

*The Evolution of the Human-Animal Bond*, presented by Stephen Budiansky at the 2010 NAIA Conference in Colorado was a leap backwards to geological times. Budiansky is an author, historian and journalist. His interests are wide as evidenced by his books' which range from "why animals choose domestication" (*The Covenant of the Wild*, Random House Value Publishing (March 2, 1994)) to fiction (*Murder by the Book*, CreateSpace (January 30, 2008)), to *The Truth about Dogs*, Viking Adult; First Printing edition (October 2, 2000), the subject of Budiansky's presentation to NAIA conference attendees.

For 45 minutes, the NAIA audience traveled back more than fifty thousand years of geological time and got an opportunity to look at humans' interaction with wolves. Cave drawings evinced early humans' fascination with animals. Their detailed animal drawings side by side with only bare representations of humans clearly display early man's priorities and concerns. The wolves, according to Mr. Budiansky, traveled close to the human camps for scraps of food, and the humans noted that the wolves deterred other predators. As some wolves became more at ease around the camps, humans began to utilize their presence. It is thought that differences between the wild wolves and the beginnings of domestication began as wolf pups may have been found, fed, and became part of the camps, hence, proximity led to domestication.

Mr. Budiansky proffered that much of dog ownership throughout historical as well as modern times, beyond the strict utilization of the dog, relied upon the "cuteness of puppies." He showed how the shape of those neotenic features of certain dogs made them preferable as pets. (*Neotenic* - retention of juvenile characteristics in the adults of a species.) He said that unfortunately, as other pups grow and lose their cuteness, they are no longer as treasured and are often abandoned.

The interrelationship of dogs and humans continued throughout history as man found them useful for hunting, herding, retrieving, sledding, sight, war, etc. Depending on those different talents or skills, dogs that were best at the specific work were bred more, and breed diversity was established.