10-1-1981

Editorial: A Mandate for Man

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A Mandate for Man

No one, of course, has ever been able to fix a point in time when our species emerged. Although the word "impossible" is an anathema to us, I fear we must admit that that search is an impossible one. We are destined never to be certain about where we first appeared or in what moral or intellectual condition. And this will continue. But as the name suggests, Health Affairs is concerned with the University's Academic Health Center in its entirety. Of necessity, the space devoted to any one school is rather small, but we also think the circulation of Health Affairs is too restrictive to satisfy our growing needs.

Our newsletter may never win a prize, but we shall endeavor to deliver interesting, accurate information on every facet of the school's activities in a format that will invite and hold your attention. Dr. John E. Martin, editor, whom graduates of the '50s and early '60s will remember fondly as a professor of pharmacology and therapeutics, was one of the best teachers in the school.

In preparation for our centennial celebration in 1984, Dr. Martin is also hard at work on a history of the school with particular emphasis on the last fifty years. Looking back to the beginning, to 1884, when the University admitted its first class of veterinary students, Dr. Martin has uncovered data that have a particular fascination, as we prepare to occupy the new teaching hospital in West Philadelphia. He discovered that in 1884, the building that was to house the entire School of Veterinary Medicine cost a mere $16,900, almost precisely one-thousand times less than the cost of the new teaching hospital. In that same year, the Trustees' minutes record an event that was to be traced unmistakably through nearly ten decades, the school's educational philosophy and achievements can be traced unmistakably to those humble beginnings, when a few sagacious men determined to establish a veterinary school in a great center of humanistic learning and academic medicine.

In this newsletter we shall often cite the achievements of our students and faculty, both individually and in the aggregate, but mainly we hope to acquaint you with the school's remarkable spectrum of activities and to bring to your attention those advances and areas of endeavor which are of particular interest to alumni and to all the constituencies—farmers, horsemen, owners of companion animals—served by veterinary medicine.

Dr. Robert R. Marshak
Dean, School of Veterinary Medicine

Roger Caras, author of this Bellwether editorial

Canid Lupus pallipes, a companion animal. That may have been as long as 150 to 250 centuries ago. And what has come and gone in the interim? Slavery, even if it was a moral disaster, and cannibalism as a ritual and human sacrifice. One of these was a solution to the eternal protein shortage and the other got rid of a lot of undesirables. All of that has gone by the way, however, the companion animal idea has not only lingered on, but has become a very important part of our way of life. Psychological benefits were acknowledged long ago, of course. As a result of studies at this University, as well as at others, it now seems certain that there are profound physical effects as well—things like longevity, our own longevity.

Not long ago I was in Amsterdam with my wife, my daughter, and some friends. I was moved to give them all a brief history quiz. "Who," I asked, "was the prime minister of the Netherlands when the Nazis invaded the low countries? What was his name?" Puzzled looks. "When he was unseated? Who did the Nazis put in his place as the Dutch quisling?" More puzzled looks. "All right," said I with mock disgust, "who was the German general who conquered this part of Europe?" No one knew. "Just two more questions," I promised. "Who was the head of the Gestapo in the Netherlands?" When no one seemed to know, I protested again with mock disgust, "But these were men who had the power of life and death over millions of people—and wielded it without mercy. These were the movers and shakers of their time and they wore shiny belt buckles and daggers. O.K., one last question, who was the twelve-year-old girl who remained hidden in a small room here in Amsterdam for two years, kept a diary, and then died in a concentration camp?" The chorus, of course, was immediate. "Anne Frank.

Does that tell us something about power—dark, corrupting, unlimited, and evil? I think it reflects directly on what we were just talking about. It suggests that quiet, benevolent, positive human acts and actions, people with ideas, goals, and thoughts are the high places in our past, present, and future. All the rest of it happens down in the valleys, in the cuts, hollows, and draws, the dank places and the dark, the places that real history forgets once you add time. As might be expected of a race, a species coming from the primitive time of skull bashing and cannibalism and overall brutish behavior toward a mandated, no-alternative place of gentle care and benevolence, we peak at the good and suffer briefly, and mercifully forget the bad. Nature has been kind. Men and women cannot remember pain.

To tie up the loose ends, to package it, as they say in my world of show and tell, I think our purpose in being here today has a great deal to do with everything I have been talking (continued on page 4)
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about. This structure could contain almost anything: a printing press for political obscenities, a terrorist's bomb factory, a research lab for biological warfare, a Gestapo interrogation center, a prison, or an X-rated movie house. It could be a place of evil or a place of good. But by chance it is a structure for good—a building built specifically to be a high point for us in this great journey of ours. What will be done here is destined to be felt and remembered. Kind and gentle people of the best intent will be taught the art of their benevolence here. The intelligence exhibited here will well match our own ultimate mandate. It will be—it already is—a shrine to the success of suffering. The broken will be fixed here and made whole, men and women will learn, and participate—the better to go forth and repeat the miracle of that brand of benevolence all around the world.

This is a building, built at great financial cost certainly, but with an even greater investment in good will. The returns will be beyond measure for they shall echo and grow into the future. Without doubt the things learned here, proven here, and done here for the first time will cross over that ever-strengthening bridge between the healing arts of human medicine and veterinary medicine. This building will radiate those qualities in us that assure us of a future of our own, and it can be viewed, as well, as a means of repaying a very old debt. For we owe much to our ancient anions, our non-judgmental forgiver of all sins.

So, we have come here to celebrate today one more peak attained and one more critical step toward benevolence. The cannibal and the destroyer in us move back another inch; the sunlight is a little closer and a little warmer. Our future is the better assured, we seem less than what was called for. A trumpet call first and then a song would have been a better choice. Heartfelt thanks and certainly congratulations to everyone involved in making this dream, this landmark in benevolence, come true.

This talk was given by Roger Caras at the dedication of the new Veterinary Hospital of the University on May 15, 1981. Mr. Caras is an author, naturalist, photographer, lecturer, and recent recipient of the Joseph Wood Krutch Medallion.

Mr. Caras has authored more than forty books on nature, environment, and animals. He is a special correspondent on those subjects for the ABC news television network and a commentator for CBS radio on pets and wildlife. Mr. Caras recently became a member of the Board of Overseers for the School of Veterinary Medicine.

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The Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society is housed in a brownstone building on Spruce Street, not far from the School of Veterinary Medicine. In September 1981 the center will move to the school. In 1977, the center was established to provide a more comprehensive understanding of companion animals and to gather data about all aspects of the human/companion animal bond.

Funding came initially from the Marilyn Simpson Charitable Trusts, individual donations, and a training grant. In 1979, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation provided a five-year grant to the School of Veterinary Medicine, which enabled the center to expand and establish a core staff. It now has a full-time director, Dr. Alan M. Beck, who holds a master's degree from California State University in Los Angeles and a doctor of science degree from The Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health. Dr. Beck was director of the Bureau of Animal Affairs of the New York City Department of Health prior to joining the center.

Other members of the core staff are a full-time social worker and two animal behaviorists. The center has become truly interdisciplinary. Psychiatrists, veterinarians, anthropologists, social workers, and animal behaviorists are jointly developing research programs which, according to Dr. Beck, "will be examining many of the roles animals play in society, so as to better understand them, to better utilize them to the advantage of all living things, and to correct those roles that are not in the best interest of people and animals."

The field is complex and the topics covered in the papers and workshops at the international conference give an indication of the many disciplines involved. There will be fifteen workshops:

- Evaluation of Animal Behavior
- Ethical Constraints on the Use of Animals
- Experimental Design of Pet Facilitated Therapy Programs
- Evaluation of Horseback Riding Therapy Programs
- Ethology and the Study of Companion Animals
- Animals as Symbols—Anthropological Study of Companion Animals
- Programs Using Animals with the Aged
- Companion Animals and Human Health
- Legislative Aspects of Animals in the City
- Animals and the Family
- The Human/Companion Animal Bond

in the Veterinary Curriculum
- Social Work Practice and Veterinary Medicine
- Nursing Practice and the Companion Animal
- Management of Grief and the Loss of a Companion Animal
- Legal Counseling of Problems Related to Companion Animals

The conference will present current information on the nature of the relationship between human beings and their companion animals. Speakers are coming from many parts of the United States, France, and Great Britain. There will be an emphasis on basic psychological, sociological, and ethological studies, as well as information about projects using companion animals to improve the quality of life and health of people. The conference is sponsored by the Latham Foundation's Delta Group, and co-sponsored by the American Animal Hospital Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Veterinary Association. It will be held at the University City Holiday Inn. Participation in the conference qualifies as two units of continuing education credit.

Philadelphia was the natural choice for the conference because the Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society had initiated several innovative programs at the School of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania. No longer are students trained only to treat diseases, they are also taught to consider the relationships between pet and owner and to keep in mind basic principles of human and animal behavior. Students, in five elective courses, receive information about people, their pets and the

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