

This Aviculturist's Response to "Animal Rights Fanatics" Propaganda

Marcy Covault

It has ALWAYS been true in society that extremists develop a following among normally sensible people through an emotional hook that leaves common sense behind. For the "animal rights fanatics" (ARFs), the barrage of animal-directed laws is NOT about animal welfare, it is about PUNISHMENT for those breeding or "using" animals, in any way, shape, or form. That punishment is intended to be so painful that we give up our animal-using ways.

As aviculturists, we cannot barricade ourselves behind symbolic or actual barriers and expect to survive the onslaughts. We also cannot go head-to-head using the ARF tactics, as that makes us appear to stoop to their level of insanity. The true ARFs have positioned themselves with their talons in the tender flesh of animal lovers who believe in "animal welfare" and who have been brainwashed to believe in the ARF propaganda. We must be careful how we remove the ARF hooks, lest we cause additional bloody pain.

Should everyone have a pet or a child? Obviously not, but I believe MOST people do benefit from a relationship with a companion animal, and their choice to do that is as sacred as our right to exist on this earth. What bothers me the most about the ARF's main goal is their desire to sever the human/animal relationship. Without companion animals, we would lose an important part of our humanity towards other humans. Children often learn about nurturing through their pets—why on earth would anyone want to eliminate that? I can only conclude that those who are at the forefront of the ARF movement have something wrong with their psyches, some inability to understand the mutual value of nurturing and caring for creatures that depend on us.

As I've told many people, my birds keep me "grounded" in both sanity and loving exchange. They remind me daily of what a bond there can be between creatures,

and they are my refuge from a world that sometimes seems hostile and self-destructive. Do I want to share my “bird” experiences with others? Absolutely! To see my youngsters go to homes where they are appreciated and loved gives positive reinforcement to what I am doing. I always encourage people to keep in touch and send me stories and pictures—and if they are having problems, to ask for help.

I stand up for myself and say what I think about a controversial issue, but I try very hard to control my emotional response and not appear too negative—and not to personally attack or name-call individuals, in particular. Emotional outbursts will not budge those with closed minds—all it will do is confirm to them the existence of “us” (good guys) vs. “them” (bad or irrational guys) in their worldview. Does that mean I won’t defend myself and will “turn the other cheek” if confronted by those who would invade my home and steal my animals? NO! The “mother bear” side of me would come out in a heartbeat.

Those of us who are owners/breeders/stewards of our animals need to reclaim our power through explaining our love of our animals and how we want the best for them—and that best doesn’t mean “better dead than in a cage” or “better dead than bred,” as the ARFs have so often chanted. That is barbaric and insane! I don’t have a single animal that would choose death over a pampered domesticated existence—nor would my animals choose to roll the dice on making it in Mother Nature’s harsh world of survival-of-the-fittest, particularly in today’s world of habitat alteration and destruction. AND I won’t choose that for them, nor will I let anyone else choose that for them. We NEED our passion, our love for our animals, our “mother bear” protection of our animals—but we also need the ability to reason and communicate, which has thus far kept our civilization from crumbling.

I know it’s HARD not to reply in kind when verbally attacked, but I believe we must try to be educators rather than defensive snarlers and snappers. Those who are “on the fence,” or who are bothered by the breeder-bashing, will be equally *turned off* when breeders defend themselves by name-calling and yelling (e.g., in a message) at those who believe differently. I’m not saying that we don’t

defend ourselves (as breeders), because we must do that or be trampled by the vocal “righteous” ARF minority, who would impose their beliefs on everyone. As individuals, we each have to decide on our own responses, but we are also responsible for our actions (including words) that may provide ammunition for the ARFs.

The more we can show by positive means how we care for our birds—through stories and educational exchanges, for example—I feel that the more the public will be “breeder friendly” and see ARF chants as irrational rantings.

Granted, some people just repeat those bizarre chants because they want to be passionate about a “cause,” and they are basically brainwashed by the appeal to emotions that is cleverly used by those pushing the ARF agenda (e.g., PETA’s overt actions and declarations). We can awaken some of those people, but some will not return to common sense—and we have to accept that and neutralize their misconceptions and actions where we can.

Because most people love animals in one way or another, I believe the majority of people would welcome a loving approach to “animal welfare,” rather than the militant, ham-fisted punitive approach behind all these AR-created and backed bills that continue to pop up all over the country under the guise of “animal welfare,” or the now politically correct “animal protection,” as groups such as Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) are now claiming. We need to continue to point out how a seemingly “problem-solving” bill, for example, carries unintended consequences because of the wording which goes beyond solving a problem and rather seeks to control animal-owners in ways that truly are not in the animals’ best interest.

Can we, as aviculturists, reach the majority of people? Can we make a positive difference in the public attitude towards bird breeders? If we are to continue, we must, and the choice and the responsibility are ultimately ours.

However, we are NOT ALONE! Pet owners are waking up too. There is a web site that is developing to wake pet owners up to the ARF threat and to unify the

majority against a vocal and perverse ARF minority. Check out:

<http://www.animaltalknaturally.com/2007/01/13/animal-ambassadors-emerging-to-shed-light-on-anti-pet-laws/>

Following is an excerpt from an article that doesn't mince words, but that nevertheless is positive in tone [FULL ARTICLE AT

<http://www.huntingtonnews.net/columns/070128-bloomer-comment.html>]:

COMMENTARY: Light Banishes Darkness

Kim Bloomer

Darkness has crept into the world of animals and animal protection over the years, with 2007 shaping up to be the darkest yet. Those of us who love our animals and want to continue to live with them in companionship (rather than banish them to a "gaze upon at a distance place," as the animal rights movement would have us do), are experiencing a rude awakening to the true dark agenda of this movement.

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We don't fight tactic against tactic but rather face the darkness with light. A friend, Ron Hevener (author/artist/breeder), said "Be the change you want to see." Mahatma Gandhi said something similar. BE light. We've been trying to fight this all wrong. We are the TRUE voice for the animals. We've been moping in the animal rights darkness, cowering in fear at all these ridiculous ordinances passing. That is one reason they are winning.

Money isn't a problem because with millions of pet lovers who want to continue to own and love their pets in this country, and billions of dollars spent in the pet industry, it stands to reason we ARE the ones who call the shots. We've just been listening to too much rhetoric and propaganda. Light banishes darkness. Banishes it! When it is dark outside things can seem scary with dangers lurking in every corner. But when the sun comes up, the fear vanishes because we can see clearly.

I'll leave you with this thought: when you flip on a light in a roach-infested room, they scatter like the scum they are. We can do likewise and we ARE the "sun come up."