

Animal Human Interaction: Research & Practice Newsletter



Section 13 of Division 17, Society of Counseling Psychology- APA

June 25, 2008



*News and Notes from your Organizing
Committee Co-Chair
by Maya Gupta, Ph.D*

Greetings, all! This is Maya Gupta, Co-Chair of our Section's Organizing Committee. By way of quick introduction, I'm the board president of Ahimsa House, Georgia's first and only nonprofit organization dedicated to helping the human and animal victims of domestic violence reach safety together. My background is in clinical psychology (shh! I'm a stowaway), where I studied the incorporation of animal abuse into typologies of partner violence, but I am so pleased to have come into the fold of Division 17.

Welcome to our second newsletter, and our first as an official Section of Division 17! In addition to receiving our formal Section status at the SCP Executive Board meeting in March, we have accomplished quite a bit since our last newsletter: we have over 140 individuals on our mailing list, we have many activities scheduled for the APA Convention in August, and we are developing our website (soon to be linked to both the Division 17 site and the APA Divisions page). Our long term plans focus on nurturing research and practice in this area through continuing to define topic areas, identifying and fostering communication/collaboration among those with similar interests, and developing resources and training opportunities at multiple levels that will assist both those established in the field and those seeking an introduction. To this end, on May 27, Mary Lou Randour and I met with

representatives from NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in Rockville, Maryland. We had set up the meeting with the intention of exploring ways that Animal-Human Interaction: Research and Practice Section members could seek NIH funding for projects related to children's interactions with animals. However, upon discovering that NICHD has been pursuing a "Human-Companion Animal Bond" project over the past few months, our discussion soon turned to ways that our Section may actually be able to partner with NICHD. A few topics for further investigation include the development of mentorship and training programs for students and early career professionals; the role of our Section in offering continuing education programming for psychologists; sponsorship of special Advanced Training Institutes; establishing a single, easily searchable literature database that indexes Animal-Human Interaction publications across the diverse disciplines and journals in which they are housed; and, thinking in on a grand scale, the development of a National Technical Assistance Center for Research and Practice in Human-Animal Interaction.

Our challenge now, as a Section, is to build our infrastructure, assess our resources, and further articulate our goals so that we are able to commit to undertaking these projects and to make a strong case for our readiness to make them happen. Can you help us? Now is the time to get involved! We need a webmaster, a librarian/archivist, a database manager, and more...if you have a skill, we can put it to use. Please contact me at president@ahimsahouse.org or Mary Lou at randour@comcast.net, or post a notice through the listserv. And by the way, if you're not yet subscribed to our listserv, please make sure to a) send in your Section membership application and b) notify me so I can add you. Happy Summer and I hope to see many of you in Boston in August!

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Announcements & Events

August 2008



July 2008

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
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| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
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| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

*Join the AHI Teleconference Call,
July 1, 2008 4:00-4:30 pm*

Are you interested in meeting your fellow section members to talk about ideas for research and training--and to get to know one another? The first 20 people that notify us of their interest before noon on July 1st by emailing Mary Lou Randour at randour@comcast.net will be given directions for how to place the call. (We have to limit it to 20 people at this time because of technological limitations, which we hope to overcome in the future.)

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
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| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

*APA Convention, Boston, MA
August 14-17*

*Symposium: Role of Animals in Community Family
Violence Prevention and Intervention.*

Mary Lou Randour, Ph.D., Chair; Maya Gupta, Ph.D., Howard Davidson, J.D.;

Friday, August 15th, 8:00 am to 8:50 AM,
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center,
Meeting room 253B.

SCP Hospitality Suite: AHI meeting.

Saturday, August 16th, 12:00 to 12:50 pm,
Suite D (Brewster). After meeting, we will gather for
lunch at a nearby restaurant for all interested.

AHI Business Meeting:

2 Sunday, August 17th, 10:00AM Suite C

SCP Mentoring Roundtables, TBA



What's Going On With AHI Members?

Pet Bereavement Groups at Veterinary Hospital: Challenges and Possibilities

By:

Paul Larson, Ph.D.

Chicago School of Professional Psychology

**Below is a brief summary of the early stage of a bereavement group at a vet hospital; I welcome input from colleagues about the possibilities for further development.*

I recently began doing a pet bereavement group after giving two half day stress management workshops to the staff of an emergency veterinary hospital, which is open evenings and weekends. The long hours and the high potential for pet loss and all the demands of emergency care create a high stress environment. Certainly, part of this stress is dealing with the grief of the human companions of the pets.

The sessions were offered once a month for two hours. Thus far only two sessions have been held. We had two single individuals and one couple for the first meeting. One person had serious psychopathology and reacted with some strong grief. It was clear that the seriously distressed client caused some discomfort in other attendees. I had not brought release forms for that session to contact the client's therapist, but did so at the next meeting and was able to have a productive conversation about how to manage the case. This just serves as a warning that one can encounter significant pathology in these groups that requires professional care and thoughtful follow-up. My co-therapist (a student of mine) and I are now better prepared to intervene if there are similar issues 3 in future sessions.

Although there is a documented need for pet grief counseling, and it is an emerging field in counseling psychology, our bereavement group is going slowly so far (I'm anticipating the vet hospital will do some broader advertising in upcoming weeks). One reason is not the lack of perceived need, but the uncertainty about reimbursement. All services in veterinary care are basically cash only. There is a small market for pet insurance that is seeking to expand, but so far as I know, counseling for pet owners is not covered under any plan. This means that pricing for the bereavement group would have to be reasonable enough for the cash market. I had previously hypothesized that \$20 per person per session is a good starting point. Most people are willing to pull out a \$20 bill without thinking too hard. So that was my proposal to the sponsoring vet hospital. However, the hospital wanted to offer service gratis to the public, so the vet reimbursed me the \$20/person/session out of corporate funds. To advertise this service, the chief vet sent out flyers to the other vet hospitals who are shareholders in the venture for initial advertising. The vet hospital was able to rent suitable space at a venue next door on Sunday morning (not the best time for drawing in people, but that's what we're dealing with). Any input you can provide regarding further development of the group would be greatly appreciated.

Current Books by Members:



Fine, A.H. (2006). *Handbook on animal-assisted therapy, second edition: Theoretical foundations and guidelines for practice*. New York, NY: Academic Press.



Anderson, P. Elizabeth, (2008). *The powerful bond between people and pets: Our boundless connections to companion animals*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.



AHI Member

Research Spotlight

Ecological Effects On Cognitive Development In Yellow-Crown Parakeets

By:

Mildred Sears Funk, Ph.D

*Roosevelt University, Biology Dept,
Chicago, IL, 60605*

While similarities in human and nonhuman primate cognitive development are not surprising to us, such parallels in the early cognitive development of some birds have rarely been described. Obvious differences between the two vertebrate classes in mode of birth and early physical development would make it seem probable that their cognitive development would also be very different. Particularly, it would seem unlikely that young birds could master cognitive tasks designed for human infants. However, Jarvis et al (2005) show that avian and mammalian brains are more similar than heretofore believed. Ecological pressures may underlie some similarities of function in certain common brain areas.

How to test for any similarity in cognitive skills? Developmentally, using Piaget's (1953, 1954) broad framework, with activities from reflex to complex can be very helpful: 1) the great variety of basic problem-solving tasks can be judged from observed behaviors, common practice in ethological studies, 2) language is not necessary to perform the tasks, 3) the activities have been widely used in clinical tests of young children and in laboratories to test a variety of primates, 4) use of the tasks is a heuristic tool to find unexpected similarities and differences in development across species.

METHODOLOGY

The three scales used were object permanence (OP) means-end understanding, and use of objects in space. The activities were easily observed and scored and interobserver reliability was 100%. Though these tasks were designed for human infants, the birds could physically perform all but one (II-11) and a Piagetian task at the same level of difficulty was substituted. Test sessions were 20-40 minutes, every other day. Criterion was correct consecutive performances of trials over three sessions, as in other Piagetian studies. There was no pre-training on tasks.

RESULTS

The kakarikis completed all the object permanence tasks. They are, in fact, the first taxon to actually perform a "systematic search" required by U & H (1989) on Task 15, returning to search all the hiding places after being tricked on the last task (with no reward hidden).

However, most tasks were not performed in the order human infants did them: Task 9 having one cover was apparently easier for them than Tasks 7 & 8 which had multiple covers or movement of the reward. Even the invisible displacements with only one or two screens, Tasks 10-11-12, were easier for them than tasks 7 & 8. In the Means-End Scale, the birds walked (Task 5) earlier than they grasped and played (Tasks 2-3-4). They could not physically perform Task 11, so another Piagetian task at same level of difficulty was tried: they pulled out a matchbox containing seeds they had seen introduced. They also did not perform Task 12: use of a ring stack (they only unstacked rings). On the Object Use Scale, the parakeets failed to fill containers (they emptied them) or to stack objects (Tasks 6 & 7). They also took detours (Task 10) earlier than the play tasks. These parakeets walk a bit while still in the nest. After they fledge, they learn to grasp, they follow trajectories of other birds around them, they explore and drop objects and pick them up, and they learn many other things in the weeks after fledging, and probably not in any particular order.



**Section on Animal-Human Interaction:
Research & Practice (AHI)
Society of Counseling Psychology
American Psychological Association**

Call for Nominations

The Section on Animal-Human Interaction: Research & Practice of the Society of Counseling Psychology is issuing a call for nominations. The election process starts with members of the section nominating colleagues for offices to be filled. The Section on Animal-Human Interaction: Research & Practice encourages you to nominate members who represent the diverse characteristics of the membership, enjoy providing leadership, and are interested in serving on the Governing Board. We hope that the Section's commitment to diversity will be reflected on the Governing Board through the nomination and election of persons who represent a variety of perspectives such as those based on different activities, ethnicity, gender, race, and work setting.

The following Officers shall be elected: **Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and two Members-at-Large.**

Qualifications for Elected Office: Member or Fellow of SCP.

Eligibility to Vote: Elected Member or Fellow of SCP.

Other officers of the AHI Governing Board will be appointed and include: Membership Chair, Newsletter editor, and chairs of section committees and task forces.

***Professional and Student Affiliates are eligible for these offices.

The Nomination Ballot will be enclosed within this newsletter.

After listing up to three nominations for each office, mail *the nomination ballot to:*

***Mary Lou Randour
4330 Leland Street
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815 or
fax to 202-676-2300.***

Ballots must be postmarked or received by August 17, 2008.

Nominations Ballot

Chair (2 year term)

1)

2)

3)

Chair-elect (2 year term)

1)

2)

3)

Treasurer (2 year term)

1)

2)

3)

Secretary (2 year term)

1)

2)

3)

Members-at-Large (2) (2 year term)

1)

2)

3)



Student Guest Editor Final Words.

Where is Multicultural Research In the Animal-Human Interaction Bond Literature?

BY:

Bianca T.L. Fetherson

Doctoral Student Counseling Psychology

Western Michigan University

Student Guest Editor

Although the American society has grown to be diverse it is still plagued with racism, heterosexism, classism, and other forms of oppression that can demoralize and break the human spirit. Research on the impact of living in such a virulent environment revealed that marginalized individuals' (e.g. racial minorities, LGBT individuals, women, and persons with disabilities) experiences of oppression can produce acute, chronic, conscious and unconscious forms of stress that can most likely affect their mental health functioning (Carter, 2002; Pieterse, & Carter, 2005). Numerous studies thus far have investigated the benefits of the animal and human interaction bond (e.g. Barker & Dawson, 1998; Brasic, 1998; Flom, 2005; Barker & Dawson, 1998) on the well-being of individuals. Yet, to date there are no studies done on the bond that exists between marginalized populations and their pets and what effects this may have on their overall well-being. Such research is beneficial; especially since these individuals are more than likely to experience

stressors on a daily basis.

The Animal Human Interaction: Research & Practice Section in the Society of Counseling Psychology is not only concerned with increasing the understanding of the animal human interaction bond; this section, like other divisions and sections of APA, is also dedicated to multiculturalism. Thereby, I summon the committee and its members to seriously consider expanding our scholarship in an area that has been overlooked thus far. Research examining the animal and human interaction bond with marginalized populations has the potential to provide an understanding of how the animal and human interaction bond can contribute to the psychological functioning of these individuals. Furthermore, we can become the forerunners and exemplars of the benefits of multicultural research. So let's not be like others who just only talk the talk, let's also walk the walk of multiculturalism.



Lastly, AHI Has No Dues;

However, the most modest donation will help us:

- ***Develop our website so we can interact with more psychologists
- ***Offer teleconferencing training to members and
- ***Establish a fund for students

Donations can be sent to the AHI Acting Treasurer:

Julia C. Phillips, Ph.D.,
Associate Director Training,
Counseling, Testing and Career Center,
University of Akron
Akron, Ohio 44325-4303,
phone (330) 972-7082, e-mail: julia7@uakron.edu

ANIMAL/HUMAN INTERACTION: RESEARCH AND PRACTICE SECTION
Society of Counseling Psychology, Division 17
American Psychological Association

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2008

Animal/Human Interaction: Research and Practice Section is the newly established Section 13 of the Society of Counseling Psychology. There are no dues. Donations of any size are welcome.

Please mail or fax completed application form to:
Karen Schaefer, Ph.D.
New Mexico State University Counseling Center
Garcia Annex, MSC 3575
Las Cruces, NM 88003
Fax: 575-646-1975

Or send electronically to Randour@comcast.net

Name: _____ Title _____

Institutional Affiliation (if any): _____

Address: _____

Office Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

APA Membership Number: _____

Please indicate APA Division(s) in which you hold membership, if any: _____.

The Animal/Human Interaction: Research and Practice Section (AHI) welcomes members and students from the Society of Counseling Psychology and other Divisions of APA. There are three categories of membership that one may apply for:

Member: Any Associate, Member, or Fellow of Division 17

Professional or International Affiliate: Professional or International affiliates of Division 17, or Fellows or Members of APA who are not members of the Division

Student Affiliate: Any student affiliated with either Division 17 Student Affiliate Group or APAGS

Please Indicate the Type of Section Membership Sought:

- Member
 Professional Affiliate
 International Affiliate
 Student Affiliate

We plan to set up a Section website and listserv as soon as possible. Please indicate below if you want to be listed in the member directory on the website and subscribed to the listserv:

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Member Directory Y ___ N ___ Listserv Y ___ N ___

ANIMAL/HUMAN INTERACTION: RESEARCH AND PRACTICE SECTION
Society of Counseling Psychology, Division 17
American Psychological Association

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Are you willing to participate in the activities (e.g., governance, committees, other activities) of this Section?
Y____N____

Please check any areas indicating your research and practice interests by using “R,” “P,” or “R/P” for both research and practice on the following list:

Animal-assisted activities/therapy (including outpatient psychotherapy, medical/physical therapy, hippotherapy—therapy with horses) _____

Animal-human bond relational and attachment issues (e.g., degrees of bonding, attitudes toward animals) _____

Bereavement reactions to the loss of a companion animal (including providing hospice care for animals, making the decision to euthanize, etc) _____

Cross-cultural aspects of animal/human interactions _____

Developmental features of animal/human interactions (e.g., children and animals, special considerations with elderly-animal interactions) _____

Diagnostic issues associated with animal mistreatment _____

Health benefits of the human-animal bond _____

Link between animal abuse and violence toward humans, particularly family violence _____

Role of animal/human relationships in various treatment modalities and interventions (e.g., treatment interventions using information, stories, metaphors, or relationships with animals in family therapy, use of the client’s relationship with a companion animal as a reason to live, etc) _____

Theory, research and treatment of animal abusers _____

Other (please describe) _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

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Correspondence regarding AHI newsletter can be sent to:

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Under the Advisement of:

Dr. Mary Lou Randour, Ph.D. & Dr. Maya Gupta, Ph.D.
Co-Chairs, Section on Animal-Human Interaction: Research & Practice Society of
Counseling Psychology American Psychological Association

****The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the policies of the APA, the Society/Division of Counseling Psychology, or its Sections.*