involved with a group called Sierra Gorda in Mexico. They did a positive job making a biosphere reserve that is now one of the UN biosphere reserves that they are

supporting in Mexico. It’s a beautiful place. I was more into that. I love dogs. I like animals, and spoke with them all the time. Then I met Christi one time in a bar in Mexico City. I saw her smile, and got that feeling like, “Oh, I know you,” and then we just hit it off. In the beginning she didn’t want me to help much with the dog situation but I was stubborn. I began helping with the rescue, and we started just creating these programs. We make a good team. I know how some situations work in Mexico that are really different from the States.

I’m a graphic designer and photographer by trade. I started doing all the marketing and photos for the organization. I’m also the handyman, kennel cleaner, and dog driver. It’s just been an interesting ride. It’s been a process of learning every step of the way. Every turn of the ball there are new challenges and new things to do. Christi has an incredible amount of skills; I am more the brute force. (*laughs*) We love the organization, and the work we do.

Do you have a favorite animal story you’d like to tell?

I had the great pleasure to live with Don Cocho for not as many years as we would have liked, but he came with us for a little bit. He came to the clinic and entered the program. He was the classical junkyard dog that had a really tough life. He had scars all over his face and body. He fought

to live for a long time. When he came to the clinic he was really emaciated. Really thin and really, really, really messed up. He couldn't even stand up. But he was eating, and if they are eating they are saying, "I can keep going." He fought so hard. There should be a prize for surviving. Every part of his old pit-bull body was really stiff and arthritic, and he was just having a hard time. He was not gaining weight for months and months. We thought that he was just going to be our hospice case. We call him Don Cucho. In Mexico, Cucho is like a funny way to say like oh, this table, it's kind of cocha, a little rickety. So he was like a rickety old fellow. Not a single part of his body was working properly. One eye was cloudy, because he lost it in a fight; then his other eye was incredible soulful. He would just make you feel special because he was special. He would just ride with his dignified self. Every day we would spend with him, he would show you that it is worthwhile to live. He was totally in a lot of pain, but never complained. He was so happy to be present in the morning. "Here we are. This is another wonderful day. Let's keep doing that day, right?" Then the next morning was the same. The entire day he had never a minute to complain. Nobody gave this poor dog a silver spoon. When he came to this other side of his story, he embraced it, and never looked back. He was fragile all his life, but he did gain a lot of weight. He always was looking forward, and whatever it is that is beautiful

to look for. Even to the day he died he was just amazing. A beautiful soul. He was always smiling, a real precious smile that we loved. We miss him every day. He was our warmest friend.

A current favorite animal friend – I have my dog I love the most. I love them all, but Cricket is my sidekick. She is a blue nosed pit-bull that we rescued from the landfill in Puerto Pinasco. Somebody dumped her because she was hit by a car. One of the garbage pickers in the landfill attended to her so she was able to walk again, and she gave birth. There was only one surviving puppy, so we rescued both of them. The garbage picker really loved her too and wanted to find her a home. He said, "I'm glad that she's having a second chance." I really wasn't planning on having another dog at that point but I totally fell in love with her. She is my kindred spirit. Cricket is the best. She's fun and not like really crazy ... but she gets crazy if you want to! She's great with everybody that she meets.

All the dogs we get are special one way or the other and have all been through a lot. If you put any human being through what some of these animals go through, we would not have the grace and the elegance of how these guys navigate this suffering. They are just always forgiving. They are always looking forward. They try to enjoy a new beginning. It is just really humbling working with animals because they are very incredible teachers. It's sad

that humans cannot take their egos a little out of the equation and just see the beauty of nature as it is. We could learn in every moment and just see them for what they are, not for what we think they should be ... a hamburger or a pet or entertainment or work or money. When you really start opening your eyes, it's hard not see they are all special. They are all unique.

We've got a big computer in the head, but it just is not quite the right version yet. We're still in Beta. The computer is just mis-firing the algorithm sometimes. No other species takes more than what it eats; we're the only one. Except for viruses. It might be that we are one of them?

What is your view regarding animal rights? What should be included?

We tend to put our view of the world first. We try to comply every animal to that expectation. We are not entitled to that. I think the rights of the animals should be really from their perspective, not what we think is the right thing for them. We tend to really treat them as a commodity, like an ornament for some people. We make dogs and cats so dependable on us that they comply with all our requirements. I think when somebody decides to bring a dog or cat into their house the expectation should be that the one you are bringing is a unique individual. You should attend to the needs of that individual and not to your own preconceived idea of what this animal is to do for you. It's about the

relationship you're learning to have with this unique individual. They can enrich your life easily, or you can make it very difficult. It's all dependent on a good relationship with that individual, and how your expectations are incorporated. I think it's just a really big problem that we have such a big egocentric view of the world. The rights of animals are surrendered because of the lack of balance. We have an uphill battle to learn. We are not that evolved at all. It would be nice if we could respect the rights of all these little creatures, but we are far from that.

What is your view about performing animals, in circuses, etc.?

It's not their job to entertain us. And it's stupid, to be honest, to have animals performing for our pleasure. If the animal wants to perform for you in your own house, that's great. I have my dogs that are silly, and they perform some silly acts in the house sometimes. They make me laugh and we all have fun. It's not like me cracking a whip and making them jump.

How do you feel about zoos?

Zoos could be a great place to keep animals, if they are having problems, but not to trap animals and make them a spectacle. Zoos should be wildlife rescue sanctuaries to integrate them back into their native environment, if possible. If they are not able to because their injuries are too grave, then they could

have a sanctuary for them, not be a zoo. It would be a center where people could see and learn about different species in the world. But the entire purpose would be not trapping those animals.

How would you like to see the relationship between people and animals change?

It is their planet too. We should be a little more kind to our shared environment.

What should the role of government be, in regulating how we interact with animals, both wild and domestic?

There should be laws to punish humans if they break the rights of other creatures. It would be nice when laws are created that they cover all aspects of the country including the forests and the oceans and did not allow the greed of corporations to take advantage of them.

Why is it acceptable to eat some animals and not others?

It's just not. The thought that we decide as a society, "Oh, these ones are okay, these ones are not." It's not right. People go to the supermarket and buy meat. It's a product. It doesn't have a head or eyeballs. It doesn't look like an animal. So for them it's just dinner. Like you're buying a bag of Cheetos - it doesn't have a connotation. I think if you want to buy chicken, you should go butcher it and see how it feels. A lot of people, if they had that connection

and saw the eyes of the animal, would stop doing that. A big percentage would become vegetarian, if they have to do the dirty deed. I'm not naive that everybody would change. Some people actually like it. If people were more aware of how their chicken is raised, how a factory farm works, how much ecological damage it is causing ... ignorance is bliss. My hope is that the new generations will be more informed. It's just going to take a long time. I'm vegetarian, pretty much. I used to be vegan. Now I cheat sometimes. I get in trouble when I'm in Mexico.

What would you like to see happen for CWB in the future?

We created an organization to help animals in the most poor situations, in countries like Mexico. I would like to figure out how the organization could grow to the point that we can reach other countries using the model that is based on the work we do. We want to inspire more people to fix the problems because it takes an army. It can't happen overnight.

What are the present and future consequences of global warming for the animals that you work with?

Global warming is affecting every single aspect of this planet. But for our animals, a lot of them are on the streets dealing with heat, crisis, lack of water, and more difficulty in finding shelter. The temperature on this planet is rising quite

a bit. If you are on the streets in some areas, a couple of degrees make a difference. Our whole planet is suffering from it. The disparity of rich and poor in this world is getting bigger and bigger. The people and animals who are paying the bill end up losing the little they have in this situation. They are the most unfortunate ones taking the first hits.

The crossover virus issue is really important. Why there wasn't more publicity about that? We're interacting with animals in ways that shouldn't happen, and it is pretty clear that it is causing these kinds of pandemics.

In Mexico there are some of those wet markets, even in Mexico City which is a really cosmopolitan city. There is a pretty famous market that has a lot of captive wildlife and they sell whatever you want, from a tiger to a jaguar to a monkey. They are all in horrible conditions. These animals are not only under such awful distress but disease is so prevalent in their housing. It is happening all over, not only in Asia. I'm surprised, to be honest, it didn't happen before. We've been incredibly lucky up until now. They have big mafia that controls the underground markets for wildlife, and they are incredibly profitable. As long as humans keep buying, they are going to keep selling. The results are frightening. The conditions are totally disgusting. I don't

know how it's allowed. As a worldwide community, we should just shut down these kinds of things. They don't do anything about it because it's big money. Everything is decided by money.

What brings you joy doing this work?

We are stopping a small percentage of the suffering, correcting a wrong, moving the energy and changing the situation. The joy that I get is to see that individual animal not suffering any more, and just getting what he deserves.

Sallysue Stein, ED

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GOLD COUNTRY WILDLIFE RESCUE



Sallysue with orphaned baby opossums

“Learning how to live with your wild neighbors is the best thing you can do. Don’t let your dogs run free in areas populated by wildlife. Your dogs will injure or kill wild animals. The greatest number of animals we get at GCWR are the result of the impact of humans on the environment. It’s our cars, our fences, our dogs, our cats, and our houses. More housing continues to remove more and more of the wildlife territory. People need to learn to coexist, especially people who are moving into rural areas. The cities are expanding; look at Rocklin and Roseville and Lincoln. They just think those are empty fields out there, but they are just teeming with life. People need to appreciate that and understand the impact on everyone when destroying the ecosystem. It comes back to coexisting. Think about what you’re doing with your land. And sure, you can farm it if you want, but let’s try to think about the wild neighbors that were here first, and what you’re doing to them, their life and their territory.”

Throughout my whole life I have had this deep affinity for animals. The youngest in a family of three kids, I was a tomboy who never wore shoes (my mother would make me put shoes on when I came in the house in order to keep her carpet clean).

I was the animal child, fascinated by pets, livestock, and all of the various wildlife that I encountered throughout the day on the little farms that I grew up on. I say farms because we moved a couple of times during my early days, first up from LA, where I was born, to the Dixon-Vacaville area and later, when I was about to enter my teens, to the Weimar-Colfax area. Each move resulted in rural life. We always had a cow that my dad would milk. My mom would churn butter, raise chickens, and tend the garden (vegetable and floral). I would be right in the middle of all of the farm chores, especially where the animals were concerned.

Looking back, I realize that what was normal everyday life for me then was something special; a childhood spent growing up on an organic farm where I was healthy, happy, and, except when having to wear shoes in the house, free. Those days are a part of the reason that I have, with a couple of short breaks, spent most of my adult life enjoying living in Placer County.

As a child I was always trying to rescue, save, and often adopt, yet another animal-in-need. When I graduated from Chico State in the late 1970's I did a brief stint at Hewlett Packard in Santa Clara, then moved back here and started my own

business. My love for animals led me to get involved in the local SPCA where I started by helping to teach a course to first, third, and sixth graders about cat and dog over-population. I then joined the Placer SPCA Board of Directors, where I remained active for ten years. I actually helped the Placer SPCA get launched with a professional board and its first shelter. Throughout this period I kept thinking that I should do something with wildlife, but I still had no idea what to do.

Then one day I saw an ad in the Sacramento Bee for a songbird training class put on by Wildlife Care Association in Sacramento County. Their recruiting philosophy at the time was that volunteers needed to first go through their songbird training class, then rehabilitate songbirds for a year, after which one could move on to mammals. I love all wildlife, but mammals have always been my thing. I know the basics of birds and their care, but my first love has always been for mammals. I persevered, and went through the songbird training. Then, a week after completing the training, I got a phone call from them saying, "We have a litter of opossums in Auburn for you." I said, "But I took songbird training." She said, "That's okay, the lady that has them will teach you how to tube feed them." I never got a songbird to rehab. I got right into mammals.

A little background is in order here. Opossums are marsupials. When they

are first born they have to travel to their mother's pouch. The mama possum has 13 teats: a circle of 12 and one in the middle. She can support 13 babies. No matter how many babies she births at any given time, the first 13 that connect to a teat are the survivors. They just stay on that teat until they're big enough, after which they start getting pushed out of the pouch. After that they hang onto her, going back and nursing as they need. The problem with rehabbing opossum orphans is that they don't latch on quickly to an artificial nipple like a squirrel, or a fawn, or a raccoon will; you can pretty quickly break those to the bottle. In order to feed opossum orphans, we have to put a tube down into their stomach. We weigh and measure them to figure out how long the tube needs to be, and based on their weight, how much formula to give them. If you have a litter of 13 possums, you can tube feed them in 20 minutes or so. To attempt to feed them with a bottle and a nipple would take much longer (and would be unsuccessful in most cases).

Starting in about 1988 my mammal specialization broadened to include foxes, raccoons, and especially fawns. I rehabbed fawns for 12 years. After two years of working under Wildlife Care Association's license, I shifted to working under Sierra Wildlife Rescue, which is based in Placerville in El Dorado County. Soon after I came to the realization that Placer County needed its own permit for rehabbing wildlife. I wrote a proposal to California

Fish and Wildlife; we received our initial permit in 1991. That's when we launched Gold Country Wildlife Rescue (GCWR). I have been doing mammals ever since, except for the time I was out of the country for a few years. I'm back seven days a week doing this, but now instead of rehabbing, I'm GCWR's Acting Executive Director. We're over 40,000 animals handled for our 30 years of existence.

Sometimes, in the midst of the whirlwind that is keeping GCWR going in the face the constant growth in demand for wildlife rescue, I have to stop and consider how amazing this whole thing is. We have acquired and are building out a new 15-acre property with a wildlife intake and rehabilitation facility. We've come a long way from the time when there were six or so of us rehabbing in our backyards while putting GCWR together. It wasn't until 2010 that Gold Country Wildlife Rescue had its first wildlife intake center. Before that we operated like most other smaller rehab groups, which are open for baby bird season, but not open year-round. Moving to be opened year-round in 2014 was a huge step for us, and so very necessary for the wildlife and the communities we serve. Amazing.

The whole volunteer landscape has changed since we started. In the beginning, as I said, the majority of our work, especially with mammals, was taken care of at people's homes. "Home rehabbers" we called them. I felt that we

needed to drive Gold Country Wildlife into a situation where it had a central facility with paid, trained staff; a place where we could provide consistent treatment and secure housing to injured and orphaned animals, without relying solely on volunteers. We would continue to need and engage volunteers, but to supplement our paid staff.

We have about 125 active volunteers. Not all of those people are working in the Wildlife Intake Center. There are volunteers who only want to provide transport, getting a phone call saying “We need you to take a jackrabbit from here to there,” or “There’s a bird that needs to be taken to a special rehab center in the Bay Area.” Sometimes our transport volunteers make really long trips, depending on the animal involved.

We have volunteers that handle our phones. We get over 13,000 phone calls a year. We can’t afford to pay somebody to answer 13,000 phone calls. When someone calls us, they get a voicemail system that directs them to leave a message on the line appropriate for the species they need help with. Those messages get sent via text to our volunteers, along with an email with the actual recording of the message. As soon as s/he is able, a volunteer will return the call and talk to the caller about the situation. A lot of times it’s just education and coaching people. “There’s a fox trying to get into my chicken coop.” We just talk them through the situation: “Well, we can

help you learn how to build a predator proof chicken coop? That’s what you need to do.” We work to solve the basic problem, fixing things for the long, not short, term. Lots of callers want the quick fix (in this case, come trap the fox and take it away). They don’t see that this won’t really solve their problem and is illegal for us to do.

Expanding on that thought: many people don’t realize that it’s illegal to trap and move “nuisance” animals. The law in California is straightforward: if you trap an animal, you either have to release it where you trapped it, or you have to kill it. Moving a “nuisance” animal to someone else’s neighborhood doesn’t solve anything. And it is very dangerous for the animal since you would be removing it from the only territory it knows into other animal’s territory. It’s just keeping the nuisance going, best case. Worst case, the animal dies or is killed by animals in the new territory. Really what you need to do is practice exclusion. Don’t let the animals get into the chicken coop or under your house, or into your attic. Screen all your vents and all the openings, making sure you’ve got quarter inch hardware cloth over them. Don’t leave your pet food out at night. If you do, you’re attracting every skunk, opossum, and fox, as well as all the animals that eat them. It’s just a vicious cycle. That’s one of the reasons why it’s actually illegal to feed wildlife. People get so mad at Fish and Wildlife about this, but there are lots of

problems with feeding wildlife. Another is that human feeding of wildlife often results in wildlife populations getting too close together, leading to the spread of disease. How many people are going to sanitize their birdbaths and feeders every day? You really need to, if you're going to do right by the animals and avoid the spread of diseases. Lots of people like to feed the deer. This attracts the mountain lions. Now we've got a mountain lion in the neighborhood, and everybody wants it killed. It's only coming because it's following the deer and the turkeys. All the issues, disease, predators, over population, etc., just ripple out when you feed wildlife.

GCWR tries to address many of these sorts of issues through education. We have an education program with what we call our ambassador animals. These are animals that came to us that couldn't be released, usually due to an injury or because they were raised by humans and can't survive in the wild. When we determine an animal might make a good ambassador we have to get agreement from Fish and Wildlife, and also a veterinarian. We all have to agree that the animal will have a good quality of life in captivity. That's often hard to do with an adult animal because they're just so wild. It's different with a baby animal. When animals are raised with humans, they don't know any better. They can sometimes have a good quality of life in captivity, and are good candidates for education.

Schools and nature centers call us for presentations. We also go out to fairs and other events with our ambassadors. We have three ambassador raccoons, four grey foxes, and several ambassador birds also. At present we can only take ambassador birds to an event. When I started this 30+ years ago, you could put mammals on a harness, leash them, and take them to a school. But our permit doesn't allow that anymore because it just makes the animals look too much like a pet. We are planning to build display enclosures for our ambassador animals at our new facility so that the public will have a place to come and actually see them. Signage will tell their stories; hopefully we will have docents to talk to people and help them understand why it is so important to keep wildlife wild.

Our four ambassador grey foxes were raised by people. They cannot be released because they are so tame. One came in with a sister, and the sister went to a sanctuary. We kept the little male who was very sick from being fed only boiled chicken. He has metabolic problems, basically nutritional rickets. He is bowlegged in the front, and lame in the back. When we got him, his bones were so paper thin that he was at risk of fractures from basic movements. We had to be really careful with him; he couldn't play and jump and run because he could have broken his back and legs. He is now better in terms of his bones being stronger

due to supplements and a proper diet. He will probably develop arthritis earlier than he would normally. Those are some long-term effects from that kind of nutritional deficiency as a baby. He will be a good educational animal, because he's so tame and so sweet. But wouldn't it be better if he were able to be out being a wild fox, and living his life?

More on foxes: they aren't cats or dogs. Yes, you can make them not afraid of you, but they will never lose that wildness. They're always going to pee on everything to mark it. Foxes have a musky, almost skunky scent to them. We receive a few imprinted foxes almost every year. People abandon them after they find out they're too hard to keep. You can't housebreak them. They don't make good pets so they dump them in parks, where they starve to death, are killed by other predators, or die at the hands (or cars) of humans.

This brings me to the environment, the ecosystem, we live in. I think everyone needs to think about what their impact is on the environment. Every yogurt cup you throw out that you didn't clean out may well get stuck on a skunk's head (or a fox's or some other animal). We get calls all the time regarding a skunk walking around with some kind of plastic container on its head. Perhaps the best example of this problem was a coyote we encountered, I think in 2017, who had a jar stuck on its head, like a large plastic jar of mixed nuts. There is a video of its story on our YouTube

channel, <https://www.youtube.com/gcwrtv>. We chased that coyote for almost two weeks. People were tracking it in the Cool, CA, area, and calling all the time with sightings. What kept the coyote alive was he was smart enough to lower that jar into a creek, and let it fill up with water so it could get enough water to survive. Otherwise, he would have died before we were able to capture him. Eventually a man who lived in the area happened to drive by and saw him run across the road. He leaped out of his car as they coyote went down into the creek. He chased him and grabbed him by the tail as the coyote tried to hide in blackberry bushes. It had a jar on his head so it couldn't bite him. He just held on till we could get there with nets. That coyote was almost dead by the time we got him. It was a case of emaciation and dehydration; it was touch and go for about a week. You have to be very careful with emaciated animals because re-feeding syndrome is a huge danger. Everybody wanted to give him cans of cat food. We told all the rescuers: "Do not give him anything to eat, because you can kill him with re-feeding syndrome." If you look at treating starvation victims, you have to get their electrolytes in balance. You have to check their kidneys, all their organ functions, and make sure everything is functioning, because if you just feed them a regular diet, they won't survive. You basically have to keep them on a starvation diet, and get them re-hydrated, and then

gradually start to introduce their food back. We use an intensive care slurry for mammals. For several days, we let them have just six tablespoons in a day for a coyote, just a very little bit. It's really hard to do because your heart says feed this animal that is starving. When you look at the blood work, you know you can't do that. You have to ease it back very slowly into eating and drinking on its own. So it's a lot of IV fluids, and little tiny bits of nutrition. Then we move to skinned mice, because the skins and the tails are hard to digest. You want to introduce foods that are very, very easy for them to digest, while their system starts working again. This coyote was known all over the country. We had offers from back east for people to come with their dogs to track him.

This story is an example. Nobody washed this container, so it still had the smell of whatever food was in it. Then it was thrown out somehow that it was accessible to the coyote, and he got his head stuck in there. And it goes on: it wasn't two months later, from the same area, we had a fox in the same situation. We caught it a lot more easily and quickly. Both animals lived and were returned to the wild. But look at the huge amount of effort required just because someone couldn't clean and securely dispose of his or her trash.

So, people need to clean their trash, cut up anything that an animal could get a foot or neck stuck in. People need to

work on generating less trash overall. We all need to keep the places we live in as clean as possible so you we don't attract wildlife. You might think it's cute for all the opossums to be on your deck, but your neighbor might hate them and call a trapper. The trapper comes and has to trap and kill them. Everybody thinks the county trapper comes and takes whatever animal away to a happy new life; that's absolutely not true. Just be cognizant of what your impact is, and don't leave out trash or food. You think it's fun to throw French fries to the gulls at the ocean, but you're just teaching them to be scavengers. They'll also eat things that aren't good for them; you certainly don't want them to pick up a piece of plastic or something like that that they mistake for food.

Learning how to live with your wild neighbors is the best thing you can do. Don't let your dogs run free in areas populated by wildlife. Your dogs will injure or kill wild animals. The greatest number of animals we get at GCWR are the result of the impact of humans on the environment. It's our cars, our fences, our dogs, our cats, and our houses. More housing continues to remove more and more of the wildlife territory.

Cats ... I love cats, but I have a real disconnect in my brain about how to love them; I don't want them to be outside. A lot of people want them to hunt mice. That's good if they kill and eat them. But to just randomly kill animals is not useful. A lot

of cats just catch birds for fun. We get an awful lot of cat and dog caught animals at our center. We can help them if they haven't been too badly injured. But it's not as straightforward as most people think. We ask people to bring any bird caught by their cat to us, even if they think that the bird can fly. The reality is that if the cat's teeth punctured it anywhere, it is going to get an infection and die. Untrained people frequently cannot find that type of puncture wound. We just automatically have a protocol of antibiotics for those types of birds when they come in. We obviously look for injuries that we could treat, but regardless, even if we don't see one, they get put on a course of antibiotics.

When people see a baby bird, or a baby squirrel, they want to give it water and food. We ask them not to give it anything, because, especially if they're cold, animals need to be hydrated and warm before you start feeding them. Otherwise, you will kill them. Additionally, feeding them is very difficult. If you don't feed the animal correctly, you will kill it. If you don't feed the squirrel correctly it can aspirate the formula, or whatever you're trying to give it. Most people just try to give them milk, which is the worst thing for them. They might get aspiration pneumonia. We just ask people to give them to a licensed rehabber as quickly as possible. Only then can we be certain that they will get the proper diet and the proper care, and have a much higher chance of getting back into the wild.

“The animals foretell what’s going to happen to us humans if we don’t take climate change seriously. It’s not just about running your air conditioning longer to stay comfortable because the climate is warmer. We’ve got to really think about what we do about this, and what our impact is on the overall environment, including climate change.”

Birds that fly into a beautiful glass window are another problem. We ask people to bring those birds in too, because although they may be able to fly off, if they have a serious head injury they really need steroids and antibiotics. They need the head injury treated. It doesn't take us long, and we can turn them around and release them usually within a matter of days. But when they fly off with a head injury, it's often fatal. Even though they fly off and you think they're okay, they're often going to suffer brain swelling, or be unable to fend off predators.

Jumping back to the topic of education for a moment, we use multiple channels to get key messages out. We post daily on social media, and we try to educate as

we post. “Please don’t keep wild animals. If you have to keep them at night when we’re not open, keep them warm, dark, and quiet, but don’t give them food or water.” I still run into people every day who have never heard of us right here in Auburn. We get some good press from the local TV channels for which we are very grateful. We need that kind of press, but normally we only get 60 seconds to communicate our message. We don’t get enough time to explain the whole story. Because everybody goes, “Why can’t I feed it and give it water?” We need the time to respond: “Well, you need to understand, if you’ve got this cold baby, its organs aren’t functioning correctly, and you’re going to put it into shock by giving it food and water. We warm it up, give it subcutaneous fluid, and make sure it’s ready to be able to digest the food that it’s given. We weigh the animals every day. We have all the protocols for each species because you can easily overfeed or underfeed. You have to know a lot to do it right.” Getting the air time for those messages is difficult.

I think the story that really changed my focus about medical care for wildlife was the Camp Fire that destroyed Paradise, CA. We got a juvenile bobcat with horrible burns to his paws and feet. It was about two to three weeks after the Camp Fire, so he’d been out all that time. He was emaciated and badly injured. We looked at him and knew his wounds were more than we could handle. We gave him pain

meds and took him to a vet the next day. She said, “Well, we can clean these and wrap them, but this cat needs to go to UC Davis Vet School.” The next day, I went in and met Jamie Peyton, the vet who pioneered the tilapia fish skin treatment for burns and severe wounds. She’s learned how to process the fish skin to create a biological bandage out of it. It’s about a three-day process to make it into a sterile biological bandage. In 2017, for the first time, she used tilapia fish skin on bears and lions from the Thomas Fire in Southern California. When we got this bobcat on the table she said, “These are fifth degree burns.” I said, “Excuse me? I never heard of anything past third.” She said, “No, there’s fourth, fifth, and sixth. If you have fifth degree, it’s all the way to the bone.” I said, “Oh, so we need to euthanize him. Right?” She said, “No, I can treat this.” I said, “But is he going to be releasable? If he’s not going to be released, he is a euthanasia candidate.” She said, “He’s burned off the pads of his paws, and those will not grow back. It will grow back skin, but it will toughen and callous. It will never be as thick and as hard as the original pads were on his feet, but he will be fine. He may not be the king of the jungle, but he will be able to hunt and take care of himself and climb trees.” I said, “My final question is, what are we putting this cat through to do this? To my understanding, there is nothing more painful than burns. Are we torturing him

to get him to that spot?” She said, “I’m a pain specialist and work with the burn unit at UC Davis Med Center for people. My goal is to control their pain and attack it from every possible angle. I know I’m doing that, because these animals come out of anesthesia and walk, where before they were crawling on their elbows. They eat and try to get away from us. They are hissing and spitting at us. They aren’t giving up. They aren’t lying curled up in a ball in miserable pain. They want to live. I think he has a good chance.” She put tilapia fish skin on all four paws that day. I took him back Monday for his bandage change, and all of the bone was covered with tissue. Now it wasn’t anywhere near fully healed, but in just three days, it was absolutely amazing to see the healing process so far along. I started working with Jamie, and her husband who is also a veterinarian, and some of the other vets at Davis. I learned that medical science had reached a point at which you can treat some of these animals that are seriously injured and get them back out to the wild.

The bobcat was with us for eleven weeks, after which we returned him to the wild. We watched him climb a tree and be mad at us. We took him up to the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve; as close to Paradise as we could get him. CDFW has found in its studies that when they release these animals – bears or lions, or bobcats, they go home. So now, rather than take them far away, they try to get them as close

to their original capture site as possible, but obviously not in a burned area. They don’t want them traveling across freeways and hundreds of miles trying to get home. Another example of this ‘Lava Bob’, brought to us from the Lava Fire near Weed, California. We released him within eight miles of his original territory, a distance which he could cover in no time. He’s basically in his home territory. He’ll stay near where he was released because it is so close to the burned area, but is lush and has lots of game for him to eat.

Treating the burned animals changed my thinking about the kinds of injuries we can successfully treat. The Campfire bobcat was our first burn patient, and it was serendipitous that he came in. With Dr. Peyton’s help, we learned we could treat and rehabilitate these animals, and give them a second chance at life in the wild.

The next wonderful thing that Jamie did was start the Wildlife Disaster Network (WDN). Now, in disaster situations if you see wildlife in need there’s an 800 number to call: 800/942-6459. It’s answered by veterinarians who, if at all possible, will mount a search and rescue effort.

We got eleven animals in 2021 from the fires. Typically, we get two or three. Now every time a fire breaks out GCWR contacts the fire Incident Commander making sure that animal control, firemen, ambulance, or any first responders can be coordinated with WDN. Any of the people out there in domestic search and rescue, or doing

welfare checks, can call WDN if they see wildlife in need.

People hear about fires, and all the houses lost, and people evacuated. What I want them to think about is what happened to all the creatures of the forest? Because they don't all run away. Jamie and her husband tracked and found one of the bears we cared for in 2021. He was in such bad shape, that little cub. They were six inches deep in ash. They gave him IV fluids in the field to save his life. They said the dead animals you see out there is just sickening. They aren't all escaping. Especially the mega fires we are seeing more frequently move so fast that many of the animals can't get away. In 2021 we didn't see any injured adults. There was one injured adult in Tahoe that ended up being euthanized in the field, because the fire was coming and they couldn't capture him. He was just crawling on his elbows; he was so badly burned, so they put him out of his misery. Because these fires are so hot and fast, the big bears climb trees to escape. But they are so heavy that they can only get up a tree so far. Thankfully the cubs are able to go all the way to the tops of the trees. What they sometimes would find was a cub that was sitting next to its dead mom who had died in the fire. The cub had finally come down the tree after everything quieted down. I think that's what people need to be aware of. The animals foretell what's going to happen to us humans if we don't take climate change

seriously. It's not just about running your air conditioning longer to stay comfortable because the climate is warmer. We've got to really think about what we do about this, and what our impact is on the overall environment, including climate change.

Not just us but every rescue group in Northern CA had more animals in 2022. We received a thousand more animals than we did last year, and that was a record year for us. We attributed it to all the fire prevention work, as I call it, which is cutting trees and brush to prevent fires. Typically, we always tell people to cut in November-December-January, or December-January-February, when it's still the dead of winter. The tree cutting and brush clearing is going on now year round for two reasons. The power companies clearly need to clean up around their equipment for safety, and private home owners have to clean up to keep their fire insurance. Almost everybody I know in this area had their fire insurance cancelled. When this happens, your only option is to get a California Fair Plan policy. Then they send out inspectors who will say this tree and this tree and this tree have to come down in thirty days, and you have no choice. It is the middle of spring; it's baby season and you have to take the trees down. I think a lot of people don't realize that trees are full of life, even dead trees. I never cut down a dead tree on my property prior to this, because it is home to so many animals, and the live trees are

home to even more animals. It is all the song birds that nest in the trees, all the cavity dwellers, the woodpeckers, the barn owls, and the foxes that spend half their time up in the trees. Foxes climb as well as the cats. And raccoons will put their babies up in trees. A lot of wildlife use that tree canopy as home and as a source for food. There are seeds and acorns and baby birds and eggs to be eaten by raccoons and other animals. So it is a whole cycle of life, an ecosystem, that gets destroyed when the trees get taken down. The result is a huge rise in the number of animals brought in to us. They at least have a second chance. But for the much larger number that don't make it to us, it's the end. We are seeing approximately 1000 more animals each year. People are told to just clear your property and they don't consider the consequences of that.

I think we are going to see a huge shift in population, because some of these burned areas are no longer habitable with these mega-fires that we're having. Back in the old days forests would burn, but a lot of times they would be quick burning fires and wouldn't kill the trees necessarily. They would burn the bottom of the trunks. A lot of seeds need that fire to start up again, and those forests would regenerate. What we are seeing with these huge white hot mega-fires is that there is nothing left for the animals to go back to. So the question is "Where are all those animals going to go?" I hear about the

bears in the Auburn area now after we lost thousands of acres with the River Fire in Colfax. That area is not habitable anymore. Where are those bears and other animals going to go? They're all out looking for new territory and shifting. Then as human population growth continues, we keep building further and further into wildlife territory. I don't see a good ending for any of it, frankly. I don't have an answer, and don't expect a Walt Disney ending, unfortunately.

We received our bear permit in 2021, and are 1 of only 4 rehab centers in the state to have a bear permit. We raised three burned bears from the fires last year, and we worked closely with California Department of Fish and Wildlife on that, and on the releases. The animals got collared, which a lot of people hate, but they are breakaway collars they hoped would stay on a month. The collar is contained by elastic that rots in the sun pretty quickly. If the bear tries really hard it can use its claws to break it. They typically don't even last a month on them, but any information we can get on these released animals is golden, and will help future bears by letting us know where to release them, how long to keep them in captivity, and what are good spots with a lot of food for them? Those are the kinds of things we're hoping to learn. CDFW also puts out trail cams which give us even more valuable information. What condition are they in? Have they

maintained their weight? We need the science. We can't make good decisions without data, and collars and trail cams are the only way we're going to get the data.

We got the video from Fish and Wildlife showing the release of the two bears from the Dixie Fire (which is also on our YouTube channel). It was a beautiful release. They came out of their bear cages and just ran as fast as they could, as far away as they could, and climbed trees. It was an all-day event just to capture them and drive them four or five hours to release. We of course put news about the releases on Facebook and Instagram. We got a lot of positive feedback about that. A lot of people who donated to help us feed those hungry animals appreciated getting an update and seeing them out in the wild.

There's a really good video on our YouTube channel that tells the story of Lava Bob, the bobcat from the Lava Fire that I mentioned earlier. It shows his treatment all the way through to release. He was an adult bobcat who came in at 14 pounds, and should have weighed 30 pounds. He was almost dead. When he left he weighed over 30 pounds. He was a big boy.

Is it ever appropriate for a human to establish a personal relationship with a wild animal?

I don't think so. There's a squirrel that comes to my backyard, and we have a personal love/hate relationship, (*laughs*) mostly because he gets my dogs riled up.

But beyond knowing the animal because you're used to seeing him living in your world, they don't make good pets. They shouldn't be pets. I believe they should be in the wild and be wild animals. I don't think it's in anybody's best interest to habituate wild animals. We took in a lot more imprinted animals because of Covid. A lot of people at home were thinking, "Oh, I could raise this baby squirrel," or this baby fox, or this baby coyote. It presents a real difficult situation for us because we cannot release imprinted animals. If you're out walking in your backyard and a fox walks up to you, you're probably going to think it's rabid. It's not safe for the animal, or for us to release imprinted animals. Imprinted animals have to be placed in a sanctuary or euthanized.

Why is it acceptable to eat some animals and not others?

I think that's a very personal decision. Americans are so besotted with their cats and dogs. Rightfully so. I am too. I have four dogs. Could I imagine eating one of them? No. But I think there are cultural differences, and we have to respect those and those working for change have to respect those. Why is it okay to eat some and not others? If you think eating animals is okay, it would be hard to say, why can't I eat all animals, right?

These are emotional questions, and everybody has to make their own decision, but I think regarding what other cultures

do, we have to try to respect that, and the answer is not to just roll in and say this is horrible without explaining why we believe that. A lot of it comes down to economics and education. If someone is an animal meat farmer and you want them to stop, you had better be prepared to help them understand why and help find a new source of income

As a little kid on the farm, we ate meat every day. It was just part of my upbringing. And I knew the name of the animal we were eating. But as a child, you just do what your parents do and tell you to do. It's not until about age 12 or 13 when I started to question those things and look at them differently. There were some other issues around how animals were treated, and over-population issues with cats that I disagreed vehemently with when I was old enough to know better. It's a tough one, because people are so emotional about it. Is it okay to eat animals? If they are raised humanely and organically, I think yes. Do I need to eat them? No. Our ancestors had to hunt; that is all they had to eat. Native Americans especially respected the animals that they had to hunt. They used every bit of the animal.

Our society is changing. Right now you can go to the grocery store, buy a pound of chicken, and have no idea where it came from, or how it was raised. I don't approve of that at all. But then again, organic, and humanely raised meat is very expensive. So how does the person who is living

paycheck to paycheck afford that? It's such a tangled web, and so emotional for a lot of different reasons, that again, I try to keep an open mind, and respect everybody's choices.

I occasionally eat some beef or chicken, but if I do, it's local, and raised like my parents raised animals when I was a kid. The little calf grows up with its mom, not in a feed lot. I don't call myself so much an animal rights activist as much as an animal welfare activist. I try to respect everyone's beliefs, be they carnivores, vegans, or vegetarians. If people want to eat meat, I just hope that they're eating organic, truly humanely raised animals.

How would you like to see the relationship between people and animals improve?

One word: coexist. Not a day goes by that I don't see on Facebook about the skunks under someone's deck, or a fox has baby kits in my yard. If you don't want skunks under your deck, you need to exclude them. You need to make it so they can't go under your deck, or under your shed. Humans have a responsibility to manage their property, their pets, their animals, and their livestock, in such a way that the wildlife won't impact them. I think all the responsibility lies on the side of the humans.

It's illegal for us to take any animal, nuisance or just accidentally trapped, and relocate it, in the State of California.

To trap, you either have to kill it, or release it where you trapped it. Everybody calls the trapper, and thinks that the animals just get taken, oh, down to the river. Well, no, they don't. They get killed if the trapper takes them away. A lot of people don't understand that. A lot of people say that they are animal lovers. "I'm an animal lover -well, except for the skunks" (or except for the raccoons, or except for the squirrels). I just want to say, if you're an animal lover, you're an animal lover. You don't discriminate. You love them all. Just like we should with people, right? We're all humans. We're all just trying to survive, and raise our children, and live a decent life. People need to learn to coexist, especially people who are moving into rural areas. The cities are expanding; look at Rocklin and Roseville and Lincoln. They just think those are empty fields out there, but they are just teeming with life. People need to appreciate that and understand the impact on everyone when destroying the ecosystem.

It comes back to coexisting. Think about what you're doing with your land. And sure, you can farm it if you want, but let's try to think about the wild neighbors that were here first, and what you're doing to them, and their life, and their territory. I don't know how you get people to do that.

What should the role of government be regarding the protection/preservation of animals?

I think there should be more protection of all the animals. We work with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The people I know at CDFW do what they can with the resources they have. They are trying to do the right thing within the rules and regulations that are before them.

The virus crossover issue: the 'spillover' of viruses, pathogens from animals to people. Why is this not getting more attention during the pandemic? How can we raise the issue in order to change how we interact with other species?

I think it goes back to culture and economy. You shut down those wet markets, how are those people going to live? So it's not as easy as just shutting down the wet markets. The governments have to be willing to do that, but then they have to be able to provide some other source of income, some other jobs, for the people that are bringing animals to the wet markets, and for the people who own the stand in the wet markets. I hear it talked about some in the news, but maybe it should be talked about more. With Covid, for instance, we know it can go to animals. Zoo animals have died of Covid. But I think the bigger issue of wet markets and improperly handling animals is just going to come down to politics, culture, and economy. A three-pronged sword.

I spend all my time taking care of this wildlife group, and making sure that we have funding to keep this operation going. You can imagine with over 720 animals right now in our care, just the salaries alone for paid staff is daunting. We use volunteers as much as we can, but we're here at least 12 to 15 hours a day. I have the luxury of being able to donate my time and energy into this, but they can't. Again, I call myself an animal welfare activist. I want everything to be cared for properly, and humanely.

I started in my kitchen 30 years ago. Now look where I am! It's work. I had a daughter who was ten when I started,

in '91. Because I was doing fifty fawns a year, my husband said, "She never feeds us, because we don't have spots." *(laughs)* "Yeah, you guys can take care of yourselves. I have to take care of these babies that have nobody." My daughter is on our board and is always rescuing animals. She is an animal nut who didn't fall far from the tree. She contributes as much as she can to GCWR but has to work full time.

What gives you joy about this work?

The releases. It's all about the releases. That's why I do this, because those animals get back to the wild. That's our reward.

**Wildlife Disaster
Network (WDN)**

*If you see wildlife in need
there's an 800 number to
call: 800-942-6459*

Joan Flinn

VOLUNTEER, GOLD COUNTRY WILDLIFE RESCUE



Joan with owls

“We all live on this planet, and animals have a place in our environment just like we do. They should be allowed that spot. I had to take a turtle in to be euthanized last week. Somebody had run over it, and the shell was all cracked. That is irresponsible. People should give them their space, not injure them, and not take them out of the environment. Even though there may be things like skunks which you don’t want to have around your house, they do their job, and are entitled to be wherever they need to be.”

I grew up with lots of animals. We had property in the country, and cows, sheep, pigs, and chickens. I can't say that I was necessarily responsible for their care, but I was raised around them. We always had barn cats, kittens, and dogs. We moved up from LA a little over 20 years ago. It was a new place, and we didn't know anybody. My husband retired, and I was looking for things to do. I saw an ad in the paper for a volunteer orientation that Gold Country Wildlife Rescue was doing. So I went, and it was very interesting. They had ambassador birds, displays, and a speaker who told what they do. It was a very small group at the time. This was 15 years ago, but I can't be totally accurate on that. Time flies.

They had just moved into a new facility, a Victorian house, but it was very small. I've worked there as they've grown and moved from one place to another, and we are now in our third place since I joined. It's just been a very rapid growth of the organization, as far as the number of animals we take in, and the number of volunteers, and staff. As a volunteer I assist the staff in animal care, cage cleaning, dish washing, and feeding animals. I just learned on-the-go about handling the animals, being comfortable around them, and how to help the techs care for them, like holding the animals so they can do whatever they have to do. I was the treasurer for a couple of years, when the budget was a whole lot less than it is

now. I was on the board for about four to five years.

I especially enjoy working with the baby birds, learning what to feed them, and how often, because if you feed them wrong, you can injure them. It is a lot of fun. I learned how to feed baby mammals, give them formula, and do it safely, so that they don't choke on too much formula.

Most of the direct animal care these days is done by the techs and the interns. The volunteers do the food prep, the cage cleaning, and changing out the liners of the cages, and things like that. I build cages, and do some construction and repairs. Somebody has to do it. (*laughs*) Recently I've been doing most of my work from home. During baby season, when there are a lot of animals in there at once, I feed baby birds every thirty minutes, and just whatever needs to be done. The birds are my favorite. I love seeing the little baby birds sit up there, open their mouths, and wait to have something put in it.

When we first moved up here from LA, I was just amazed at the number of birds around here. It's just mind-boggling to me. I look in my yard, and there are maybe 50 birds out there. They're all different. There's such a variety of feathers, colors, sizes, and habits with the birds that I find very interesting. I studied birds actually when I came up here too. I did it on my own, so I may not be fully accurate, but I think I am.

There are some birds that don't do

anything for me. You try to feed them and they are all on top of one another, pushing and shoving. But the little mockingbirds just sit there, and are so polite. They open their mouths and line up to be fed. They're really cute. They're one of my favorites. I try to do at least one shift a week. I come in a week later, and see all the advances that they've made in one week. It's just amazing. And I am totally amazed what the parents do in the wild to feed those babies, and get them on their way. I'm very impressed with the wildlife, how they take care of their own, and raise their family. I have not seen a case of bad parenting in a bird. (*laughs*) It seems like lately though, we've been getting a lot more mammals in than when I first got here. It used to be almost all birds. Now we get some squirrels, possums, foxes, raccoons, and bears. All those require a lot more food and a lot longer stay as they don't grow up as fast.

At the moment I have an adult owl who was found in somebody's yard on the ground, and not flying. They brought him in from Marysville which is quite a ways away. In the beginning we put him in an enclosure when he couldn't get off the ground, but then gradually he finally flew to the top of the carrier, and then I took him home. Now he flies around through the cage easily, but he is not ready to be released yet, because he still has some problems with one of his wings. When he lands that wing doesn't come into his

body quite like the other wing. Eventually it does, but it is out for a while, and that's not natural. It might be some swelling, or some soft tissue damage that still needs to heal. I wait until I hear from the animal care person that he's ready to be released. I don't make that decision. My husband and I were able to take him to his capture address and release him.

A couple of years ago at the end of baby season in the fall when things were really slowing down, there was a big outbreak of botulism in the lakes in Nevada affecting all the ducks. They were dying and paralyzed. There was a group of volunteers that would bring down the ones that were salvageable to us. Every day we would get boxes full of ducks. They would all be stacked in there like cord wood. Botulism paralyzes them. They can't hold their heads up or stand. We'd use a towel like a dam around them that would hold them in place and upright. They had to be tube fed multiple times a day. It just took a huge number of people to do that. As some of them started to get better, they would be moved to another cage together. We just had hundreds of ducks. A lot of them eventually got released.

GCWR has been wonderful for the area, and it's just grown so fast. Every year the number of animals we've brought in almost doubles. So we've had growing pains. There have been so many interesting cases. With our Facebook posts I get to follow a lot of the animals. We have a wonderful

Facebook page, which is an education tool for the community, and for our followers. It tells the history of a certain animal, or a certain species, or more about the organization.

We have certain people that specialize in public education. The two that I'm thinking of work with animals that are in their care. Greg Grimm has a red-shouldered hawk that lives with him, and Christy Berger has crows and ravens. They take them out to classrooms and festivals. Rather than seeing them way up in a tree somewhere, people can see them up close, really study them, and get to know them. These animals are not releasable, so the fact that they're around people is not an issue.

What do you want people to learn about wildlife to help their well-being?

Let them be wild. Don't try to make them do something that they wouldn't naturally do. Don't feed them. Let them be. You can plant plants that will attract and house wildlife in your yard. If you find an injured animal, or an animal down, make sure you get help for it. We're seeing so many animals coming in now, because people are really aware of the fact that we are here, and can help the animals. If they bring it in, it will be taken care of. Whereas before, people would say, "I don't know what to do. I found this nest down. What am I going to do?"

How would you like to see the relationship between people and animals improve?

We all live on this planet, and animals have a place in our environment just like we do. They should be allowed that spot. I had to take a turtle in to be euthanized last week. Somebody had run over it, and the shell was all cracked. That is irresponsible. People should give them their space, not injure them, and not take them out of the environment. Even though there may be things like skunks which you don't want to have around your house, they do their job, and are entitled to be wherever they need to be.

Is it ever appropriate to establish a bond with a wild animal?

We have some that are non-releasable, and therefore we need to be able to handle them, and take them for educational purposes. You have to have a bond with an animal like that, just so that you have control over them, and they're not going to injure somebody, or yourself. But they're still wild at that point. There's only so much you can do as far as build a bond with them. They still would rather be wild than with us.

I had an owl last year in my cage who had been raised as a baby in captivity, and rescued. We call it habituated. It had had too much human contact, and wanted to be with me, hand fed, and taken care of. That was probably my closest relationship

with a wild animal. I was trying to wean him away from being around me. For some reason, we don't really know why, he died. It was hard. It wasn't in his best interest to be around humans. The ones I have in my cages at home, I try to avoid eye contact, talking, or any more interactions with them than I have to, because they will eventually be released. All the rest of them were released, and did fine.

Why is it acceptable to eat some animals and not others?

It's probably cultural, passed down that certain things taste good, or are okay to eat. I don't know why we eat some things. Every once in a while I question that myself. If it looks like an animal, to me it's not as appetizing.

We are really interested in the crossover issue, the spillover of a virus from animals to people. Why isn't it getting more attention during this pandemic? Do you have any thought about why we're not addressing that?

Actually it can go the other way too: people to animals. I think it's all part of the research and the learning about how these things develop. We didn't know in the beginning. We just dealt with the consequences. If we avoided those animals that we were crossing over from, would we eliminate the disease? No, we were passing it from human to human at that

point. There are so many world issues and this is not one that the press chooses to highlight.

What do you think the present and future consequences of global warming are for both wild and domestic animals?

I see that there really is an issue with global warming. I think their habitats are going to change, where they live, and they're going to be more in our environment, maybe living farther away. Animals that need very cold climates are going to have to adapt to warmer ones, and come closer to humans rather than out on the ice floes. The ones around here are probably going to have to deal with water availability, habitat change, and how that affects us and our relationship to them.

What would you like to see happen in the future to improve our relationship with our fellow creatures?

It would be helpful to teach children to understand the place of animals in their environment, and how they can help them survive without making an impact on their lives. Let them be wild and in their environment, and hopefully, not have so much interaction between people and wildlife. Just let them live their life. We certainly are seeing a lot more animals being brought in. People, especially in this community, are more aware that we're

here to help those who are injured or orphaned. There's always somebody at the door with an animal, and so people are out in the environment more. They're seeing these animals, and know that they can be helped, which is great, because the more we can get them back out there, the better we'll be.

We save a whole bunch of them. Some of them have to be euthanized, because they're injured to a point where they can't be fixed, but then they don't suffer. If you leave them out in the wild, they'll just suffer until they die. But we are able to save a lot of the animals and get them released.

Is there anything else you would like to see in the future for GCWR?

We need more volunteers! More volunteers means better care for the animals. I am looking forward to the completion of the new property construction site. I will be great to have all the space and a place for education opportunities.

What brings you joy doing this work?

I find joy in connecting with the lives of these wild critters, watching them develop, observing their habits at different life stages, and eventually seeing them released.



“It would be helpful to teach children to understand the place of animals in their environment, and how they can help them survive without making an impact on their lives. Let them be wild and in their environment, and hopefully not have so much interaction between people and wildlife. Just let them live their life. We certainly are seeing a lot more animals being brought in. People, especially in this community, are more aware that we're here to help those who are injured or orphaned. There's always somebody at the door with an animal, and so people are out in the environment more.”

Corky Quirk

FOUNDER, NORCAL BATS; PROGRAM COORDINATOR, YOLO BASIN FOUNDATION



Corky with bat

“There’s a whole world 10,000 feet up with insects that I knew nothing about, and probably never would have until I learned that the Mexican free-tail bat frequently hunts there. Until I learned about them I had no idea how gentle and calm the individuals were. I don’t consider bats companions. I consider them ambassadors for their species. They’re not looking to me for companionship. They tolerate me. I wouldn’t say they like me. They don’t seek me out. If I open up their cage, they don’t come running. It’s not like going home, and your dog or your cat might want to sit with you. They’re not doing that. They allow me to hold them. They give me that privilege. The difference though that these individuals make for their species is huge. People don’t have that opportunity to meet them and when they do it begins to change their minds. Then when there is a colony of bats that moves into the eaves of their house maybe they won’t panic and try to kill them.”

When I was growing up I wasn't so much directly involved with animals, but definitely with the environment. My parents were great believers in getting us outdoors, visiting the State and National Parks, going camping, and learning in those ways. We didn't have many pets and animals in the home.

I've always loved the underdog and environmental education. Teaching about nature is something I've done most of my life. If you'd asked me 15 years ago would I be working with bats, I would have said, "Well, they're interesting, but maybe not so much."

My degree is in Natural Resources with an emphasis in Environmental Education so I had a broad knowledge of a lot of things. Then I took a job at Yolo Basin Foundation teaching kids about birds and wetlands. I started learning more about the bats here at the Yolo Causeway and just found them fascinating. The more I learned about them, the more I wanted to learn and I was encouraged to develop that interest. There was a person who would contract two or three times a year to do some bat programming. She did wildlife rescue with the bats and education programs, bringing them out to schools so I mentored with her. Then she retired and that just left an open niche so I stumbled upon it. As far as my work with bats you could consider it mostly self-taught. I've taken classes and workshops and done a lot of personal reading. Also they've lived

in my home one way or another since 2004, so I have that experience.

I've always been fascinated by flight and those that have the amazing ability to fly. I just think it would be amazing to be able to fly. Then like I said, the underdog has always had a soft spot for my heart too and bats are definitely an underdog, very unappreciated, very misunderstood and they fly! The combination just sort of ran away with me. Also I like environmental education and bats are something that many people don't know much about, or if they thought they knew something it was fear based rather than within reality.

Bats are vital to our ecosystem. They not only are important for nature in general, but hugely economically important to agriculture. Bats eat insects. The Central Valley of California is a huge agricultural community. Bats are saving farmers billions of dollars in reduced pesticide use and reduced crop loss. Pesticides certainly are not healthy for humans either. Even if a farmer is not an organic farmer, if they can use less insecticides, that's good for us health-wise and also good for our wallets.

I have had the opportunity here and there to talk with groups. One time I talked with squab farmers. Squabs are pigeons, and they grow them for meat. In Modesto, they were having a problem with Pigeon Pox which is insect spread. The only farmer in their community who had no Pox in his birds was the one who had a

barn full of bats. So they asked me to come and talk to the farmers and that was pretty cool. Here in the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area there is a lot of rice that's grown. The farmer tells me because they're in a wildlife area he's not allowed to use insecticides. That's okay with him, because he's also never found an army worm which is the caterpillar stage of a moth. The Mexican free-tailed bats who live in the Bypass are moth specialists. He said, "I don't need to use insecticides." It is cheaper for him, and just beneficial all the way around. And who wants insecticides on their food?

Many counties including Yolo County have Integrated Pest Management farm advisors. Yolo County is a big farm community. Their farm advisor has a very pro multi-nature approach to reducing insecticide use. She works heavily with the organic farmers too who are always looking for alternatives.

I wish there were a way to import bats or relocate them to the farms. What farmers will do is put up bat houses to give bats a roosting location. Then it's a matter of putting it in the right place and hoping for the best. Bats don't relocate well. They have their own ideas of where they want to be and they can fly long distances. Around here our biggest bat house bats are the Mexican free-tailed bats which are the ones in the causeway. They love the heat. Placing a bat house east facing for the morning sun high on a building is best. A pole is okay, but bat houses in

trees in California don't tend to work. There is too much shade and fluctuation of temperature. Also too many predators can get in there.

Do you have a favorite bat experience?

I was at a kindergarten sharing about the bats. It was the last class of the day and so parents were starting to show up. One little girl started to cry. I thought, oh my goodness I scared her or I didn't do my job well enough, because I didn't walk her over that hump. The mom came up afterwards and said, "Each of these bats is injured, right?" I had told them that they couldn't fly any more. She said, "My daughter said you're the bat lady and what happened to your wings? She is upset because you can't fly anymore." I thought it was so sweet. A little five-year-old.

When I go to an event, a lot of people will come up and talk to me at the table about bats. I also will have usually adults stand back because they're afraid. Their kid might come up because their kid is curious. Eventually when the adult goes, "Wow! I didn't realize!" Then I've done my job. I get that experience fairly regularly at public events.

Do you see any interesting interactions between bats?

I think it's fascinating that many species will hang out together. We certainly wouldn't see humans hanging out with

orangutans, chimpanzees, and great apes because we're too different. There are bat species that wouldn't hang out with each other, but many of them do. It's not uncommon for individual bats to choose to be with the same other individual in the cage regularly. Sometimes they are the same species; often they're not. I think we could learn something from that. They do make friends. They know each other by sound, smell and vision much like we do.

A mother bat usually has one baby. There are exceptions, but in general one baby per year. She is a very good mother. She nurses her baby and takes care of it. She hangs out with other moms who also are taking care of their babies. They form long-term social relations. They know each other, their young and others in their colony. I think they're pretty intelligent. They can't use tools, which often we think of tools as being the defining form of intelligence, but they don't need them. They learn from me and from each other. I can teach them to eat from a bowl which is really a foreign concept to an animal who catches insects by flying. I can have a bat that doesn't know how to eat from a bowl join a colony and learn to eat from a bowl from the other individuals. So there's some kind of communication going on there. They're very cool.

People fear bats and there really isn't a need for fear. They are calm animals and not aggressive. Even if an individual bat is sick, it's not aggressive. They don't attack us. There is so much bad information out there; mythology and Hollywood movies ... so the whole impression of them is skewed. If I had a magic wand, I would help people understand that many of those fears out there are not real and give them a basic education about wildlife. We're

very removed from our environment. Many people live in a concrete community where they just don't see insects and kill them around their home. There are fewer birds around also. If a lizard shows up, they're

afraid of that too.

Prior to COVID-19 we had about 4,000 kids a year coming out here, just one class at a time with a full day. The number of kids that have never gotten their hands dirty is just sad. I find that rather scary, because when they're that removed it's very hard to appreciate it. If we don't appreciate it, then we don't protect it. If we don't protect it, it will affect us ultimately. If we continue to kill the insects at the rate we're killing them, we're not going to do well either, because so many of the things we depend on depend on insects: our pollination, our decomposition, food for many of the things that we enjoy eating

“My hope is that the individual ambassadors save a wild colony by helping somebody understand more about them. We tend to fear what we don't know.”

eat insects whether that is fish or ducks or whatever. So it's not just bats.

What are the main things you learned from bats?

I learned a lot about some things I never would have even thought about. There's a whole world 10,000 feet up with insects that I knew nothing about, and probably never would have until I learned that the Mexican free-tailed bat frequently hunts there. Until I learned about them, I had no idea how gentle and calm the individuals were. There are 1,462 species of bats. They're really different from each other genetically. We just don't realize that. They're more different from each other than we are from a chimpanzee. I know I'm related to a chimpanzee, but we also are very different. These bats are actually more different from each other than we are from many of our primate friends.

I don't consider bats companions. I consider them ambassadors for their species. They're not looking to me for companionship. They tolerate me. I wouldn't say they like me. They don't seek me out. If I open up their cage, they don't come running. It's not like going home, and your dog or your cat might want to sit with you. They're not doing that. They allow me to hold them. They give me that privilege. The difference that these individuals make for their species is huge. That's because like your reaction, "Well, I didn't realize they were so cute." Or

"Look at that face." People don't have that opportunity to meet them and when they do, it begins to change their minds.

Then when there is a colony of bats that moves into the eaves of their house maybe they won't panic and try to kill them. So my hope is that the individual ambassadors save a wild colony by helping somebody understand more about them. We tend to fear what we don't know. Historically it wasn't real safe for humans to be out at night. Prior to having the level of control that we have now, if you were living here 200 years ago you probably weren't hanging out at night because there were other animals that were out at night. Big ones. *(laughs)*

Do you think there needs to be more legislation to protect bats?

As far as legislation to protect bats there are a couple of things I'd like to see. One is protecting bats during maternity season. There are regulations that the Fish and Game Code has, but they are broad and protect native mammals. It's illegal to harass native wildlife, but I'd love to see something more specific that says you cannot exclude bats during maternity season. Most pest control companies won't. It's not ethical. It's technically illegal, although not heavily prosecuted, but if it was on the books then it could be enforced.

There are some counties where the people understand that not all bats have

rabies. It varies heavily from county to county, when it comes to a person who finds a bat at their house. Just because that bat is roosting over your front door doesn't mean you're going to get sick from rabies. In fact, likely it's not sick at all. There are other counties that are like, "Oh my god, you saw a bat? We'd better kill it." I wish that there was a broader understanding. I don't know that that's legislation; I think that's education and I do try to work on that. I know that there are people doing similar things to what I do in other part of the state. They're trying to work with their animal control. A lot of times it just depends on who's at the top and then what government agency is responsible.

What is your vision of animal rights? How would you like to define that?

I'm not a PETA person. I am certainly not an extremist on protecting animal rights. What I would like to see is the animal control community understand what's normal. If a bat is roosting above head height, it's probably just normal, versus a bat on the ground that your child picked up. That's not normal. We need to protect human health, but finding some kind of reasonable balance. I don't think that it needs to be an extreme.

What is your opinion about the virus crossover that has happened that likely created COVID and other diseases. What are we doing wrong in our interaction with animals that creates these situations?

There are almost eight billion humans on this planet. With our population the size it is we are more likely to enter areas where we never have been before, and therefore expose our species to diseases that we never have been around before. Then we capture animals and take them out of their habitat which is high stress. High stress situations cause the shed of virus. Then we mix them up with species they never normally would be around ultimately, potentially creating a new virus. Then we jump in an airplane and fly someplace else and carry those things with us. I don't think we need to be going so deep into tropical areas like we do and capturing animals for our pleasure.

I think it would be healthier for the planet if the human population was smaller. I don't know how to do that. The choices we make such as how large we choose to have our families be are personal decisions but they certainly affect the planet.

How do you feel about zoos and animals used to perform for humans?

I'm more interested in how they are properly cared-for rather than whether animals are used to be shown. Although

often in the animal community people feel it is inappropriate to use animals in shows, I feel as a society we are really separated from the environment and some animals. Often that is the only time that a child or even an adult might see that animal. If you don't see them, you often don't get a connection. Animals in a zoo or the same thing for some of the aquatic parks, if they are properly cared-for and have enrichment available, people that come to the zoo may form a connection which may then extend to their native habitat.

What about working animals?

Again if they are ethically treated, I personally don't have a problem with that. Often working dogs seem to enjoy their work and some of those dogs would not be appropriate as house pets. Actually I'd worry more about herding dogs that are kept as house pets because they don't get that enrichment. It is not uncommon for people to choose to bring in a herding dog into their life because they are a runner, but they are not prepared for the reality of having one.

Is it ever appropriate for someone to keep a wild animal as a pet?

That is such a fine line. The ambassador bats that I use for the program are all injured wildlife, but they are not pets. I try to allow them to live away from people as much as I can except when I use them in a show. The only reason we use them

in the show is because if people don't see them and don't connect with them then they fear them. They tend to get over that when they actually meet the animals. The problem with the native species that I see to try to make them into pets, first of all they are always wild. They are not domesticated like dogs and cats with their thousand years of breeding to make them comfortable around people. The other is I would be concerned that it would lead to people wanting to take wildlife out of the wild and keep them as pets and that is inappropriate.

Why is it acceptable to eat some animals and not others?

I actually don't know. I don't have a problem with ethical hunting. I don't have an issue when people are carnivores. Again, I look at the ethics. We look at how many of what we consider acceptable to eat often are not treated well in captivity. The way chickens are housed for example. It affects their flock when a duck in the wild is taken, but that animal at least has an opportunity to not live in a little cage. We tend to eat herbivores. We don't tend to eat carnivores and omnivores. I assume it has something to do with flavor. Some cultures eat dogs and some eat anything. I don't live in those cultures and try really hard not to judge them. In some cultures it is not acceptable to eat cows and in the US it is.

Are you a vegetarian or vegan?

I tend to be not quite a vegetarian mostly because my whole family isn't, but I tend to lean in that direction. I don't eat meat often.

Any other bat stories you want to share?

I thoroughly enjoy watching peoples' reaction out at the Bypass when the bats come out from under the freeway. And the awe. It is amazing and it is right there in our backyard, and so many people for whatever reason don't realize that. They come on the tour and they're just amazed. They often come back and maybe explore the wildlife area in other ways. I really like these mixed emotions that people share about the falcon hunting the wildlife. I also really like it when I have a child in a classroom or a parent at a community event who stands back and is obviously fearful of the bat, and then slowly over the

course of the presentation they move up. Often by the end they will say, "I had no idea how amazing they are and what they do. They weren't going to attack me, but I was afraid of them." That makes such a difference to that individual and hopefully to the bats. The goal is to protect the ones that remain in the wild by using the ones who can't.

How does global warming affect bats?

I think there will be a number of species that will suffer significantly. As we've seen historically we've had ebbs and flows of climate, now accelerated because of our interactions. The time frame of evolution may not exist for at least some of the species. At least bats fly and are not walking from one place to another. And because they can fly, with habitats as disjointed as they are, they actually might be able to make it to the next appropriate habitat. They may not,



but they might. Compare that with an animal that is bound to land and can't get from the habitat islands that they live on surrounded by humans. And the plants don't move quickly; their seeds might go but depending on the kind of plants, they may not mature fast enough to ever make those moves. That will affect the insect world and that will affect bats. However, for bats I see other larger problems. Certainly global warming is going to be an issue, but their habitat loss and pesticide use are huge elements for longevity of the bat. Pesticides potentially affect their brains and bodies like it affects our own. Habitat loss takes away potential hunting and roosting areas.

What gives you joy doing this work?

I've always liked the under-dog. Bats are incredibly valuable to the ecosystem and financially for pest control. They are so misunderstood. When I can change minds and see somebody light up, that gives me joy. I feel like I've made a difference over time. When I started doing this in 2004 I way more often ran into people who were afraid. I now run into people who say, "I really like bats."

¹ The Yolo Bypass is flood protection for the surrounding communities when the Sacramento River fills and overflows its banks. Portions of the bypass are farmed and part of it is the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area.

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HOLY COW

Changing tacks might work
considering our mess
Maybe we should revere and worship
COWS
Our Celtic ancestors fought
bloody hacking battles over them
Remember COOLEY'S CATTLE RAID*
Of course you do
Cows have been with us
almost as long as dogs
Maybe we should stop killing and eating their flesh
Look them in the eye if you dare
They know us only too well
Cows did not ask us to devastate landscapes
to increase their numbers and their suffering
Maybe they can teach us the way to peace

JANET CLINGER
from Take My Word For It
(soon to be published)

*Check Irish History/Mythology

About Janet Clinger

Janet Clinger holds an MA degree in history. In 2005 Ms. Clinger and photographer, Ruth Morgan, created an oral history with accompanying photographs, *Our Elders: Six Bay Area Life Stories*. Ms. Clinger's work was featured with Ms. Morgan's photographs in the exhibit, *Ohlone Elders and Youth Speak* at the San Francisco Main Public Library in 2014. They created an e-book containing the photographs and complete interviews from this project. She and Ms. Morgan, in collaboration with the Piqua Shawnee, created an exhibit and accompanying book, *Piqua Shawnee: Cultural Survival in Their Homeland*, highlighting the cultural revitalization efforts of the Piqua Shawnee Tribe in the Ohio Valley which opened in Kentucky in 2018. Her book of poetry, *The Woman Who Lives in Trees*, was published in 2007; her second book of poetry, "Take My Word for It" will be published in the near future.

"It has been an honor to create All My Relations in collaboration with Ruth and the animal warriors and ambassadors."

ROAD KILL

Slow down!
Uprights!
In your metal boxes
Hurtling through our territories
Killing without thought
for our young waiting in the nest
Have you no care for your sisters and brothers
who live unnoticed by your side
You came from us
Learned from us
And now you kill us with no remorse

Slow down!
Uprights!
In the end, certes,
You will want us on your side

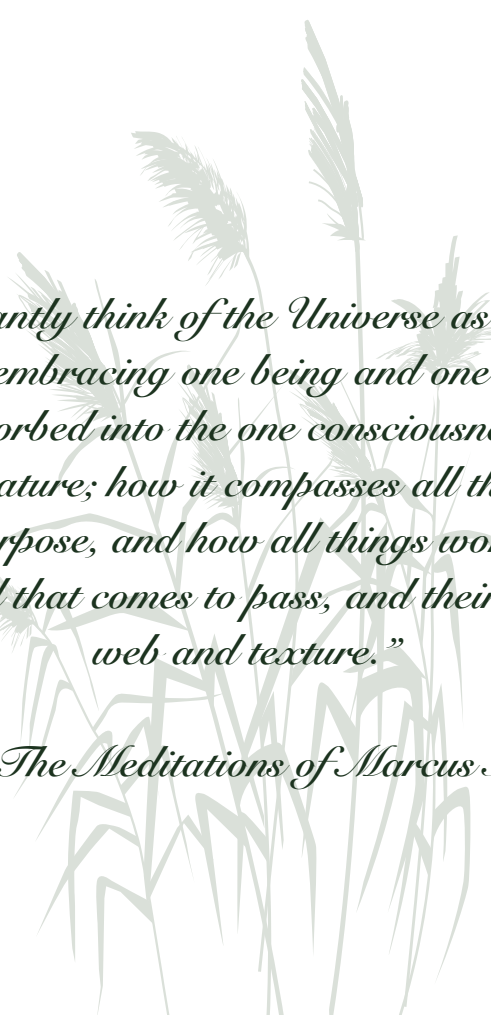
MITAKUYE OYASIN
All My Relations

JANET CLINGER
from The Woman Who Lives In Trees, 2017

About Ruth Morgan

From her work in San Quentin Prison in the mid-1980s, through her exploration in Widelux format documenting intimate portraits of her aging parents in the 1990s, to her engagement with marginalized communities over the past 20 years, Ruth Morgan's lens has focused with deep empathy on people—probing their struggles, their communities, and their robust endurance. Some of her earlier work derives from the implicit intimacy between the participants in the encounter—the artist's presence in contact with her subjects on the other side of the camera. Morgan is there, a character in the drama. The participants are not “subjects” they are looking at her, not at a camera. (The SF Jail Project, The Ohlone and Shawnee Projects in particular). “Requiem: Remains of the Day, made in 2022 in contrast to previous work, is completely devoid of people. The images reveal only what remains of the former lives of those not shown--what's left after a devastating fire obliterated that displaced over 1000 people in less than 45 minutes on the day (August 3, 2021). The work shows the remains of lives shattered not by an “act of god,” but by human-generated climate change. It is traveling across the country after opening at the Richmond Art Center, in Richmond CA. All My Relations the subject of this exhibit is another departure for her. The photos are about the relationship of her subjects to the animals in their care.

A Partial List of Morgan's one-person photographic exhibitions includes the Berkeley Art Museum, the Museum of Photographic Arts in San Diego; Moore College of Art, Philadelphia; Eleventh Street Gallery in New York, the Oregon Center for Photographic Art, City College of New York, Chico Museum of Art, North Light Gallery, Tempe, Jewett Gallery in San Francisco. Upcoming exhibits include the Fresno Museum of Art, the Montana Museum of Art, and DeAnza College. Her work is also in public and private collections, including the Houston Museum of Art, the SFMOMA, the Philadelphia Museum, and the De Menil Collection.



“Constantly think of the Universe as one living creature, embracing one being and one soul; how all is absorbed into the one consciousness of this living creature; how it compasses all things with a single purpose, and how all things work together to cause all that comes to pass, and their wonderful web and texture.”

from The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius





In loving memory of Remy & Renegade
