

The National Animal Interest Alliance Conference
“The Conversation Begins With You”
November 1-3, 2013, Orlando, Florida.
Report submitted by Stormy Hope

The theme of the conference was indicative of what was to follow. The conversation DOES begin with us, and the program was filled with speakers who have been starting that conversation for years, and they were now sharing with us how they were doing it.

NAIA was founded with the goal of “building unity and cooperation” among all animal individuals and groups, and this conference was a celebration of those goals as well as a roadmap for continuing to forge unity.

The NAIA conference was so FULL, so intense, every hour, with so much vital information that it all had to be put aside for a couple of weeks to decompress and settle, to allow what seemed to be the most relevant, the most startling, the most exciting, to burble up. While the presentations were awesome, it wasn't just the presentations. The attendees who came to listen and learn were some of the most renowned individuals in their fields. Mingling with them during the first night's reception, the Saturday night dinner/auction, and throughout the weekend, was exhilarating.

Two lunchtime awards were presented: on Saturday, Dr. Julian Prager, NAIA Legislative analyst, was presented with the newly created NAIA award, “Above and Beyond Award for Volunteer Service” in memory of Diane Albers and Diane Makinney. At Sunday's lunch presentation, Kenneth Feld, Feld Entertainment (Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey), was presented in absentia with another NAIA newly created, “Leadership Award,” for individuals making outstanding contributions to animal welfare and maintaining human-animal interaction and responsible use.

To the Conference!

- David Waters, DVM, PhD - Dr. Waters reported his experiences and results from the Old Grey Muzzle Tour; It Takes Imagination. He emphasized that “It Takes Imagination,” throughout his presentation. What impressed me the most were the catchphrases: “Unlearn!” “Open our eyes, take off the labels,” “Get the words out of our eyes, Unlearn!” “Look at a situation as neither good nor bad.” “Get linguistic health.” “Make sense of the world.” “Make independent observations.” “We are doing mimicry rather than discovery.” The fact is that we have to UNLEARN in order to learn to see with our **experiences**, not with labels - experience and learn afresh. After the conference, I viewed Dr. Water's presentation on TedX (<http://gpmcf.org/>) “The Oldest Dogs as Our Greatest

Teachers: Get the Words Out of Your Eyes” and experienced again his presentation of the 40-day, cross-country scientific expedition investigating possible age-related connections of intact females in the oldest living Rottweilers.

- While Judith A. Milcarskey, another presenter, didn't talk about Unlearning, it was a good example of what needed to be Unlearned. Cat lovers who have been resistant to the appeals of bird lovers and others regarding the practice of TNR would have been stunned at some of Ms. Milcarskey's revelations. Her comments about the homeless people infected with Toxoplasmosis, very possibly due to consuming stray felines and not cooking them to 140°, was shocking. Ms. Milcarskey continued that there is ongoing research about possible connections between Toxoplasmosis and Schizophrenia, with a distant, but distinct, possibility that the disease may have some relation to childhood Toxoplasmosis infection and subsequent schizophrenia onset. The fact that cats, feral and domestic, are often in youngsters' sandboxes in parks and elementary schools should also give us more than a casual concern.
- Professor Jerold Tannenbaum, JD, Veterinary Ethics and Law Professor, UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, used Ayn Rand's metaphor of the Giant Oak Tree, an excellent metaphor to describe his concern regarding what was once excellent, what once held great promise, but was now rotting from the inside without the public realizing it. Ethics in Animal law, while retaining the outward glory, is nothing now but a hollow shell, rotted from the inside, which distresses Dr. Tannenbaum. Dr. Tannenbaum stated that while animals are legally classified as property, there is decided movement, a slant/switch, towards viewing animals as part of the family. People espousing those views, the views of Animal Rights groups, are the writers of animal ethics journal articles.
- One of the excellent panel discussions at the conference was comprised of Phil Guidry, Adrian Hochstadt, Pat Mixon, and Patti Strand.

Phil Guidry, JD, AKC Legislative Analyst, emphasized that while AKC has member clubs, the clubs were comprised of individual members and AKC encourages individual action by those members. Mr. Guidry stated that **we** are the underdog in this foray, and that we need to connect with people/groups who have successfully achieved their goals in other undertakings. He stressed that we should avoid extremism. Phil impressed us with, “Invest in a better community, not only in your own self-interest.”

Adrian Hochstadt, JD, CAE, directs the AVMA's state legislative and regulatory initiatives. Dr. Hochstadt stated that it was important to keep the veterinary community involved in any legislation that has to do with animal health and welfare. He emphasized that every single person can make a difference and to develop individual relationships, thus laying the groundwork for beneficial contacts. AVMA has a Legal Outreach Program to expose law students and legal professionals to a veterinary perspective on important animal law issues.

<https://www.avma.org/Advocacy/StateAndLocal/Pages/legal-outreach-program.aspx>

Pat Mixon, VP, Mixon and Associates, an expert in government relations, stressed that advocates should assemble what might appear to be disparate groups to pick apart proposed legislation. Create a panel and pick apart a bill. Analyze each sentence from each person's unique perspective (e.g., property issues, hunt, dog, breeding), so that there would be effective opposition or support as a whole. She suggested finding people who care and getting those caring people to be concerned about our animal issues. She continued, find people in your community; get them to take an interest in the animals in their community and laws that affect them.

Patti Strand, NAIA founder, in that panel and later in the conference, told of an exciting new development for reaching out and increasing possibilities for individual action. NAIA has developed a new site that utilizes an advocacy software program "CQRengage," which is much more than an updated Capwiz. It is a complete platform that will engage the members as it engages, educates, informs and alerts. Patti told us about the recently upgraded NAIA Shelter Project, guided and organized by Barb Reichman. Different states and city animal shelters are tracked, as well as the movement of rescue and shelter pets as information becomes available. That information is available to lawmakers and those who are tracking pet population trends. For example, new information from a study that is being finalized reveals that less than 6% of shelter dogs are purebred. <http://www.shelterproject.naiaonline.org>

- Arnold Goldman, DVM, MS, MPH Connecticut VMF President, joined Patti to discuss the translocation and imports from foreign countries. Dr. Goldman states that while Connecticut once had a shortage of animals, it has become a dropping off place of modern outlaws, "dog translocators." Laws were circumvented for as many as 14,000 dogs brought into CT in 2012. Translocation from state to state has continually increased: Maine 10,000, OR-10,000, FL-30,000, CT-14,000; foreign imports continue to escalate, 10,000 from Mexico to CA alone. Rehoming organizations brought strays into GA from India and from Iraq in 2013. View Dr. Goldman's NAIA's previous presentation on this issue!
<http://www.puppiesanddogsinfo.com/flash/goldmanSeparate.html>

- Michael Tennenbaum is lawyer on the forefront of the law "on the production and sale of food in interstate commerce." While Mr. Tennenbaum was not able to discuss ongoing lawsuits in response to animal rights groups against poultry farmers, restaurants, and renowned chefs, he gave overviews of several cases that have been litigated. A judge dismissed PETA's case against SeaWorld where PETA attempted to give the Orca whale personhood; however, as in other cases, in the media PETA treated the dismissal as if it were a win. Mr. Tennenbaum warned that ALDF and others could continue to make OSHA

complaints that could create future court cases. OSHA will have to investigate Animal Rights-initiated complaints, which, if not settled to the satisfaction of those Animal Rights organizations, they would likely subsequently sue OSHA. Animal Rights groups are winning as “Humanness” is in the eyes of the beholder, and generally, judges have a “stunning level of ignorance and sympathy for ARs.” Courts LISTEN to cases. The groups do not litigate to win, they litigate to 1) “get legitimacy, 2) get donations 3) take one sentence out of a losing case and publicize as if it’s a win.” In closing, Mr. Tennebaum stated that it’s dangerous to ban a product because of its “manner of production.”

- John Simpson, Esq., Washington Litigation Attorney, Partner, Fulbright & Jaworski LLP. <http://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/people/90655/john.simpson> Mr. Simpson is the lead attorney in ASPCA, et al., v. Feld Entertainment, Inc. In reviewing the Feld case, he explained various points of law and legal “standing.” “Standing,” legally, must show that some legal interest has been invaded. An organization can assert third party standing to represent their members; however, legal interest is difficult to prove in those cases. Standing may also be claimed by alleging that the unlawful treatment of animals is causing “aesthetic injury” to a human plaintiff.

The suit against Feld was frivolous and vexatious from the beginning, as the only witness proclaiming status was exposed as being a paid witness. Feld Entertainment sued ASPCA et al, for court costs when the case was dismissed, and was awarded \$19M in legal fees. Noteworthy was that this is the first time that a defendant won an endangered species case, also the first time that a defendant was awarded legal fees in that type of case. Feld is now pursuing RICO charges against ASPCA, et al. Since HSUS acquired Fund For Animals (FFA), a plaintiff in the case, in 2007, HSUS is included. The RICO case, if won, could potentially result in treble damages, an amount that is now 215M and growing.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Center for Elephant Conservation was established in 1995 to help preserve and protect the species’ well being. Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey© is committed to caring for the Asian elephant and this is their number one priority. If ASPCA, et al were successful, Asian elephants would become extinct.

- Dr. Candace Croney, Associate Professor of Animal Behavior, Purdue University, addressed Animal Welfare: the Roles of Ethics, Science and Semantics. Dr. Croney emphasized that language is being changed and shaped by Anthropomorphism. She stated that over half of the people in the U.S. don’t have a source for knowledge of animal welfare. When people go for information, 12% of those seeking gain the knowledge from HSUS, 7% from PETA, 5% from the Government and 4% from social media. People don’t like animals in boxes or cutting pieces off of them. The smarter people think an animal is, the more they don’t want to eat them. She suggests that we *need* undercover... some of the

abuses are true. She warns that if animal agriculture doesn't regulate itself, "they" will do it.

- Marsha Kelly – What Did I Say? , Ms. Kelly is President of MSK Ventures, a Public Relations Consulting firm. Part of our mission of being part of the conversation is to educate ourselves on bringing the message to the public. Ms. Kelley's presentation was rich with material on how to do that. First, she stressed, "Trust that we are doing the right thing." We need to say what the public needs to know about our opponents - over and over – it's important for them to know. We should reach the public and get them to care. If they care, we can call them to Action, get them to act.

Ms. Kelly continued with the message that we need to remember that our work benefits humans and animals. We provide high quality care, we have tough regulations to insure proper animal care and we enforce them. We provide best care and that benefits us as well as the animals we raise. She states that we need to reposition the opponent as AR is about ideology; they don't provide animal care, they are too extreme, and they want to eliminate agriculture and the American way of life.

Ms. Kelly gave us comprehensive advice on how to engage the various audiences that we would be encountering. That advice will be put to good use in the months to come. She stated to engage the audience no matter the media and get our point out first and often. Anticipate questions, and rehearse different answers. We need to gather the necessary facts and allow ample preparation time. When talking, we need to be friendly and conversational, and remember to repeat OUR message, not the opponents. We must avoid being defensive and if we don't know, say so and say we'll get the answer to them. Some important points to remember are to not combat ethical arguments with profit statements. (Ex: We take good care of our animals, we couldn't sell them for good prices if we didn't.) She cautioned us to not attack the media and practice, practice, practice for live media.

In order to get our message out, we should use all media available. She related various ways to get coverage in Print, Radio and T.V. She emphasized that Social media, Facebook, Blogs, Twitter, etc., are all valuable tools in getting the coverage. There are good ways to gain access in all the media forms and Ms. Kelly described the different manners of access to each.

Finally, Ms. Kelly explained why we should use social media. The role of Social Media is all geared to get the public to our Webpage. We build a support community within the social media, we share information (links), and we facilitate reputation – management. Further, by utilizing social media, we are able to respond to breaking news, get the information out quickly and respond publicly if needed.

- Jamie Foster, partner in the UK law firm Clarke Wilmott, and an acknowledged expert in Animal Welfare Law and the law relating to Field Sports, spoke. He is the solicitor for the Countryside Alliance and has been involved in defending most of the prosecutions in England of the Hunting Act. He is the co-author of 'The Law of Field Sports,' which is currently the authoritative text on the state of Field Sports Law in the UK. Mr. Foster's presentation was quite informative regarding what is happening in the U.K., and the impact that extremists have made on hunting, politics and in the law.

Each NAIA conference becomes better and stronger; however, this one surpassed wonderful on its way to magnificent. It was outstanding in its choices of presenters, timeliness, and scope of subjects. Please take every opportunity to attend an NAIA conference, bring the wealth of knowledge back to your clubs and your organizations. Using what NAIA offers will help us all become better advocates for Animal Welfare and better activists for our animals.