

# Teaching Kindness

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## Introduction What's All the Fuss?

In the late 1950's researchers came back from a tour in the Soviet Union. While there, they visited the Soviet's primate research facility. These scientists became alarmed that the Soviet Union was ahead of us in the "biomedical race". They testified to Congress about the need for a similar program in the United States if we were not to be left behind.

At that time, nearly 45 years ago, our understanding of primates was very limited and naive. Philosophers and ethicists of the time believed that the gulf between humans and other animals was wide and clearly defined: Only humans made, modified, and used tools. Only humans possessed language. Only humans possessed culture. Only humans participated in systematic warfare. Only humans could exhibit altruistic behavior. Only humans pondered death and participated in religious ritual. Monkeys and apes, while they might be something like us in appearance and biology were nothing like us inside, in heart and mind.

Today we know that those philosophers and ethicists were completely wrong.

Tool use in primates was first discovered in 1960 by Jane Goodall. Since that time we have learned that chimpanzees use an assortment of tools. Examples of meta-tool use, using a tool to modify or improve another tool, have been documented. Capuchins, a new world species of monkey, are known tools users as well; and macaques, an old world group, readily learn to operate computer joysticks.

Almost 30 years ago people began to search for ways to communicate with apes and monkeys. They wondered whether real language use was even possible for non-humans. Today, many chimpanzees have been taught American Sign Language and have been engaging in dialog with humans. From these conversations it is now clear that their perceptions of the world are nearly identical to ours. They combine words to coin new expressions for novel situations and objects which we fully understand. An example of this is a chimpanzee signing, "fruit drink" when

inventing a name for Kool Aid. Chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans, and gorillas have all been found to be adept at learning human language. To date, few humans have come close to learning a non-human primate language. Noam Chomsky once criticized the research in sign language saying that if chimpanzees were capable of a gestural language they would be using one in the wild. He believed that this put the matter to rest, but since then we have learned that chimpanzees do use such a language in the wild.

The discovery that chimpanzees use a gestural language in the wild has contributed to the understanding that culture is passed from generation to generation. Language and tool use are both used in unique ways between different chimpanzee groups. The knowledge of how to use a specific tool and specific gestures is learned and transmitted between generations. Rhesus macaques use at least 18 different words or phrases (calls) in the wild, but when raised in captivity, a culturally deprived setting, they learn only five or six.

It has been known for eons that animals will sometimes fight with each other, but systematic warfare was considered to be a uniquely human trait. It is now known that chimpanzees sometimes engage in long term aggression with neighboring groups and will systematically murder each member. This is accomplished through a group of mostly males silently searching for isolated members of the rival community and killing them. Such campaigns can last for months on end with frequently repeated excursions into the rival territory.

Altruism has long been a bastion of human uniqueness, but the frequency of adoption of orphaned babies in chimpanzee society is high. Chimpanzees are well known for their willingness to put themselves at risk to aid a friend. Gorillas will defend their group members to the death.

People observing chimpanzees in the wild have been given food by them. And who did not read of the child saved at the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago by Binti Jua, the captive lowland gorilla?

During a particularly violent lightning storm, Jane Goodall observed a group of chimpanzees repeatedly run down a hill one at a time brandishing a branch. After running down the hill screaming and waving the branch each chimpanzee would climb back up to repeat the performance. The group continued this ritual until the electrical storm had passed. Had an anthropologist observed the same phenomena while studying a tribe of humans she would have likely believed it to be a religious rite.

When asked what happens to you when you die, a gorilla answered in sign, “Dark. Ground.”

Today in biomedical laboratories around the world monkeys and apes are treated as if the past years of study mean nothing. The ethical and moral implications of what we now know about the similarities between human and non-human primates are ignored and suppressed by the National Institutes of Health and the primate labs themselves.

The Oregon Regional Primate Research Center: Oline K. Ronnekleiv is administering cocaine to pregnant mothers and unborn fetuses. He has “discovered” that chronic cocaine use causes brain damage. (Project number: 5 P51 RR00163-38).

Miles Novy “...studies...unanesthetized chronically catheterized maternal-fetal preparations...”. He wants to know how hormone levels change during pregnancy in rhesus macaques and baboons. (Project number: 5 R37 HDO6159-25).

Washington Regional Primate Research Center: Marnix L. Bosch has learned that HIV and SIV have, “...important biological differences.” He “discovered” this by infecting rhesus and pigtailed macaques. He infected them both orally and rectally. (Project number: 2 P51 RR00166-36).

Virginia M. Gunderson has received a “Scientist Development Award” to “...gain expertise...and,...acquire the skills to attain her career goals.” She is injecting chemicals into the brains of very young pigtailed macaques to try to induce seizures.

New England Regional Primate Research Center: Janice H. Kinsey designed a database to keep records on the large population of individually housed monkeys. She gathered data on the amount of various behaviors such as: “...pacing, bouncing, rocking,...self-biting, grasping, and hair pulling.” She learned that 10% of the center’s monkeys bite themselves. [Sometimes they chew off fingers, tail tips and chew holes in their arms that require veterinary care.] (PN# 5 P51 RR00168-36).

Alyssa Rulf Fountain, studying self-injurious behavior (SIB) such as self-biting, reports that, “...the causes are largely unknown.” (PN# 5 P51 RR00168-36).

Both of these studies are ongoing, but as early as 1990 researchers had found that even a small hole between cages of individually caged monkeys which allowed them to touch each other

stopped most of this behavior. Ms. Fountain's assertion notwithstanding, the cause of SIB has been well known for years: Most non-human primates are more social than humans and isolating them causes insanity. (See D. Blum, *The Monkey Wars*, pg. 191).

Wisconsin Regional Primate Research Center: Christopher L. Coe says that "Prior research at our laboratory has determined that stressful events experienced by the pregnant female monkey can affect her fetus...". Now he wants to know, "...whether the absence of breast milk and its soluble immune products exacerbates the effects of prenatal disturbance." (PN# R01 MH41659-12).

In a similar study at the Wisconsin center, researchers are scarring the amygdala (a deep brain structure) of female monkeys and frightening them. They want to know whether such stress can affect a baby born to such an afflicted mother.

Tulane Regional Primate Research Center: Margaret R. Clark is working to enlarge the breeding colony of rhesus macaques. She wishes the facility to produce an additional 150 babies a year. She says, "...infants will be removed [from their mothers and all adult monkeys] within three days of birth...Management practices will maximize the psychological well-being of the animals." (PN# 5 P51 RR00164-34, \$103,241).

Gamal M. Ghoniem is implanting vascular cuffs around the neck of the bladder of rhesus macaques. A lead to this cuff runs out of the monkeys' bodies and allows him to squeeze off the neck of the bladder while the monkeys attempt to urinate. He has found that monkeys whose bladder necks are most tightly closed take longer to pee than those with less obstruction. (PN# 5 P51 RR00164-36).

Yerkes Regional Primate Research Center: Leonard L. Howell has learned that monkeys trained to drink caffeine will self-administer lower doses than monkeys trained to receive intravenous injections. (PN# 5 P 51 RR00165-37).

Opendra Narayan has successfully developed a cross between SIV and HIV-1. He reports that this new virus he has created is, "highly pathogenic in pigtailed macaques." He does not mention whether it would be harmful to humans. (PN# 5 P51 RR00165-37).

Margarete Tigges is sewing the eyelids shut on newborn infants. (PN# 5 P51 RR00165-37).

California Regional Primate Research Center: David G. Amaral is using chemical means to permanently disconnect the amygdalas from the rest of the brain in male monkeys. He wants to know whether they will still be able to communicate with facial expression. He says this will help us understand criminality and psychopathic behavior in humans. (PN# 5 P51 RR00169-36).

William Gilbert is ligating (tying shut) esophagi and catheterizing the tracheas of fetus rhesus macaques. He characterizes this as chronic catheterization which means that these babies inside their mothers have these tubes in them for days or months on end. (PN# 5 RR000169-36).

What these examples teach is that the federally funded primate research centers around the United States have little regard for or understanding of the animals they experiment on. Any abuse is allowed in the name of Science. Studies routinely repeat experiments that have been done on humans. Monkeys are disposed of as if they are broken equipment.

Every center has received warnings about the condition of the animals' housing. Every center keeps monkeys in isolation. Every center receives over 10 million dollars a year. Expansion is underway around the country. Every law to protect and enhance the life of these animals has been heavily lobbied against by the biomedical community.

The researchers say this work is important because we learn about humans since monkeys and apes are so like us, but at the same time they say we should not be concerned over the torment these animals suffer because they are so unlike us.

Biomedical researchers have made the same arguments and done similar things to minorities throughout history. The research taking place at the NIH Regional Primate Research Centers is just more of the same. Its root cause is the bigotry that is always associated with unbridled hubris. Only when people speak out will it end.

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All education should be directed toward the refinement of the individual's sensibilities in relation not only to one's fellow humans everywhere, but to all living things whatsoever.

Ashley Montagu (1905- )

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## One

If we are born into this life to learn something, then I received some extra tutoring during the 96/97 school year. The year began on an off note. At the end of the previous school year I was asked to change teaching assignments. The school needed someone to teach seventh grade math and seventh and eighth grade science because of a change in our school's organizational scheme as conceived by our principal, Greg Newton, who was just beginning his second year at Prairie City Schools. I was probably the most qualified among the middle school staff to fulfill this need.

I had discussed with Mr. Newton my uncertainty about the seventh grade life science classes. I knew that he envisioned a very hands-on science curriculum, and while I agreed that science education should include experience with the scientific process – hypothesize, test, theorize – I was loath to do any activities involving living animals or prepared animal specimens. My own observations of standard life science curricula suggested that dissection activities were (and are) of little real educational value. I had been an ethical vegetarian, sometime vegan, since 1972 and was not willing to compromise my beliefs. Newton had said he understood my concern, and he did not believe that it would cause any problem. We also talked generally about what parts of the new textbook and lab manual to use because the entire class was being condensed into a twelve-week block and anything more than the most cursory survey would require choosing two or three topics to pursue. I told him I would like some assistance choosing the parts of the text to use. Newton said he would write an outline of the lessons to teach, and that I could pick up the materials and outline a couple of weeks before school started.

I left for the summer with some uneasiness and foreboding, but quickly put it out of mind. We were building the home of our dreams high in the mountains outside of town. We were running a

few power tools with our small generator, but most of the work was labor intensive and Lynn and I were the only laborers we had. The physical work and planning took my mind away from school.

A couple of weeks before school was to begin I stopped by and picked up the science materials. Newton had written an outline for the class and had identified the lab exercises he thought the class should be able to cover in the twelve weeks. At home I began to look through his suggestions. The first couple of labs were on safe laboratory procedure and microscope use. These were followed by labs on earthworm and grasshopper anatomy. The labs were dissection activities. I was almost shocked.

I was shortly in Newton's office.

"I thought we had talked about dissection last year and that you understood my feelings. I was under the impression that I had made myself pretty clear on this issue."

"What are you talking about Rick? The students need this experience."

I was starting to shake a little. I really hate conflict and confrontation and the last thing I wanted was to start off the new school year in conflict with the new principal. Also, twenty years of talking to friends about treating animals with respect and compassion had been met with uniform blank stares; I had little doubt that going over my many reasons for not wanting to harm another being were going to be any more successful in this situation. "I won't do this Greg. This is my eighth year here and everyone knows how I feel. The other teachers would be shocked if they knew you were asking me, of all people, to teach this class." My peculiar dietary and ethical positions were quite well known among the staff and throughout the small community.

"I'm sorry Rick; I guess I just didn't realize how strongly you felt. When you get to those lessons I'll come in and teach them."

"I can't believe this."

We never did get to those lessons, for some reason. We studied plants and looked at old slides that were already in the lab. We grew mold, yeast and examined exotic mushrooms. We looked at organisms in pond water and then returned the water to the pond from which it came. We did do one series of experiments with eggs I got from a free-range grower. Today, I wouldn't have done even that, but then, I was less aware, still groggy.

## Two

The beginning of a school year is a time full of promise for teachers. We think about past years when we might have done just a bit more and dream of what the upcoming year has in store.

Days, sometimes weeks, before students arrive teachers are at work in their rooms trying to get everything just right. First impressions are so important and we want the first day, that first moment, to set the tone for the rest of the year. Parents sometimes decide to send their children a day or two late under the impression that the first days are unimportant, but what the child misses is a special moment that takes place but once a year. That first moment is so full of promise and magic that I lose sleep the night before going over and over the scene in my mind, ticking off each pre-orchestrated item: desks just so, where I'll be standing, what I will say first, the morning's schedule - so unlike any that will come again during the year; I toss and turn all night.

Getting ready for this first morning normally takes a few days. First, I clean and sort all the cupboards in the room after the last packing and cramming moments of the year before. I look at old posters and displays and wonder what should be out for the beginning few weeks.

In late August of 1996 I was in my room getting ready for the first day of school putting on the final polish. The last thing I had to prepare was a set of classroom rules.

For the four previous years I had been teaching a self-contained sixth grade class. I was responsible for teaching all subjects except physical education and foreign language. Normally in my room, one of the first class activities of the year had been to cooperatively develop a set of

class rules. By the time students arrive in sixth grade they are experts at what is and is not allowed in a classroom setting, and this procedure rarely takes more than 20 to 30 minutes, but it does allow discussion about what my limits are and at the same time allows some ownership for the students. Generally, we create the rules on the blackboard and then a volunteer or two will work on turning them into a poster that hangs on the wall throughout the rest of the year. They always have a “student-made” look.

This year was different though. Along with the seventh and eighth grade science classes, I had been asked to teach the seventh grade math and remedial high school math classes. So instead of having the same group of kids in my room all day I was now going to have a different group every period. Thinking about the first day repeating itself over and over made me decide to post a set of rules that every class would follow without the usual cooperative process of developing them.

### **Classroom Rules**

1. Escort little visitors outside.
2. Be polite.
3. Be prepared to do your best.
4. Books will be covered.
5. No food, gum or drinks.

### **Consequences**

1. Name on board - warning.
2. Name with one check - 10 minutes after school.
3. Name with two checks - 10 minutes and call home.
4. Name with three checks - 10 minutes, and parent conference with principal.

### ***Sentences !***

About the only rules my students were ever actually punished for breaking were the book cover rule and the food, gum, and drink rule. For repeat offenders and those who seemed to need a little extra encouragement I sometimes resorted to assigning copious sentence writing, or as my

students would complain, paragraph writing. For instance: Suppose Bess had been warned about not having a cover on her book for a few days in a row and had not come in at recess or after school to have me help her put one on her book. I would assign her a statement and have her copy it twenty-five times “Mr. Bogle has reminded the entire class many times to keep a cover on their book to protect it from damage. I am glad he is giving me this extra practice to help me remember to keep my book covered.” This is what the “Sentences!” statement at the bottom of the rules refers to. The hard-line consequence schedule was in place to assist with a student who was genuinely disruptive to the learning environment.

### Three

Classrooms are expressions of who the teacher is. In my wife’s classroom the walls are covered with fine art and poetry; in other classrooms scenes and maps from historical events and times dominate the decor. I have a very religious friend who subtly displays religious sayings and who keeps a Bible on his desk.

Since I was teaching math I had filled my bulletin boards and most of my wall space with math related posters and displays. I was teaching the life science classes in the high school science lab but had all the seventh and eighth graders in my regular classroom at some point during the day, so I had placed some posters of animals around the room as well. The classroom rules were above the door.

In my classroom, killing has never been sanctioned. For seven years I had told my students that they could catch and examine the creatures who found their way into our classroom, but that they could not intentionally harm them. Everyone – human or otherwise – who came into my classroom was safe. One cold fall we had an exceptional influx of mice into the building and I learned the custodian was setting traps. My sixth grade class designed and built live traps and ridded the building of these unwanted guests with nary a fatality. We also found the hole the mice were using to come in and had it sealed. Classrooms and the activities students are asked to engage in are a reflection of the teacher.

## Four

[Italicized sections were written by my wife, Lynn Pauly.]

*Prairie City School is not a very attractive school. The word that comes to mind when I think of the buildings is . . . brown. Brown tables, brown walls, brown doors; brown exterior paint, and brown carpeting. Since the mascot is the Panther, there's also a splash of black and orange once in a while, but the brown pervades. The building where Rick's classroom was located is the Bates building which houses the middle school grades. The Bates building had been physically moved from the old mill town of Bates after the mill's lease on the property had expired. As a part of the lease, the company had been required to return the property to near its original state. This entailed removing about a hundred houses, the mill itself, and the school. Prairie City paid to have the building moved the thirty or so miles through a very winding mountain highway at approximately five miles an hour.*

*Across the playground from the Bates Building lies the elementary building, and connected to it by a gymnasium is the high school and the offices of the superintendent and principal. It seems that aesthetics have never been a priority at Prairie City. Money is spent on technology, sports, and agriculture education. Sidewalks are cracked, roofs leak, and old furniture can accumulate in the driveway, along with uncovered grounds equipment.*

*However, the view from the school is spectacular. Strawberry Mountain, the dominant landmark in the valley, is in view to the south and the Elkhorn Mountain range is visible to the east. The John Day Valley is a beautifully scenic place to live. The Malheur National Forest, a forest of pines and firs, lines both sides of the valley while the narrow John Day River meanders its way along the valley floor. During the first weeks of school it would not be unusual to see smoke in the distance from late forest fires, as well as the ubiquitous green Forest Service vehicles driving fire fighters back and forth from fire camps.*

*I remember helping Rick get ready for this particular year. Our friends and land partners Zeke and Donna Becker lived in town less than a mile from the school. Their daughter, Logan, and son, Matthew, liked to come and play around in Rick's classroom while he was getting his room*

*ready for school. We'd munch chips, drink Cokes, and listen to the Beatles while deciding where to hang which poster. I remember the sign with the rules being right above the door. I thought the statement "Escort little visitors outside" was a positive one, and I had it hanging in my classroom as well. Neither of us expected any sort of reaction from it.*

*This year was different from others because he was trying to make it look like a math room, rather than a self-contained 6<sup>th</sup> grade room. Rick was a little worried about the switch, since his favorite thing in teaching is talking to kids and listening to what they have to say. He gets involved in discussions with his students and was worried that math wouldn't allow him to reach the level of communication he loved so much. But, the switch was made, and he was optimistic about the new year.*

*To see him, you'd never guess he was an elementary teacher. Tall, dark, with a full beard, and a rather ruffled appearance, Rick looks more like a carpenter or a timber worker than a schoolteacher. I can still see him, sitting on his high stool at the front of the classroom, giving the room one final look as we finished for the day. He'd have the books on the desks, ready to be covered, the schedule on the chalkboard, the overhead projector clean with pens ready, and his desk neat and organized. Like the other Bates Building teachers, he'd make do with what he had and overlook the lack of supplies and conveniences.*

## Five

Shortly after the school year began I received a note asking me to contact a parent about a concern they had. I called Wanda Voigt and asked her what she was worried about.

"Is it true you have a rule about killing bugs in your room?" asked Wanda.

"Yes," I told her. "It is the same rule I've had for going on eight years now."

“Well, Shannon and I don’t think that’s right. It’s like you teaching your religion or something. This is how all this damn environmental stuff always starts, and we’ve got to put a stop to it. What do you think about the Clean Stream Initiative?”

The Clean Stream Initiative was a statewide ballot initiative being voted on in November. It would have required ranchers to fence livestock out of native waterways in an effort to restore salmon habitat. The local ranchers felt under attack from the environmental community. The loggers had been at odds with the environmental community for years and such conflict had long been a large part of the local culture. The native-born locals liked to stereotype all those who felt that forests and wildlife deserved some sort of protections as trouble making outsiders. It was, and remains, one of an *us versus them* mentality.

I told Wanda that I supported the measure but did not understand what that had to do with encouraging children to be kind in my classroom.

“We just don’t think a child should be punished for killing a damn bug. I kill them all the time. And we teach our kids to kill them.”

“Wanda, I’ve had this rule for nearly eight years now, and no one has ever complained. I’ve never punished anyone for not honoring the rule other than talking to them privately. What the students do outside my room is their decision and what you teach at home is yours, but killing is not allowed in my classroom. If you think this is unfair maybe we can work something out to accommodate your concern.

“We want you to get rid of that bug-killin’ rule.”

“I believe that I get to decide what happens in my classroom.”

“I think you better call back and talk to Shannon,” Wanda answered.

When I finally got Shannon Voigt on the phone he had just come in from punching cows.

“Hello Shannon. This is Rick Bogle. I understand you are concerned about my classroom rules.”

“That’s right Bogle. I’m only gonna tell you this one time. Wanda and I didn’t like that rule when Megan was in your room. We didn’t say anything then, but I’m tellin’ you now: Get that rule down or I’m goin’ after your job. You know I’m a man of my word. So what’s it gonna be? You gonna take it down?”

“If you think I’m going to do anything you ask based on a threat you are sorely mistaken. If you want to pursue this you should speak with Mr. Newton.”

I ain’t a threatening you! I’m just a sayin’ what I’m gonna do!”

“Maybe I could make an exception in Mindy’s case since this seems to be so important to you.”

“We ain’t just sayin’ this for Mindy. We think all the kids should be able to kill a damned bug if they want to.”

“I don’t think that is going to happen Shannon. You should probably make an appointment to see Mr. Newton and file a complaint.”

## Six

*I remember this day so well. From what I remember of the story, the Voigts were eating dinner when Mindy mentioned to her dad that if she killed a bug in Mr. Bogle’s room she’d get in trouble. It was probably an innocent comment after someone swatted a fly or an ant, not one meant to cause any type of a problem between her father and Rick. At the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, most students don’t want any communication between their parents and their teachers. I’m sure she didn’t expect the volatile reaction from her father that came from that comment.*

*But were we surprised? No. Our drive home was a long one, long enough that we could talk about our day at school, complain, laugh, and share ideas we had on teaching. When Rick told*

*me about Shannon's complaint, I'm sure we laughed and shook our heads, and while I thought it would all blow over, I think Rick sensed trouble brewing.*

*Greg Newton was a tall, thin man, about 50 years or so. He wore glasses and he had a thin face with his eyes set very close together. I'd often see him walking to school, and he would wave, but seemed preoccupied with the many details involved with his job. He seemed to me to be a decent principal. He was an outsider, and he didn't have any old family loyalties. Between him and Rick I felt that they would be able to communicate with Shannon, smooth his ruffled feathers, and that would be the end of that.*

*Rick had a history of calming down parents who would come in upset about this or that. They would enter angry with a list of concerns and leave laughing and smiling, thanking him for his time and concern. But he'd never made a Voigt angry.*

## Seven

The Voigts are old timers in Prairie City. Shannon is the youngest of five boys. His oldest brother, Michael, was at one time one of my closest friends. He used to tell me how his father, Carl, a small hard man who speaks in a nearly undecipherable rural dialect, used to come home from the sawmill and whip all five of the boys if one of them had misbehaved or failed to get his chores done. He worked to make his sons as mean as himself and has been largely successful. I remember once when Michael took one of his sons out to kill something; not because they were go hunting *per se* or to put some creature out of his or her misery, but simply because he thought it was "time for the boy to learn to kill." The Voigts also teach their sons that they are better than everyone else and deserve more. The boys grow up believing this and preaching it to everyone they encounter. Interestingly, the Voigt boys have spawned a few daughters along the way as well as sons; generally, the girls are as polite and genuine as any students I have ever had in my classes.

The Voigts are members of the small kernel of Prairie City town bosses. Fighting them is daunting. Within a few days, Wanda, Shannon, and I met with Mr. Newton. Newton saw himself as progressive and experienced in dealing with ultraconservative parents. He had never dealt with a Voigt.

Greg and I sat in his office before Shannon and Wanda arrived.

“Rick, they just want to blow off some steam. People see the schools as the only place they can have an impact on government.”

“You don’t know these people Greg. They think they should be in charge of everything. Shannon has already threatened to get me fired if I don’t do what he says. A few years ago one of his brothers tried to get a teacher fired for having her first graders share pencils. They called her a communist. They made her life hell. She’s not here any more.”

“Rick, I’ve been through this sort of thing a lot. Quit worrying.”

Shannon arrived a short time later with a sheet of “Beef Facts.” Wanda arrived a few moments later.

“Mr. Newton,” I began, “Shannon and Wanda feel that my classroom rule, banning the killing of bugs, is unfair. I disagreed and explained the complaint procedure to them. That’s why we’re here.”

“We know Rick’s a good teacher,” began Wanda in her thick Eastern Oregon drawl, “but we just feel like he’s trying to impose his views on the kids, and we think that’s wrong.”

“We ain’t got no problem with his teachin’,” Shannon joined in, the Voigt dialect in clear evidence. “We know he don’t agree with ranchin’ or huntin’. But look here,” Shannon pointed to his “Beef Facts” sheet. A beef is 100% efficient. Now what do you think of that? We use them for meat, tires, and medicine. I bet Bogle didn’t know all that.”

“We ain’t got no trouble with Rick’s teachin’,” chimed Wanda, “we just feel like the kids are getting a one-sided education. They’re not gettin’ to hear the whole story.”

I sat there thinking about the one-sided education the kids were getting. Shannon’s father, Carl, ran hounds to chase mountain lions. Houndsmen sit and listen to their dogs baying until they hear a change in their tone that signals them that the dogs have treed a cat. Then they follow the sound and shoot the cougar sitting in the tree. Carl Voigt’s dogs lived on chains behind the house running back and forth on the overhead cables they were tethered to. He had taught his sons that animals were of no value unless you could use them in some way: eat them, chase them, kill them, or sell them.

I thought about the 4-H pigs my students raised every year and the early year essays I had read about their sense of loss and betrayal.

I thought about the hunter education classes put on by the Oregon State Department of Fish and Wildlife for fifth and sixth grade children. I thought about the kids I knew who had killed their first deer sitting on their father’s lap, and the kids I knew who had been branding and castrating calves since they could remember. I thought about the frenzy that overcomes the school during deer and elk hunting season and the stories the six grade boys would tell every fall about the ways the deer or elk fell or how long it took to track it down after wounding him or her, or about how they had given up looking if it had gotten too dark. I thought about the woodshop classes to learn how to mount a deer’s head. And about the shop teacher who laughed with his students about the laws that allowed killing at only certain times a year and who wore his conviction for poaching like a badge of honor. I thought of the pheasants being raised behind the school to release and hunt.

I thought about the high school students who came to school boasting of clubbing porcupines to death or intentionally hitting cats with their pickup trucks.

I thought of the meals on the tables in my students' homes and in the school cafeteria. I thought of the local feedlots and the thousands of cows in the pastures lining the highway.

I thought about the student-raised calves and pigs at the county fair.

I thought about the Halloween carnival and the goldfish given away as prizes who sometimes ended up in the garbage. I thought about the town crowded into the gymnasium to hoot and holler at the donkeys with the fools on their backs urging them up and down the basketball court during the annual spectacle called 'donkey basketball.'

I thought of many dogs chained behind the dark weathered houses throughout town spending their lives with nothing to do. I thought of all the times I had bitten my lip rather than speak out or criticize the status quo.

"You know," I think the kids are getting a one-sided education, but it's sure not my side. For seven years now, I've felt that I had to keep my opinions to myself. I have done nothing but teach my students to respect the choices their parents have made. I've never felt at liberty to preach to my kids. Teachers who do preach to their students know my opinion of such behavior by a teacher. But suggesting that the students are getting some sort of unbalanced world perspective because they have me as a teacher is ludicrous."

"We just want you to take that stupid rule down."

"Listen," I answered, "you say the kids are getting an unbalanced education, and I agree. If you let me teach a balanced animal issue lesson, really teach both sides of the issue, I'll take my rule down. I've never felt that I was allowed to talk to the kids about these matters. If you let me do this and allow the kids to decide for themselves I'll remove my rule."

Obviously they would never agree.

"Fine," answered Shannon.

“We don’t have no problem with that as long as it’s balanced and fair,” added Wanda.

My mouth was hanging open. “Mr. Newton?” I inquired. “Can we do this? Can we drop math for awhile so I can do something on animal issues with the kids?”

“We’d want to see what sorta thing Rick was gonna teach,” said Wanda.

“Certainly,” said Greg. “In fact, I organized a similar activity in my previous school. The issue there was the spotted owl and logging. We provided the students with the most authentic learning activity and experience that they had ever had. It changed the community. There is no reason why this could not end up being an exceptional learning experience for everyone here as well.”

“That’s fine,” said Shannon. “Just as long as that rule comes down.”

## Eight

*Our 120 acres in the Strawberry Mountains had been Rick’s home base for the past 20 years, and even though he knew he didn’t fit in with the ranchers and the loggers, Rick always felt that if you treated people fairly and honestly that they would do the same for you. Once the Voigts got involved with the issue of Rick’s classroom rule, the faith he had in his friends, acquaintances, and students as well as their parents began to wane as the town bosses started to poison the good relationships he had. Here’s a piece from my journal early in the school year which exemplifies his feelings before the whole Voigt thing erupted:*

*“Sometimes I can’t believe I live here,” I said as I sat in the passenger side of the pick up. I was facing out my window, gazing at the downed pines, left after a neighbor had logged his land. “It looks messy to me, I wish they’d pick up the leftovers, but instead they lie there, in a confusing pile.”*

*“You know, Lynn,” Rick said, “there’s another way to look at it.” My eyes darted to him. I’m curious and love it when he does this.*

*“If we weren’t here, if we were living, say, in Ashland, or another less red-neck, less good old boy area, these kids would never have any exposure to a different view.” I stared at him as he talked, his eyes are the color of tobacco, with just a touch of green, like an artist tipped her brush into the hooker green by accident. He went on, “It’s not that I ever try to convince the kids of my opinions, we can’t do that, but they know how I feel, and it’s just a gentle exposure which they wouldn’t get if we weren’t here. It would just be the same old, spiel..huntin’, fishin’, and loggin’.*

*I liked that. I so badly wanted to love the land here, but I got so disillusioned by the narrow mindedness.”*

## Nine

When I got home that evening I told Lynn that it looked like I was going to get to teach some sort of animal rights unit. Lynn, who often sees into the heart of an issue, told me I was nuts.

“Rick, they’re never going to let you do that. You know how these people are. There’d be some sort of riot if they thought you were going to say something bad about hunting or ranching.”

“I know, and I can’t believe it either. But Greg said he has presented controversial topics before at his other schools and thinks this might be interesting. And, of course, we have the blessing of Shannon and Wanda. Greg’s going to talk to the school board.”

## Ten

The next Friday afternoon the fifth grade teacher, Dianna Burrill, the sixth grade teacher, Dianne Lesniak, the junior high language arts teacher, Tracy Bent, the junior high social studies teacher, Marvin Northcut, Greg Newton, and I met to discuss the possibilities of my idea and Newton’s experiences at his previous schools.

Since I had already spoken with them about my problem with the Voigts they all understood the history of the situation. Other than Tracy and Marvin, who were both new to Prairie this year, the rest of them all had had some sort of Voigt experience.

I had taught with Diane and Dianna for the past few years and we considered each other friends. I was especially worried about Dianna's feelings because she lived on a ranch and her children and husband were very involved in ranching and rodeo. Much to my amazement, Dianna became a real supporter of the idea of teaching children about animal issues. She felt that she and her husband, Bob, went out of their way to always treat their stock with respect and compassion and believed that children should be taught those things as well. Throughout the rest of this tumultuous year Dianna was to remain my staunch supporter in the face of her family's and friend's pointed attacks against me and subtle slights against her.

During our discussion and with Newton's encouragement and guidance we decided that rather than a single lesson or even a short unit, there was no reason not to use animal rights as a vehicle for a multi-strand integrated critical thinking unit. This model of curriculum delivery has been used in education for years and helps students understand that math, reading, writing, and listening are not discrete but are interwoven throughout learning and understanding.

We began to imagine a unit lasting for two or three weeks that would culminate in a position paper by each student and possibly a peer presentation of their paper. At this point I was imagining the hall of the Bate's Building, our area of the school, covered with essays explaining why each student felt that meat, raising cattle, and hunting were all acceptable. I had few delusions about any fundamental change in their attitudes.

The next time we met we had enlarged our group to include Loren Bebb, the shop and agriculture teacher. We had also told Wanda that she should feel free to participate in our planning sessions. Students were released at noon on Fridays to allow for faculty meetings and other administrative needs. Over the next ten weeks the group met nearly every Friday and discussed our planning efforts.

Wanda Voigt stopped by and sat in on the meetings a few times and usually expressed her irritation with our slow progress, “It just seems to be takin’ a long time; we wanna get on with it.” Wanda took home copies of the materials we were writing and gathering. She never made any comment other than complaining about the length of time it was taking.

## Eleven

Eventually the curriculum and activities took shape. We decided to start with a survey to assess and activate the students’ current beliefs and opinions concerning animal issues.

The survey was to be followed with short readings and discussions about each of the essays in *Animal Rights*, a volume from the University of Minnesota’s Point/Counterpoint Series written for middle school students.

The survey and readings part of the curriculum was expected to last for one week. In the seventh and eighth grades this was to be accomplished during the twenty-five minute daily home room; a time usually spent visiting, being fussed at, and getting not much done. Diane and Dianna would work it into their own classes’ schedules.

The second week would be a series of seven, perhaps eight, lectures by animal welfare professionals and representatives of the agricultural community. The students were expected to develop a few questions for the speakers and take notes during the talks for use in their papers.

The third week was going to be used for research and formulation of an opinion through some pre-writing. And finally, one week to write, edit, and produce their final paper. We expected that the students would come away from the unit with a broad understanding of the issue and would have been exposed to a variety of viewpoints that they would attempt to evaluate critically. We were all pretty excited with the plan and believed that the students would be learning skills that they would be able to draw on throughout the rest of their academic years.

The survey results were going to be used in a couple of different ways. First, the results were going to be used as data for a math unit on statistics, graphing, and practice with computer technology. Second, the students would be able to use the data in their papers. We discussed the possibility of a follow up survey to see if any statistical change had taken place.

It fell to me to oversee the writing of the survey since I was going to be using the results for their math class. I wrote a list of about thirty questions and passed them around to Mr. Newton and the other teachers. A few people suggested some changes and additions. All the suggested modifications were incorporated into the final instrument.

Here is the final survey:

1. I am a

A. Boy

B. Girl

2. I am in

A. 5<sup>th</sup> grade

B. 6<sup>th</sup> grade

C. 7<sup>th</sup> grade

D. 8<sup>th</sup> grade

3. I think being kind to animals is important

Strongly

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly

Agree

Disagree

----5----

----4----

----3----

----2----

----1----

[The next twenty-four questions had identical scales to mark, but I have left them out here.]

4. For humans, a well-balanced, healthful diet includes meat.

5. Big animals like whales are more important than little animals like mice.

6. At a rodeo, it does matter if a calf is harmed or frightened during a calf-roping contest.

7. I think some animals have feelings like love, fear, sadness, and hope.
8. I think animals can experience pain.
9. Only humans have feelings like love, fear, sadness, and hope.
10. Scientists have proven that animals do not feel pain.
11. Scientist have proven that animals do not have emotions.
12. I would rather shoot an elk than just watch it in the wild.
13. Scientists should be allowed to conduct experiments on animals which cause pain if the experiments might help find the cure for a human disease.
14. Scientists should be allowed to kill primates if the experiment is interesting.
15. I am kind to animals.
16. Scientists should be allowed to force feed animals to find out how much of a chemical it takes to kill them.
17. Scientists should be allowed to electro-shock animals to investigate the emotion of fear.
18. Scientists should be allowed to put a chemical in a rabbit's eyes to find out how fast the chemical causes blindness.
19. Animals are here for humans to use as they wish.

20. It is mankind's job to care for and protect animals.
21. An animal can show love toward a human.
22. Animals can show love toward another animal.
23. We should protect animals from being harmed or used against their will by humans.
24. I don't think dogs should be chained up all the time.
25. Human beings are kind to animals.
26. My favorite foods include meat.
27. I would like to have a fair animal. [Raising a 4-H animal is a popular summer activity.]
28. We should go out of our way to kill insects like bees, mosquitoes, and spiders.
29. Humans have the right to treat animals any way they want to because
  - a. Humans are smarter
  - b. There are more humans
  - c. My parents say so
  - d. Humans rule the world
  - e. I don't believe humans have the right
30. I like sport hunting because
  - a. I enjoy eating game
  - b. I like the trophy
  - c. I like doing things with my parents

- d. I get to shoot a gun
- e. I like killing things
- f. My family needs the food
- g. I don't like hunting

## Twelve

We administered the survey on a Monday.

As my class came into the room I asked them all to take out a pen or pencil and to clear their desks. Immediately a little moaning began.

“Hey! This is homeroom!”

“Yeah! We don't have to do work in homeroom.”

“Mr. Bogle, what kind of survey is it?” asked a more mature student.

“Well, all of the Bates teachers have been working on a special activity, and this is sort of like the beginning. What I want you to do is answer all the questions as honestly as you can. The survey is completely anonymous; no one but you will ever know what you answer unless you tell them. I'll answer any questions you have about the survey after you answer the questions.”

More grumbling.

“Where do we put our names?”

“Do we have to do this?”

“Yes, I want everyone to answer the questions.” I did an example on the board to explain the scale and told them, “No, it doesn't matter whether you use pen.”

After everyone had finished and turned in their papers there wasn't much time left in the period. I explained what this unit was going to be about and handed out permission slips and an overview written for the parents. We had decided that since we could not know exactly what a speaker was going to say, that it would probably make good sense to require parental permission for their child to participate. We saw this as a formality and safeguard.

Dear Parents,

With permission from our Board of Directors and with a great amount of planning and preparation by our Middle School Staff we are almost ready to embark on a three week, integrated learning experience with all our students in grades 5-8. This experience will pull together every strand of our Middle School Curriculum from Language Arts to Science centered around the topic of Ethical Treatment of Animals. Each of our students will be attempting to think critically, research, organize, evaluate and present in written and oral form what they have learned over a three-week period concerning this topic.

This will be an opportunity for our students to come away from their textbooks and attempt to use what they have already learned to study a real world issue. While we involve our students in this experience each of our teachers will continue to monitor the middle school curricular goals each student is expected to meet. As a result, each teacher is hard at work trying to adapt elements of the everyday teaching of the curricular basics into this learning experience. For example, in Mathematics our students will be dealing with how to find such things as the mean, mode, and median in a sample of data and learning to graph such data in a way that clarifies the results of a survey. In Social Studies and Language Arts they will be learning to interpret written information, apply it in an argument and report it in a presentation supporting a premise they have developed. In sum, they will be engaging in active learning applying and practicing skills that they will use throughout their school careers.

As an integral part of this experience during the week of November 18 - 22 we are inviting guest speakers to present their ideas to the students on this topic of Ethical Treatment of Animals. We

would like to invite you to attend these presentation sessions when you can. A complete calendar of times and dates will be sent home when all our guests have given us the times they will be available during the week. Our speakers include: Mr. Gary Delaney, Grant County Extension Agent; Mr. Jack Southworth, Grant County Stock Growers Association President; Mr. Tim Underwagner, Resident Game Biologist, Department of Fish and Game Management in Grant County; Mr. Tim Del Curtel, Agriculture Instructor at Eastern Oregon State College, and Manager of the State Agriculture Experimental Station in Union County; Ms. Nancy Perry, Lawyer and Spokesperson for the Cougar and Bear Initiative in Oregon; Ms. Becky Maddok, Animal Control Officer for Union County; and Mr. Tim Cotton, Manager of the Blue Mountain Humane Society, La Grande, Oregon. In addition, we are attempting to secure one more speaker to balance our presentation.

In our desire to have parent involvement in this learning experience we would like you to grant permission for your student to the guest speaker sessions. We suspect that some of you may not feel comfortable with certain of these speakers and as such if for any reason this might be the case we would ask you to let your son's or daughter's teacher know in advance and an alternative study session will be provided. We have enclosed with this letter a series of Point-Counter Point arguments that we plan to use as a basis for prompting our students to begin this experience. Please call any one of us if you have questions or concerns. We are really excited about embarking on a real world learning adventure with our students. Our forum promises to enlighten us all and to bring our students the hands-on experience that text driven learning often fails miserably to deliver.

The following dynamic arguments are the premise statements our students will be considering in embarking on this experience. It is our hope that each student will come away from this experience knowing more about where they lie on the continuum between the statements below.

**Human needs are more important than Animal rights.**

**Animal rights are more important than Human needs.**

**Hunting is beneficial to Wildlife.**

**Hunting is not beneficial to Wildlife.**

**Animal experimentation is essential.**

**Animal experimentation is not essential.**

**Animals should be used for food.**

**Animals should not be used for food.**

**Animals should have rights.**

**Animals should not have rights.**

Sincerely,

Middle Grade Staff and Mr. Newton

I could tell that a few of the students had been disturbed by the survey as they left the room. Comments to each other had a tone of defensiveness. After school, the other teachers said they had similar experiences and Tracy reported that the eighth grade had almost revolted.

Thirteen

I have always gotten to school early; I am often the first person in the building. On Tuesday morning I went over to the school's main building, which housed the administrative offices, teachers' room, and the high school, to pick up my mail. The secretary had just come in and had found a student's father waiting at the front door. She was unlocking the office as I went by.

I went into the teachers' room down the hall and took all the catalogs and special offers out of my box. I threw the offers away and the catalogs into the recycling box. Mixed with them were two *While you were outs* . . . asking me to return calls from two different parents. As I went back past the office the secretary called out to me, "Rick, Gary would like to see a copy of the survey Laura took yesterday and the book you are going to be using."

“Sure,” I answered, wondering why Gary had come to school so early. “I’ll bring one of each over.”

When I came back there were five or six more parents I knew in the office. The secretary told me she might need some more sets of material. I went back over to the Bates Building and gathered up the few extra copies I had and asked an early student to take a note around to the other teachers asking each of them to send their extra copies to the office. Eventually, the secretary had to print even more as parent after parent showed up wanting to know what was being taught to their children.

Things continued to get crazier during the day. By the time homeroom rolled around the students were in a heightened emotional state. They were well aware that parents had been queuing up for a copy of the materials and the opinions of some of the parents were quickly becoming the standard line. As the students came into the room, four or five came up and told me they were supposed to wait in the office if we talked about animal rights. Others could not figure out why their friends seemed so mad and upset.

Once we got settled down and those who needed to left, we read and discussed the introductory articles in *Animal Rights*: “An Introduction to Opposing Viewpoints” and “What is the Difference Between Fact and Opinion?” two sample viewpoints written by fictitious middle school students “Tessa” and “Zeke,” and an analysis of the two view points. The students who stayed were able to enter into a reasonable discussion of the materials.

Shortly after this a parent came in steaming. “What’s this got to do with school? Where’d you get this stuff?” she had a copy of *Animal Rights* in her hand. “Look at this!”

She opened the booklet to one of the political cartoons, which showed two deer running from a hunter, and saying, “Why don’t they thin their own damn herd?”

“Is this what we are teaching now?”

“Political cartoons are a classic way to comment on controversial issues,” I told her.

“If my daughter used this kind of language in school she’d be expelled!”

I told her I didn’t think that was true. In fact, a short walk down the high school hallway would quickly dispel the illusion that “damn” would be a cause for expulsion.

“So where did you get this one-sided stuff?” she demanded.

“It’s from the University of Minnesota School of Education, and I didn’t find it to be biased to any large degree. Have you read all the articles?”

“I saw the cartoons. Lenorra will not be participating!”

Apparently, critical thinking was something she did not want her daughter engaging in.

That afternoon after school it was becoming apparent that we had disturbed a hornets’ nest of emotion in the community. The other teachers were reporting that their students were quite balky about discussing the issue and were blaming me for all the controversy. The blame was not too surprising since I was the only vegetarian the students and most the staff had ever known, and my ethical views were common knowledge. What was a little surprising was the strength of the reaction. For the students to have such confusion could only mean that their parents were talking about it at home and blaming me for something bad in front of their children. Animal rights was clearly a taboo in Prairie City.

#### Fourteen

Frankly, the timing could not have been worse. The Clean Stream Initiative had ranchers on the defensive. A local doctor, Patrick Shipsey, was one of the primary sponsors and had also just been accused of shooting some cows who had been repeatedly entering his property. Editorials to the local papers were calling for his summary hanging. It turned out that the cows’ owner had

been feuding with the doctor for some time and had been pointedly not closing gates or repairing fences. It also turned out that Shipsey had indeed shot the cows, and that these were not the first of his neighbor's wandering cows he had dispatched.

Also, the hunting lobby had gotten an initiative on the state-wide ballot to try and repeal a ban on hounding cougars and baiting bears which was receiving strong opposition from anti-hunting and pro-animal groups. The community was heavily pro-hunting and the idea that it was now more difficult to find a bear or cat to kill had rankled many of the old-timers.

And, the school had made a bid to purchase the county airport as part of a school-to-work program that was drawing repeated large local turnouts in opposition. On the evening before we started the animal unit there had been a very large public meeting where the airport deal was finally defeated. This was a major political loss for Don Coffey, the district superintendent, and Gary Judd, the school board president, who had both been working for nearly a year to sell the idea to the community. The fact that Judd was also the airport manager had raised the eyebrows of a number of people. At least a hundred people, including of course, a Voigt contingent, were in attendance during that meeting. Near the end of the meeting, sensing apparently that they had the administration on the run, Shannon Voigt stood up and began ranting about me and what the school was teaching the kids about animal rights. Wanda eventually got him under control.

During the series of airport meetings people had suggested that the school's financial situation was being manipulated by the administration. For most of the following month, Carole Voigt, Carl's wife and the matriarch of the family, could be found sitting in the Prairie City School's clerk's office scrutinizing the school's books.

In all, the school was at a nadir of support from the community, the ranchers felt under attack from the environmentalists, and the hunters felt that their rights were being curtailed and the town bosses had quashed a major administrative plan. Now, on top of all this, the school was starting to teach that damned animal rights nonsense.

When I heard about this meeting I suggested to Newton that we wait for awhile before proceeding. It seemed to me that we would be throwing high-octane gasoline on an already red hot pile. But he disagreed and said that since we had board approval we should continue and not be too worried.

### Fifteen

Somehow, in spite of the unprecedented community furor, we got through that first week of activities. Our speakers were scheduled to begin their presentations on Monday, November 11.

The week of November 11 will be one I will remember for a long time. Apparently, over the weekend, parents and other concerned citizens had been burning up the phone lines and very large ad hoc meetings were held. As students came into the building that Monday morning there was an aura of hostility towards me that I had never before felt. Very ugly comments were surreptitiously made outside my door. Eighth grade students held a short sit-in in the hall to protest the idea that they might have to talk about animal rights. I received two very unkind letters from the entire eighth grade class and one exceptionally kind and insightful one from a seventh grader.

The other teachers stopped by and told me that friends and parents had been contacting them all weekend long with questions and criticisms.

Mr. Newton came by my room before class started and told me that the school board had been pummeled all weekend with demands that they cancel the animal rights forum. Newton told me that he had gotten them to hold firm by telling them that if they reversed themselves now, there would never be any way to bring authentic learning into the school and lessons would remain textbook bound for the foreseeable future.

More likely, they were smarting from the defeat over the airport scheme and saw this as a way to reassert their authority. If they had not recently been stung by the community there is little doubt that they would not have been at all supportive; also, they had given their permission and

blessing to the plan earlier on and likely did not want to appear as totally incompetent in their neighbors' eyes.

I again voiced my doubts and told him that I was very worried.

## Sixteen

Gary Delaney, the county extension service agent, and Nancy Perry, who was in Oregon working on the bear baiting and cougar hounding issue for the Humane Society of the United States were scheduled as the first and second speakers respectively. Of the fifty or sixty students who could have heard their presentations, only around twenty were allowed by their parents to do so; the rest, a group whose size we had not foreseen, were given a study hall.

These students were being told by their parents that the school was going to be telling them things that they should not be hearing, that the school and teachers could not be trusted and need not be respected. They were learning that there are some things that you should not learn about. And clearly, one of these topics was animal rights.

Somehow, nearly forty adults found the time to attend the first two talks. Most of these were parents of students who were not allowed to listen. A cordon of parents, mostly men wearing their ranch work clothes, formed on each side of the door into the library. To get into the lecture you had to walk through this angry group who stood with crossed arms and caps pulled down tight and low. They seemed to be daring anyone to enter. They murmured to each other as we passed through but did not interfere or say anything discernable. I felt quite intimidated but also protective of the few students who braved the entrance with me.

A few high school students were also in attendance; unfortunately, these were students with long histories of challenging the school's authority and who were loud supporters of poaching, beating porcupines, and victimizing new students and those weaker than themselves. Apparently some high school teachers felt that they would be a good addition to the audience.

Gary Delaney's talk proceeded without incident. A seventh grade student's notes read:

### Gary Delaney

- bases everything on research
- very intense issue lately

#### Ethical treatment of animals

- meat is a part of healthy diet
- clothes from animals
- man domesticated animals
- animals used for work
- animals are very important

#### Man's interactions with animals

- food
- clothing
- recreation, rodeo
- income, ranches
- love - give love, get love
- health
- man part of ecosystem

#### What is ethical

- dealing with values relating to humans. Goodness and badness of animal rights.

Yes animals can feel pain. Some people show compassion toward animals

#### Human right conduct

- minimize the trauma and pain
- you have the right to have your own opinions
- my facts and opinions
- don't do it } decide for yourself

I found Mr. Delaney's talk to be balanced and fair and was glad that at least a few students had gotten to hear him speak. He admitted that not all ranchers really cared about trying to be as kind as possible and that some parts of ranching probably were cruel.

After Mr. Delany spoke we went back to our classrooms to try and move along with the day as we waited for Ms. Perry. As I entered my room, I discovered that I had been followed back by another Voigt who decided that she would observe my classroom today. This was Heddy, the mother of another of my students. Heddy always made it clear during parent teacher conferences that she too had a degree in education. I had once discussed the needs of another of her children with her and suggested that she and her husband consider visiting his classes in order to understand his behavior and learning difficulties. She had never been able to find the time.

I asked Heddy to help students with their assignments while she was there; it would give her a better idea of the math the students were learning and a feel for the intense effort I expected of them everyday. I was using a completely individualized math program and each student was working independently. This made me hurry from desk to desk helping students master various math concepts and skills. Having another adult in the room to help was certainly of benefit to my students, but Heddy declined to stay and left after a little while saying that school had sure changed since she had attended.

Nancy Perry, the Humane Society representative, was scheduled to talk later in the afternoon. We again had to brave the cordon of adults as we made our way into the library. If anything, they had become more vocal and surly. Ms. Perry was delayed by the icy November roads of eastern Oregon. When she called to say she was running late, Newton advised her of the situation but told her not to worry because he knew karate and would guarantee her safety. While we waited for her tensions began to rise. Newton called the police and requested an escort for her into the building.

She finally arrived and had a harder time than Gary Delaney.

As she began to speak adults in the back began to make comments to each other. It wasn't long before they were interrupting her presentation with their own questions.

Mr. Newton arrived and told them they would have to be quiet.

“These speakers are for the students. If you have questions you should talk to Ms. Perry after her talk.”

“Hey! You better watch out there. That ain’t legal!”

This was exactly what the students needed to be exposed to: parents challenging the principal’s authority. For the rest of Newton’s stay at Prairie, he would have to fight for the modicum of authority he still had.

“Well, we’ll deal with that later,” he said. “If you can’t follow these rules I’ll ask you to leave.”

With the police officer standing next to him the parents were not so sure of themselves and remained mostly quiet for the remainder of Ms. Perry’s talk.

Here are the notes the same student took of Ms. Perry’s presentation:

Nancy Perry

- “Cougar, Bear initiative”
- believes animals should have rights
- when they kill chickens / don’t give them respect

Bear/Cougar argument

- people learned bear baiting & hound hunting
- believes in animals protection
- you can survive without meat
- is it right to take lives of animals?

Humane Society deals with animal cruelty

- should have alternatives

- upset by how the chickens were treated
- animal rights to lessen the pain

Ms. Perry spoke about a visit to a chicken slaughterhouse and how the lack of respect for the chickens had affected her. The high school students and the adults kept asking her about the bear and cougar issue. Surprising to me at the time was her easy way with answering their questions. Her inquisitors seemed put off by her expertise and obvious mastery of facts and figures regarding bear and cougar. Following her visit to the school, she spoke at a local conservation group meeting and informally debated with State Fish and Wildlife employees about using dogs to hunt cougar. These professionals were no more prepared for her sharp expertise than the Prairie City gallery had been – she ate them up.

## Seventeen

*That night I was in Prairie City spending the night. Our friends, Donna and Zeke, owned a house in Prairie City which had a small rental house in the back. Rick and I paid a small monthly rent to use the house during winter months when life in the mountains got to us (me especially). It had all of the amenities I needed...electric lights, a hot shower, T.V. and a washer and dryer. Donna had many friends in Prairie City, and she was keeping up on all of the gossip circulating about Rick. As we were in her kitchen, drinking beer and eating chips she received a phone call from one of her friends, Pat, whose daughter was in Rick's class. "Are you going to the big meeting tonight?" Pat asked.*

*"What meeting?" Donna asked. As she listened to Pat, Donna was waving her hand at me and silently mouthing, "A meeting about Rick." I jumped up and tried to listen on the phone while Pat explained that the whole community was up in arms about this whole animal rights thing, and that there was going to be a meeting at the City Hall that night at 7:00. After she hung up I said, "Let's go to the meeting!" Unfortunately, I was unable to get a hold of Rick; we didn't have a telephone up on the mountain at the time. I figured he would have loved to attend as well.*

*When we got to City Hall there was a sign at the door that said, "Meeting moved to the Grange Hall." The Grange Hall was able to accommodate more people and by the looks of the cars outside, they needed the room. Donna and I walked into the back door of the Grange Hall. I pretended that I was Jessica Lange or Sigourney Weaver playing Me in a movie. I held my head high and took a seat on the heater as heads turned and people began whispering. There were over a hundred people sitting on metal folding chairs. I locked my eyes on the speaker, Carol Wagoner, a parent of one of Rick's students and a royal pain in the ass if you ask me.*

*Carol was reading her statement. She, being the one who called the meeting, had center stage. Her main concern related to district policy and the approved curriculum. She complained that none of this animal rights stuff was in the approved curriculum. About 15 minutes after Donna and I arrived, Diane Lesniak, one of the co-writers of the Animal Rights unit, and Marnie Newton, a teacher in the elementary school walked through the door and stood beside us.*

*One woman said, "What ever happened to readin', ritin', and rithmetic?" When Diane said that research, problem solving, making decisions, and recognizing fact from opinion was most certainly part of the curriculum, a parent said, "I don't mind that they learn the other side of issues, but why pick animal rights?" Had anyone even known the whole story? It was Shannon Voigt, one of their own, who hollered enough about the spider rule o the whole debate started. The Voigts were involved from the beginning, and now there they were with the rest of them, complaining and acting like it had all been done behind their backs. I was getting mad.*

*Dolores Young, one of the tellers at our bank spoke up: "Where did this book come from anyway? It seems like it's written by a group of animal rights people to me." No one could answer.*

*I finally stood up and said, "Dolores, the teachers got this book from the John Day junior high school library. It's one of a series written by the University of Minnesota Education Department." As I spoke, heads turned, and people were whispering about me, being rude. I*

*felt my face get red. “The series also has books on other subjects such as child abuse, the death penalty, drug and alcohol, and abortion.”*

*At the word ‘abortion’ Dolores got hot. “Oh, I suppose our kids are going to learn all about abortion next. Well, that’s great.” She was being sarcastic. I just looked at Donna and sat back down.*

*“I’ll tell you one thing,” said an older gentleman in the audience. “This is just how the Nazis worked in Europe. They’d get the kids when they were young and try to coerce them into thinking like them. These animal rights people work in the same way, starting with the kids.*

*“If you ask me, we need to nip this in the bud and get rid of the cause of all of this, and that’s Bogle. He’s the one that’s starting all of this.”*

*There was much discussion after this comment, but I do remember a woman who said that her kids had Mr. Bogle and that he was an excellent teacher. “He just needs to teach his math and not try to instill his values into our kids.”*

*About this time, people were beginning to leave. It was getting ugly. One man walked in front of me, looked down, shook his head and said to Donna and I, “This is getting to be a witch hunt.”*

*When we left, they had mentioned many plans of attack. One was to demand the resignation of Superintendent Don Coffee and Principal Greg Newton. They all agreed to put a stop to the Animal Rights Forum by complaining to the school board and possibly hiring a lawyer.*

*As Donna and I walked into her house Zeke was holding the phone. “Lynn, it’s for you. It’s Greg Newton.”*

*“Is Rick with you? he asked.*

*“No, he’s home. Greg, I just got back from the meeting. People are really getting worked up.”*

*“These people are nuts,” he said. “I’m outta here anyway. My phone’s been ringing all night. I can’t stand it here. Tell Rick he doesn’t even have to come in tomorrow. Nothing’s going to get done, we’ll have parents in and out all day. These people are so stupid.”*

*He went on and on about his woes; Rick had told me that Greg didn’t drink, but he sounded a little drunk to me. He was probably just tired and fed up and didn’t care what he said. I felt sorry for him. I felt sorry for the kids in Prairie City. They were being told what they could and couldn’t learn by a minority of vocal parents. All along, the parents were told that if they found the subject matter offensive, they could request that their children do something else during that hour of the day. There were many students and parents who wanted the forum to go on, but these powerful bigmouths were trying to keep even them from participating. Who’s the Nazi?*

## Eighteen

Before school started the next morning, Mr. Newton came into my room and told me that the forum had been canceled. Apparently, the school board members had received a continuous string of calls from worried parents and had finally given in to the pressure.

## Nineteen

Before we began this unit I had quietly removed my classroom rules from the wall. I felt the rules were an unfair lobby for compassion when at the same time the students were being asked to formulate their own opinions based on what they were reading and hearing in the talks. But now that the forum had been canceled, I felt that the agreement I had entered into with the Voigts was null and void. I put my rules back up. The rest of the week was one of tension and very rude student behavior.

Twenty

On November 16, a twenty-year acquaintance of mine, Bill Young, Dolores Young's husband and second cousin to the Voigts through his wife's family, who was also a very close friend of Shannon's and Wanda's, filed a formal complaint against me.

November 16, 1996

School District #4 Board of Directors

Prairie City School

Prairie City , OR 97845

To: School Dist. #4 Board of Directors

I am writing this letter as a formal complaint against one of the teachers employed by your district. This letter is in regards (sic) to Rick Bogle and his disregard of District 4 policy.

I have obtained a district policy titled "Teaching About Controversial Issues", Code: INB, adopted 12/15/92. This district policy states, "Teachers will present both sides of controversial issues and will guard against giving personal opinions until students have had an opportunity to:

1. Find , collect and assemble factual material on the subject;
2. Interpret the data without prejudice;
3. Reconsider assumptions and claims and to reach their own conclusions."

Mr. Bogle has not given the students the opportunity to research their own information on the subject of animal rights. He has found the information for the students without giving them the opportunity to research it for themselves. He has also failed to provide the students an atmosphere which is free of his own personal opinions on the subject. His classroom posters, and rules limit the students (sic) ability to "interpret the Data (sic) without prejudice" which is number 2 of the District 4 adopted policy

The animal rights program is being presented to students as young as 8 years old to approximately 14 years old. I feel that he has targeted the younger students in order to intimidate and coerce them into believing in his own values. This would be more appropriately taught at the junior, senior, or college level. According to district policy, maturity level appropriateness should have been considered.

I am also concerned with the disregard for the policys, (sic) “appropriateness to the course”. The issue of animal rights was not brought up because of a course being taught, but because of his own beliefs on animal rights. The forum, packets and materials are being distributed to the students because he had a rule in his classroom, not because of a topic in the curriculum or text. Will our children be subjected to his views on abortion and euthanasia next? Where will his extreme views end with our children?

The rules in his classroom should reflect safety, the rights of the students to learn and the rights of the teacher to teach. It (sic) should not be a stepping stone for the impression of his beliefs on our children.

I would think his complete ignorance and disregard of District #4 policy should be grounds enough to remove him from the teaching staff. I hope the board of directors will see fit to accomplish this.

I anxiously await your response.

Sincerely,

[Signed]

William R. Young

[A copy of the policy was enclosed, and a copy of the complaint and policy were sent to the administration and all the members of the board.]

At about this same time a teacher caught a high school student making copies in the office of a drawing of someone with a beard who appeared to be me. The drawing had a bull's-eye over the face, and a quote that read: "Why shoot a deer when you can shoot a hippy?"

Nothing happened to this student. He happened to be one of those who had attended the one day of talks.

My reply to Mr. Young's complaint:

November 21, 1996

Mr. Gary Judd  
Chair, Prairie City School Board  
Prairie City

Sir:

I am submitting this letter in response to the formal complaint filed against me by William R. Young dated November 16, 1996. I will respond to the issues and allegations item by item.

Mr. Young states, "This letter is in regards to Rick Bogle and his disregard of district policy."

I feel that I have carefully adhered to the spirit of the policy in question (INB 12/15/92 Teaching About Controversial Issues.) While discussing the booklet with the students I guarded against giving my personal opinions. The intent of the activity was that students might begin to form a reasoned opinion prior to hearing the seven scheduled speakers.

Having been a part of the community for twenty years, having taught at our school for over seven years, and having had some of the students for more than one year it would have been

impossible to have erased the slate. My views are well known to the community, the staff, and the students alike. During our discussions of the booklet, which totaled approximately eighty minutes over four days, I did not voice my opinions.

I believe the policy does, however, suggest that a teacher can share their opinions at some point.

Secondly, Mr. Young states, “Mr. Bogle has not given the students the opportunity to research their own information on animal research.” [Mr. Young did not say anything about animal research; his comment had been about animal rights; this was my error, which no one ever commented on.]

Actually, Mr. Young and his band of censors took that opportunity away from the students. The curriculum was designed as a three-part activity. Week one, with about one hundred minutes of instruction, was designed to give the students a knowledge base from which to question the speakers. This included taking a survey and reading and discussing the much-maligned booklet *Animal Rights*, a volume from the Opposing Juniors Viewpoint Series produced through the College of Education at the University of Minnesota. This booklet had a point/counterpoint format with articles written by various philosophy professors and paraphrased into middle school readability.

Week two was to have been spent listening to and questioning three animal rights proponents and four animal utilization proponents.

During week three, students were to develop a position or premise and spend time doing research in the library, interviewing people, and using the Internet to gather information to write a position paper defending their conclusions. This part of the activity was of course not realized due to the censorship of ideas by Mr. Young and others.

Mr. Young states, “I feel that he has targeted the younger students in order to intimidate and coerce them into believing in his own values.” It is sad that Mr. Young’s obvious lack of knowledge about my personal and professional integrity requires a response.

The inclusion of other grades, both below and above mine, was not my decision to make. I am not authorized to order teachers to do anything. Were I to try they would surely laugh. Mr. Young’s assertion notwithstanding, his concern for the eight-year-old student is odd. He should complain to the parents who allowed their son to attend the speakers’ forum. Perhaps he wishes to take away their parenting rights. [Most interesting here is that the eight-year-old student in question was spending part of his day in the fifth grade class because of his giftedness. Additionally, he was Shannon’s nephew and Mr. Young probably considered him to be nearly family.]

Mr. Young asserts, “ This topic would be more appropriately taught at the junior, senior, or college level.”

Seven very experienced professional educators with a demonstrated concern for Prairie City School students felt that with various modifications this activity would be valuable for the ages they taught. Why this concern is leveled at me alone is confusing. In spite of this incongruence, the maturity appropriateness was considered as evidenced by the various modifications made for each grade level and also in the letter sent to the presenters concerning the nature of their presentations.

Certainly, the discussion of controversial topics in current events is appropriate to social studies and learning to present a cogent argument is appropriate to language arts. Mr. Young should have discussed these concerns with the appropriate staff teaching these parts of the program.

Mr. Young’s assertion that the issue was brought up due to my concern for animal rights is at least partly correct. For nearly eight years I have asked my students not to kill insects or spiders in my classroom. When a parent took exception to my rule this year and asserted that his

daughter had the right to kill things in my classroom I suggested a modification of the rule to accommodate their concerns. The parents said that that would not be good enough, and that all children should be allowed to kill things in my room. They continued that if I did not change my rule that they would, “. . . go after my job.”

At that time I suggested that they might like to file a complaint. I carefully and politely explained the complaint procedure to them.

A few days later, both parents and I met with Mr. Newton to discuss their concerns. At that time they stated that the students were receiving a one-sided education and having that “damned” environmentalism shoved down their throats. Though I totally disagreed with their evaluation I suggested that if I would be allowed to teach both sides of the issue I would remove my rule. To my utter amazement they agreed. From there, under Mr. Newton’s leadership, the idea grew into the Bates Building Forum.

Mr. Young asks,” Where will his extreme views end with our children?”

I will never concede that encouraging children to be kind is an “extreme” view. It seems merely to be at odds with what Mr. Young would have our students hear.

Mr. Young continues that, “The rules in his classroom should reflect safety, the rights of the students to learn, and the rights of the teacher to teach.”

I agree. I cannot teach and students cannot learn if they are jumping out of their seats to swat flies or wasps against the window as was the case during my first year at our school.

I believe there is a marked difference between impressing one’s beliefs on another and teaching respect for one another’s beliefs. Throughout my tenure I have stressed, during social studies and current event discussions, the danger of disregarding and ridiculing the values and beliefs of others. We have discussed the slave trade, Nazi Germany, Cambodia, Bosnia,

Northern Ireland, and central Africa. I believe the message they teach about the danger of disrespect is still valid.

During the seven plus years I have had the non-killing rule in my classroom no one has been punished for disobeying the rule. In fact, the most likely things to cause me to discipline a student are repeated instances of shoving, eating candy, chewing gum, and not having their books covered.

When students do break my rule about killing bugs, I ask them to please respect my wishes and remind them that in my room they should do as I request. This is usually said in private out in the hall.

It is of some note that the only student to break this rule this year is the daughter of the parents with whom the original conflict arose after they had complained to Mr. Newton. This even was unremarked on by me to the student, but she did go home with an erroneous story about it to her parents. Apparently, this normally well-behaved, exemplary student had been taught by her parents to disregard my wishes. That's sad.

Mr. Young has never seen me teach, and to the best of my knowledge has never been in my classroom. His knowledge about my teaching and classroom management is, at best, hearsay.

Respectfully,

Rick Bogle

A parent, whose son had been in my room the year before, told me that her son remembered that I had once kept him after school for intentionally killing a bug.

December 4, 1996

Gary Judd  
Chair, Prairie City School Board

Sir:

This letter concerns the complaint filed against me by William Young dated November 16, 1996 and my reply dated November 21, 1996.

In my reply, I stated that I have never punished a student for disobeying my rule about killing bugs. Recently, a parent who read my reply told me that she was told by her son that he had had to stay after school for 10 minutes for killing something in my room last year. Rather than argue about whose memory is most accurate, I would rather have you proceed in your investigation as if I regularly enforced the rule in such a way.

This is, I feel, more in keeping with the original concern which precipitated the recent events and furor. Also, it has never been my desire to side-step the rule in question. You must decide whether I may ban the killing of bugs in my classroom or whether a parent can give permission to all my students to kill at their whim in my classroom.

Sincerely,

Rick Bogle

cc Don Coffey  
Greg Newton

Twenty-one

A reporter from the Portland *Oregonian* newspaper had been in the area to cover an environmental story and had received a tip that the police had been called into our school over a controversial animal rights unit. He came by and interviewed some parents, the administration, and me. The story made the bottom of the front page and was picked up by the Associated Press.

The two local papers began carrying the story and running editorials about what was and was not appropriate for school.

Some headlines and lead ins:

November 20, *Grant County Press*: **Prairie City school criticized on animal rights forum;** “It’s a moral and ethical issue best taught at home say angry parents.”

November 21, *The Oregonian*: **Animal rights forum sparks furor;** “The Prairie City school program runs into strong opposition in the community.”

November 22, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*: **School animal rights forum outrages cow country town;** “First, the Eastern Oregon parents complained about a teacher’s policy on putting bugs outside rather than killing them.”

## Twenty-two

*After living in the Chicago area for so long, I liked the fact that I could leave my keys in the car when I went into the store in John Day. I liked knowing the owners of the town’ businesses like the hardware store. Many times while we were working on the house, Rick would ask me to run to town (no small feat) with a scrap of paper explaining the plumbing supplies we needed, and I’d realize that I had no check book, no money, no credit card. Jim, the owner, would say, “Just bring it in next time you’re in town.”*

*Being a vegetarian was an oddity. Most people who knew us, knew we were vegetarians and would either ignore it or tease us about it. A few were simply curious. Some of the children at my school didn’t even understand what it meant to be a vegetarian. One day at school there was a wounded bat outside the classroom door. One of the children yelled, “Let Ms. Pauly look at it; she’s a veterinarian.”*

*My first teaching position in Grant County was as a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher at John Day Elementary School. I didn't know any of the families, and I surely didn't know the extent of the ranching, logging and hunting community. I spoke openly about being a vegetarian, probably a little too openly. Back then I would speak up about animal rights and protecting our forests from logging. When I think back now I cringe, wondering what dinner table discussions went on during my first years of teaching.*

*Not all ranchers in the valley were the same, and not all of them treated us with the same level of respect.*

*The Holliday ranch is one of the largest ranches in John Day. I once had one of the nine Holliday daughters in my class. She was a joy to teach, and her parents were always supportive and friendly towards me. I loved having their daughters in my classes, and ended up teaching four more of them as the years went by. Surely they knew my feeling towards ranching, but we developed a mutually respectful relationship centered around their daughter's academic achievements.*

*During the same year I had another ranching child in my class. His father was on the school board and was a vocal member of the ranching and logging community. During a creative writing unit in the spring, I assigned an essay or a poem written from the point of view of a flower, finally being up out of the soil, feeling the warmth of the sun for the first time. Brian handed me his poem and muttered, "My dad said if you have any problems with this you should call him." I looked at the paper. All that was written on a plain white piece of typing paper was the sentence: "Flowers don't have feelings." Today, if that were to happen, I would call his father and explain to him that this was a creative writing assignment, not a scientific report. I would give him a chance to do it over, or I would give him a failing grade. But then, as a new teacher, I let it slide. I let myself be bullied by the arrogance of one of the ranching "hotshots" who make so many of the decisions in that community. This is what Rick was encountering.*

*This family he was fast butting heads with was clannish, stubborn, and powerful. I could tell Rick was hurt by their attack. It was a betrayal. I'd get so mad, thinking about the frustration*

*he was going through. Then he'd pick the scab even more, by bringing home school notices about "market animals" and student-written, "I love to eat animals" flyers. He tried to stay "up" but he was becoming depressed and frustrated.*

### Twenty-three

Throughout this ordeal two things affected me the most: the behavior of the eighth grade and the behavior of the staff.

Two years before this fiasco the current eighth grade students had been in my sixth grade class. Lynn was taking a year off to pursue her interests in writing and art and to take a break from the daily grind. Since she wasn't working she offered to teach art for me. If we were going to do something non-routine, like eating Middle Eastern food while sitting on the floor, Lynn came to help. My students really liked her, and with only fourteen kids in the class I felt we could do anything. One young lady in my class was so gifted at math that I was able to advance her nearly two years ahead. This was one of those golden years of teaching and the students of this class were very special to me. An inordinate number of them were struggling through school and were either receiving Chapter I reading services, or were, or had been, special education students. During the first three years at Prairie City Schools I had served as the special education and Chapter I remedial reading teacher. I had known many of these students very well ever since they had been in second grade, five years.

Having these students attacking me was . . . difficult.

The special education / Chapter I reading teacher at Prairie always has a number of educational assistants who help provide services for students who are identified with some sort of learning difficulty. I supervised the program and the educational assistants for the first three years I taught at Prairie. The women in these positions had always been close to my heart. The lead aide had begun her job at the same time I had, and together we had built a remedial reading and special education program that were child centered and well respected throughout the county. I had worked very hard to insure that these colleges were given the respect and compensation they

deserved. My efforts had yielded a little extra prestige and money for the lead aide and my relationship with all of them was one of friendship. These women had become regular visitors in my classroom after I left the program and regularly asked me for help. These friends were at the core of my distracters and accusers.

Likewise, teachers who had seemed to be my friends suddenly found reasons to avoid having conversations with me, and I began to avoid the teachers' room.

#### Twenty-four

I moved with friends to the John Day valley twenty years earlier to escape the urbanization of the world, and with a desire to live nearer to the land and more in touch with the other beings living there. We purchased one hundred and twenty acres in the Strawberry Mountains in Eastern Oregon covered with ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, western juniper and mountain mahogany. It was steep and rocky. It was possible to walk from my back door to Canada without leaving the National Forest. Its 5000-foot elevation helped account for a very short growing season and long winters and deep snow pack. For twenty years my forays out of the valley were limited to two years in the Peace Corps in Liberia, West Africa and two years in Ashland, Oregon to attend college. I had been hibernating in my mountain retreat and was unaware that concern over the treatment of animas had developed into a full-blown, if nascent, political movement arguing that the inalienable rights of non-humans superceded the interests of those who wished to exploit their various vulnerabilities.

Three years before moving to Oregon, shortly after having been thrown out of Texas A&M University, I was working at RCA's Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center on Andros Island in The Bahamas where the U.S. government was (is?) testing torpedo guidance systems. While I was there I met a young female tourist my age who told me, as we lazed around on the beach, something that changed the way I looked at animals, convinced me to quit eating them, and has affected my life ever since. I wish I could remember what she said.

#### Twenty-five

During Thanksgiving vacation, beginning in late November, schools enter into a period of extended holidays, there is the week for Thanksgiving and then two more weeks for Christmas and New Years. When Thanksgiving vacation arrived I felt that I had been repeatedly pistol-whipped. Students were very angry with me; walking through the high school hallway was nearly impossible unless I wanted to deal with the derogatory catcalls from each door I passed. A seemingly endless series of overflowing public meetings had been held to pillory me and the administration. Some teachers had sided with the mind police and had been voicing their reservations about my ethics.

Every day I had driven home I had been worried about our cats. In this community where coyotes are killed and hung on public monuments and elk herds can be killed and left to rot it was easy to imagine a couple of high school students going to my house while Lynn and I were at school. Our home's remote location and the students' histories of cruising the forest looking for animals to kill made this a not unlikely scenario. I was nervous about sitting with my back to a window. Fortunately, no one vandalized any of our property and nothing happened to our cats.

A close friend had found a book in the John Day school library and gave it to me to read. It was *Putting People First* by Margaret Marquart, and I read it during the first couple of days of vacation. I had known for some time that there was a battle of sorts going on between the pro-utilization and pro-animal interest people but was unaware of the current nature of the battle. Ms. Marquart showed me that people with beliefs such as hers were marshaling their forces in an effort to reduce sympathy, empathy, and compassion for and toward animals. She helped me wake up a little bit.

At the back of Mrs. Marguart's book were two lists; one was a list of animal welfare organizations which she said deserved my support such as the *Ted Nugent Bow Hunters* and the *American Veal Association* while the other was a list of animal rights groups which she said were dangerous and should be watched. Mrs. Marquart also went to the trouble to point out the larger animal rights groups that were especially dangerous. Toward the end of Thanksgiving vacation, with Lynn's help, I sent a job query to each one of the "dangerous" groups. I think I sent out about forty letters.

Twenty-six

When school began again after Thanksgiving vacation tensions were still high. I was called into Mr. Newton's office and met with him and the superintendent, Don Coffey. Don showed me a letter he had written in reply to Mr. Young's formal complaint against me. His draft seemed to imply that I would amend my ways and had done something wrong. After some discussion we agreed on the final draft:

December 10, 1996

Mr. William Young

Subj: Complaint filed on November 18, 1996

The Board and administration have looked into your complaint concerning Mr. Bogle and the controversial issue of "animal rights." The middle school staff chose this controversial subject as a "real world" issue to teach students to learn the difference between fact and opinion; practice their newly learned skills on a forum that presented both sides of the issue listening to practitioners from the business community; then research their own information on the issue; and then formulate a paper on the subject as a final project. As to Mr. Bogle's conduct during the Forum of late, we have not found any misconduct in his treatment of the controversial subject.

We have discussed policy INB with Mr. Bogle that deals with the general treatment of controversial issues in the classroom. The policy in general states that both sides of an issue will be presented and cautions a teacher to refrain from expressing personal views before and during the period of research and study. Mr. Bogle has stated that he will continue to avoid making his personal opinions a significant part of any classroom discussion.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Gary Judd, Chair  
Prairie City School Board

And that should probably have ended the matter. The forum had been canceled and I had been exonerated. Except for one little matter.

Newton, Coffey and I were sitting in Newton's office finishing up this letter.

"You know," I began, "this takes care of Bill's complaint, but the original problem is still there."

"What are you talking about?" said Newton.

"Well, my rule. This all started over Shannon's and Wanda's complaint about my rule. We really have not done anything about that, and I know they won't let it go."

"I thought you took it down," said Newton.

"I did at the beginning of the Forum, but when it was canceled I put it back up. The agreement was that if I could present a balanced lesson, I would remove my rule. Shannon and Wanda have been a part of this whole fiasco. They never spoke up about our agreement. The kids didn't get to make up their own minds, so the deal is off."

Newton bristled, "Get the damn thing down."

I looked over at Mr. Coffey. He was keeping his head down pretending to be trying to make the subjects and verbs agree in the letter to Young.

"You were part of that deal," I replied.

"Listen, the rule is stupid. I've told you that before. Now I'm ordering you to get it off your wall."

I was back to square one. “I’d like a written directive for the record,” I told him.

“Fine.”

Shaken, I left.

That morning’s school bulletin had an interesting item: THERE WILL BE A 4-H MEETING IN THE LIBRARY AT 7:00 TONIGHT. WE WILL BE SIGNING UP FOR MARKET ANIMALS SO BE SURE TO BRING MONEY FOR REGISTRATION.

On December 11 I received Newton’s directive:

Mr. Rick Bogle  
Teacher

Conference Summary

Dear Rick:

1. As I told you in our conference on December 10, 1996, and during the week of November 18, 1996, in my professional opinion your posting of the rule “Escort Critters From The Room” when supported by negative consequences rises to the level of being an unreasonable classroom rule. I believe you can control classroom disruption by students using a traditional rule without including the unreasonable rule of escorting insects out of the room. Why not simply state in your rule that you will not tolerate any unnecessary distraction.

2. Please revise or remove the above referenced rule.

Sincerely,

Greg Newton  
Principal

Newton called me into his office and had me sign the letter stating that I had received it. I really did not know what to do. I had been receiving many letters of support from all over the Northwest as a result of the Associated Press story. I still believed that teaching children to be kind and compassionate was not something that should be banned.

I wrote the following reply:

Mr. Newton:

My classroom rule, Escort little visitors outside, while partially intended to reduce interruptions, is primarily intended to keep students from killing things in my room and to encourage them to practice a little kindness.

Your request that I remove or modify my rule is tantamount to saying that killing things in classrooms is sanctioned by Prairie City Schools. Your characterization of my rule as unreasonable seems to ignore the local culture of porcupine clubbings, spotlighting deer, student on student violence, and teachers being targeted for assassination.

In my opinion, removing my rule would be an acquiescent act of cowardice in the face of ugly malevolence.

I became a teacher because I wanted to help people. Retreat will help no one. Therefore, I refuse to remove or modify my rule.

Sincerely,  
Rick Bogle

cc Gary Judd  
Don Coffey

It was late in the day long after the kids had gone home when I finished this letter and rather than putting it in the mail right away, I took it home to share with Lynn. She recognized that sending

this letter would result in a confrontation with Newton that I could not win and suggested we think of some sort of compromise. We looked at his directive again and considered his comments: when the rule was supported by negative consequences it rose to the level of being unreasonable, and to remove or revise it. We came up with an idea. Just cut off the consequence part of the rules. So I did not send the refusal and the next day I cut off the consequence part of the poster. I did not feel entirely comfortable with this compromise but it did seem reasonable.

### **Classroom Rules**

1. Escort little visitors outside.
2. Be polite.
3. Be prepared to do your best.
4. Books will be covered.
5. No food, gum or drinks

Twenty-seven

During the first few weeks of December I received replies to many of the queries I had sent out concerning a position with one of the larger animal rights groups. What I learned was that only a few animal rights organizations are large enough to have more than one or two paid employees. Most of them are entirely volunteer and exist on a shoestring. Of the few who do have a larger staff of paid employees, one sent me an application and the other offered me a job in southern Florida. Most were polite but not interested.

A few days later I stopped at the grocery store (there is only one). As I was checking out Diana Burril came in and a woman in the other check-out line buttonholed her and started whispering something she seemed to feel was very important. I left and was just getting ready to pull out of the small parking lot when Dianna rushed out and over to my pick-up.

“Rick, have you heard about Bill Young?” She seemed agitated.

“No,” I answered her and wondered what new attack was on the horizon.

“He’s been killed! I don’t know all the details, but I just heard he was found shot to death. I figured you would want to know.”

I was taken aback. “Shot?” Jeez. I began to think about an alibi.

The facts were quick to emerge. Bill had retired a few years earlier from the Forest Service and had gone to work for the local saw mill. He was involved in timber sale administration. His job required him to drive through the forest regularly to inspect the logging operations of his employer. Bill had a penchant for shooting coyotes. He had a special rifle for shooting coyotes he had received as a present from his family in the rifle rack in his pick-up.

On the day of his death he radioed to a log truck driver that he had seen a couple of “nice looking” coyotes in a meadow and was going to stop and “pop” them before carrying on with his job.

Apparently, as he was getting out of the pick-up a private vehicle had driven by and he had held the rifle low along his side (to hide it?) and had somehow discharged it. The bullet entered under his arm and careened around his body cavity. The evidence suggested that he had not lost consciousness right away but had made it back into the cab of the pick-up before dying. I did not attend the funeral.

## Twenty-eight

By Christmas vacation I was exhausted. Newton and I had quit speaking since our meeting with Superintendent Coffey. It felt like at least half the staff had quit speaking with me and the other half whispered to me that I had been singled out and treated unfairly. I avoided shopping in town because I was tired of the endless harangue and did not relish the thought of being lectured to in the grocery store aisle. I felt the larger issue of teaching children to be kind had been lost in some sort of political whirlwind that had engulfed me and carried me far from Kansas.

The fact that the rest of the staff had either spoken against me or kept quiet continued to gnaw. These were people I had worked with and trusted for nearly eight years. I had really believed that teachers would speak out on matters of principle, but I was wrong.

I didn't know what to do with my anger and hurt but finally took the unusual step of writing to every board and staff member at the school (except the cafeteria staff who I did not know).

January 3, 1997

Friends and colleagues:

As the furor over the Bates Building Animal Rights Forum subsides most of you will return to business as usual. Your friends will quit asking you about it, and you will quit thinking about it. But I will not.

Twenty-five years ago I made a decision to mindfully avoid harming other beings and to alleviate their misery when I could. For me, it was impossible to turn a blind eye to the suffering we cause cows, pigs, chickens, and all the rest. As I began to learn more about these ideas, I found out about the kittens who have had their eyes sewn shut at birth, the dogs which researchers infect with scabies who literally scratch themselves to death, the young monkeys kept in isolation with electrodes implanted in their brains, and all the rest. I find these things impossible to ignore.

I recognize that, for whatever reasons, most people seem unmoved or unconcerned by animal suffering. I grew up eating a normal middle class diet of beef, pork, chicken, milk, cheese, and eggs. We also usually had venison sausage in the refrigerator to snack on. Wild goose or duck were common holiday fare. I had many friends who raised cattle and a very close family friend had a gamecock farm. By most measures these friends were good kind people.

When I moved to this area twenty years ago the ranching/hunting culture was not alien to me. I made friends with people who ranch, fish, and hunt. When I started teaching here seven and a half years ago I was not surprised or concerned that many of my students and fellow

teachers hunted, ranched, or fished. But also, I did not leave my concerns about animals at my classroom door.

If you talk to students who have been in my sixth grade classes they will tell you that Mr. Bogle does not kill things. They will also tell you that I have always shown respect for their beliefs and the beliefs of their parents. They will also say that they are not allowed to kill things in my room.

This is the first year that I have had multiple classes of students. Previously, in my self-contained classes, the students and I developed the classroom rules together. This year however, I felt it expedient to post a single set of rules for all my classes. My first rule was a reminder that they were not allowed to kill anything in my classroom. The rule said: Escort little visitors outside. Since I had had most of these students before this mandate could not have come as a surprise. No one who knows me could have been surprised at my rule.

Since everything that happens in my classroom is ultimately my responsibility, I am responsible if my students kill something. As I mentioned before, I decided many years ago that I would no longer be responsible for the death and suffering of others and I would attempt to alleviate it when I could. As long as I am the authority in my classroom, killing is not allowed.

As a result of the complaints filed against me by William Young and Shannon and Wanda Voigt, Mr. Newton has deemed my rule unreasonable. Mr. Newton says that my rule, when linked with negative consequences, becomes unreasonable. Rules without consequences are not rules.

I believe my rule is reasonable. In addition, trying to ban such a rule seems to ignore the problems we face. I believe that trying to teach children to be kind is the only reasonable response a teacher can make when confronted with current attitudes.

In the high school we have students accused of rape. A boy is alleged to have beaten a girl in the locker room. A student drew my picture with a bull's-eye on my face and encouraged

other's to shoot me. Students brag about spotlighting deer, clubbing porcupines, and torturing cats.

In the middle school fighting is routine, and larger students regularly bully smaller and younger students. When I overhear hunting stories they always focus on the killing and never on how grateful the hunters are for the food. During the animal rights forum students went out of their way to call my attention to their killing something [a spider] out in the hall.

I know a teacher who bought her preschool child a little rifle so he could kill ground squirrels with the rest of the family.

I believe a segment of our local culture encourages a disregard for others. Linked to this is the belief that one's own selfish interests should take precedence over the well-being of others. I believe that a taught disregard for animals can lead, at least indirectly, to a disregard for people. Sport hunting and the demands of ranching cause children to become desensitized to the feelings of other beings. This desensitivity is reinforced through 4-H, hunter safety courses, rodeos, goldfish give-aways, and even donkey basketball. A middle school student told me that he found nothing wrong with bull fighting since the meat was not wasted. The animal's torment for our enjoyment was of no concern to him. I believe we taught him to feel this way.

There is a growing body of evidence that indicates a significant link between animal abuse and child abuse. As long as we sanction a disregard for the feelings of animals we should not be surprised when children are less than respectful to each other. If we really want children to grow up being kind and caring we must teach them to be kind and caring. Admittedly, my rule has had negligible impact on my students, but I know that, at least, I am not adding to the problem.

I have written to you because I know of no forum which allows discussion between us all. In spite of Mr. Newton's belief that my rule is stupid, I believe that our school will better serve our children and our society if we continue to talk about this issue. What do you think?

Sincerely,

Rick Bogle

I made a cover sheet for this letter that showed a double pan balance with my rule on one side and all the problems mentioned in the letter in the other. On the base it said: Controversy. The small rule appeared to be much weightier than everything else combined. The title was The Unreasonable Rule. Under the cartoon were a number of quotes:

“ . . . through being cruel to other animals one becomes cruel to human beings . . . ”

Thomas Aquinas

“Our duties towards animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity .”

Immanuel Kant

“Boundless compassion for all living beings is the firmest and surest guarantee of pure moral conduct . . . Whosoever is inspired by it will assuredly injure no one, will wrong no one, and will encroach on no one’s rights.”

Schopenhauer

“Anyone who has accustomed himself to regard the life of any living creature as worthless is in danger of arriving at the idea of worthless human lives.”

Albert Schweitzer

“One of the most dangerous things that can happen to a child is to kill or torture an animal and get away with it.”

Margaret Mead

“Those kids are getting an unbalanced education.”

Shannon Voigt

“It’s stupid.”

Greg Newton

I am not really sure what I expected to come from this letter, but I did expect some sort of a response. Months later I received my one and only reply. Apparently, no one was interested.

## Twenty-nine

*After Rick had sent his letters to the staff, we were at a movie theater watching, Jerry Maguire. There's a scene in the movie when the main character, Tom Cruise, writes a memo in a moment of intellectual passion, and before he can think things over, he disburses it to his co-workers. He calls it his mission statement. Tom is seen walking into his office after the memos were sent out. He's hiding behind his papers, looking down, not sure what kind of a reaction he would be getting. During the movie, we both saw the parallelism of the moment, and we looked at each other and laughed. Rick whispered to me, "I can relate." It was funny. I'm sure that is exactly how he felt the day after the staff received the letter.*

*The sad thing was that he received no reaction. Who knows what was said at home, between husbands and wives. Perhaps they were all hooting and snorting, thinking it was totally ludicrous – just another oddity about Mr. Bogle. I hope that one or two actually read it with an open mind, which I feel would have been possible. There were intelligent and caring people on his staff, but when you are one of a few you tend to keep quiet. I feel sorry for those people, only because I have been there; we all have. I have been told that less than 20% of the American colonists wanted their independence from England. It is the loud minority that gets their way, usually. Sometimes that is good, but sometimes it is bad.*

*Rick had a tendency to think that everybody was against him. He didn't like shopping in Prairie City, because he hated seeing people he knew, afraid that they would corner him or say nasty things to him. I know for a fact that wasn't the case. When I would go to Prairie City Drugs to buy cards or magazines, the women behind the counter would always ask how Rick was doing. They were genuinely concerned and would make disparaging remarks about the idiots who were causing such a fuss. Through friends, I would also hear of other parents who were upset over what was happening to Rick. But those people were the silent majority.*

## Thirty

After vacation, behavior in the halls deteriorated to such a degree that the other Bates teachers thought we needed a new tougher behavior policy. Privately, we felt this was simply a reflection of the parents' new level of disdain for us. We asked Mr. Newton to come to a meeting to discuss the students' behavior and what could be done to regain control. We met in my room.

"We've got to do something," began Mrs. Lesniak, "the eighth grade just looks at me as if I'm nuts when I ask them to quiet down in the halls."

"Sending the rude kids to the office just doesn't seem to be working," offered Mr. Northcut.

"The eighth grade has absolutely no respect," Mrs. Lesniak continued. "Ever since the Forum, they think they can just ignore the teachers."

"They are really hard to deal with in class," Mrs. Bent was a new teacher and had the eighth grade more than anyone else; they had decided that they could just ignore her.

"You people can do whatever you want," said Greg. "It's up to you how you want them to behave."

We had all about given up on help and support from Newton. He had become as bitter about Prairie City as I had. Neither of us was spending any time in the halls between classes; we were both allowing the rest of the staff to monitor hallway behavior. Newton had been saying he was going to be leaving at the end of the year; he had taken the community response to the forum as personally as I even though he was new to the area. He quit being the principal and had become more of a clerk. When students came back to class after being sent out, they would often boast about how much fun it had been to get out of class.

I had not noticed, and Newton had not said anything, but on January 24, I received a letter from him:

Dear Mr. Bogle,

It has come to my attention that you are still not in compliance with my directive of December 10, 1996. You were directed to remove the rule "Escort Critters From The Room" perhaps replacing it with a generic rule about distraction. When I entered your room recently the same rule was still up. Have you missed my point?

Please attend a conference with me concerning this issue at 3:30 P.M. on Monday, January 27, 1997 in my office. As this conference could lead to negative consequences you may want to have your representative with you.

Respectfully,  
Greg Newton

I immediately contacted the regional representative of the Oregon Education Association, Ken Steiger. He was able to get to Prairie on short notice and was with me as I walked into Newton's office. If I remember correctly he asked Sue Null, the clerk, to be present and take notes for a transcript of the meeting.

Newton brought out a copy of his directive about the unreasonableness of my rule.

"Mr. Bogle you were given this directive on December 10<sup>th</sup> and you have not complied with my direct order."

"Yes I have."

Greg seemed surprised. "I was in your room recently and saw the rule still on the wall."

"The rule is still up, but you told me to remove it or revise it. You said that the problem was that it was supported by negative consequences. I revised it. I cut the consequences off. I thought I had complied."

Newton seemed not to know what to do. Ken Steiger was being quiet. Sue Null was waiting for the next comment.

“Well,” began Newton, “I can see how you might see it that way. But now get it down.”

“What happens if I don’t?” I asked.

“Why wouldn’t you take it down?” Greg seemed surprised.

“Listen, you have told me over and over that you don’t want to discuss my reasons.” Newton had been adamant throughout this situation about being uninterested in hearing anything I might have to say on the topic of human treatment of other animals. “Now I want to know what you will do if I pointedly refuse to comply.”

Newton turned a deep red. He was clearly angry. “I’ll dismiss you for insubordination.”

I looked over at Ken. “Can he do that?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll consider it,” I said, “I want it in writing.”

Back in my room I visited with the union rep a little more.

“This is crap,” I began. “How can they tell me I can’t have such a simple rule in my classroom? Surely teachers have some autonomy in their own class room.”

“Right now you have to avoid being fired, Rick. Insubordination is something they can use, and is difficult to fight. The way to handle this sort of thing is to comply and then grieve. I advise you to remove the rule, and we’ll look into filing a grievance.”

I thanked Ken and he left.

### Thirty-one

I sat in my room after school looking at my rules and wondering what to do. This had now been going on for half the year and there did not seem to be any end in sight. Why was it so wrong to try to instill a little kindness? This had become a challenge to my deepest most cherished beliefs. Giving up seemed to require me to acknowledge that kindness was wrong, that the community's disregard and disdain for the suffering of animals was somehow more correct than my concern for their well-being.

I took down my rule, went home, and started looking for an attorney.

### Thirty-two

Ken Steiger called the next day and told me that the association's attorneys did not believe the situation was grievable but thought that it might be pursued on other legal grounds. They provided me with the name of a lawyer and told me that the union would pay for her services.

At the same time I contacted the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) and was given a referral. It seemed to me that I needed someone in my corner who understood my perspective.

The Oregon Education Association (OEA) attorney was Margarete Olney. When I spoke with Ms. Olney on the phone she implied that I might have some grounds for a suit based on the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. She felt that the school's position was weak and that a letter from her might be all that would be required to rectify the situation. This letter would not get written for almost four months – her attention to the matter was underwhelming.

The referral from ALDF led me to two attorneys. One offered to research the case pro gratis. She was working on passing the bar but was willing to take time to help me. The other attorney was Scott Beckstead in Coos Bay, Oregon. When I spoke to Scott he immediately expressed an interest and quoted some headlines from the AP story that had been seen throughout the region. As Scott and I discussed the situation we discovered that we both knew Nancy Perry, the

Humane Society of the United States representative who had spoken at the Forum. In fact he said that Nancy was one of his and his wife's closet friends. It seemed that fate had, at last, placed me into good hands. The future looked bright.

We decided that since Ms. Olney was most conversant with educational law that it would make most sense to allow her to proceed with my case. I thought of Scott as a reserve force who would be able to step in and be up to speed should the OEA decide to abandon me, which I fully expected them to do at some point. I sent him a one thousand dollar retainer.

### Thirty-two

One of the job queries I had sent out had gone to the Citizens for Animal Rights Eugene (C.A.R.E.). I received a phone call from them in late February I think. They told me about an upcoming annual conference in Eugene, Oregon being organized by the law students at the University of Oregon's School of Environmental Law. They suggested that this might be a good place to hand out resumes and rub elbows with people in the animal rights movement. The Land-Water-Air (L.A.W.) Conference was billed as the largest environmental conference in the U.S. Of particular interest to me was that during each of the concurrent time slots an animal rights session had been scheduled. One of the organizers was an animal person who had worked to insure the inclusion of these topics. C.A.R.E. sent me a schedule and registration form, which I immediately filled out and returned.

The L.A.W. Conference was simply amazing. All of the meals were vegan – no animal products of any sort – and delicious. The hall for the keynote addresses and dining was very large and filled to capacity throughout the conference. I heard Carol Adams, a leader of the feminist movement speak about the parallels between the exploitation of animals and women and watched her slide presentation showing the many times women are presented as meat and the ways meat, fur, and hunting is presented in ads coupled with sex. I listened to Gary Francione, a legal scholar discuss the position of animals in the American legal system. I spoke with him after his presentation and he offered to write an *amicus* brief for me should my case end up in court. At the individual sessions I heard presentations on the plight of captive Orcas, the

interconnections between all forms of abuse – environmental, child, animal, and spousal, and the buffalo slaughter taking place at Yellowstone. I heard people talk about being arrested at demonstrations and heard calls for animal rights proponents and environmentalists to work together more closely.

The most amazing thing to me was that people were standing up in public saying things that I believed and were being cheered instead of being attacked. This was not Prairie City.

One of the Speakers I heard was Dr. Roger Fouts. Fouts had been one of my heroes for years. He was a pioneer in interspecies communication and had helped a chimpanzee named Washoe learn American Sign Language (ASL). I had seen Fouts and Washoe on TV when I was eleven or twelve years old and had been a naive opportunistic observer of their work ever since. On the program I had watched there had also been a very young chimpanzee who seemed especially adept at language and was a ball of energy. While signing in ASL, this small ape would run around the living room they were filming in bouncing from sofa to chair to lap to sofa more quickly than the camera could follow. From his words I believed he was going to be able to teach us a lot about how animals thought. Looking back, I believe this small gifted individual was Booe, who later spent many long years locked in solitary confinement as a biomedical research subject after being taken away from Fouts.

During this same session I also heard Dr. Sherri Speede speak. Speede is a veterinarian and was the Northwest Regional Director for In Defense of Animals a California-based animal rights group. Dr. Speede spoke primarily about the research being conducted by Dr. Martha Neuringer at the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center in Hillsborough Oregon.

[From a pamphlet written by Dr. Speede, which reflects her presentation]

Dr. Neuringer adamantly denies that she treats her monkeys in a “cruel or cavalier” manner. However, she herself has described the infants in her experiments as suffering from severe emotional

and psychological stress, as well as prolonged diarrhea, before she eventually kills them to examine their eyes and brains.

Neuringer forcibly removes the infant monkeys from their mothers on the day they are born to house them alone in steel cages. Because rhesus monkeys are among the most social of all primates, the price in terror to these babies and mothers is impossible to overstate.

The mothers grieve for the loss of their babies for days. The infants' stress, terror, and depression are manifested in constant rocking and swaying; continued clutching at themselves; and self-mutilation.

To compound the abuse, Dr. Neuringer drills holes into the skulls of some of the babies to remove pieces of their brains. They endure painful recovery from these brain surgeries as many as four times before they are killed at or before 3 years of age.

Neuringer attempts to justify her cruel experiments by proposing to answer what she describes as a "remaining critical question": Do human babies really need the preformed long-chain fatty acids present in human breast milk?

**But this question has already been answered.** Based on existing knowledge and scientific evidence, the European Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition and the British Nutrition Foundation have already recommended that human infant formula be supplemented with these fatty acids in amounts similar to those in human breast milk.

Based on these recommendations, European and Japanese companies have already started adding these long-chain fatty acids to their infant formulas.

In 1991 - **three years** before proposing to abuse more monkeys at taxpayer expense - Neuringer herself wrote, "Ideally, the fat content and fatty acid composition of infant formula should

resemble human milk. This seems reasonable and technologically feasible.”

Dr. Neuringer’s fatty acid experiments are consistent with her long history of isolating and killing infant monkeys to confirm already-known nutritional effects. This can clearly be seen in her earlier taurine deprivation “research.”

In 1984, formula manufactures began adding taurine to their products. In 1987, Neuringer herself confirmed, “Taurine supplementation of most commercial infant formulas was instituted in 1984 or 1985.” Yet, even after making this statement, Neuringer proceeded to torment and kill at least 60 baby monkeys to “further strengthen the case” for feeding infants taurine -- **a case that had already been made.**

In 1993 — **nine years** after companies began adding taurine to their infant formulas — Neuringer, after describing an experiment in which she killed 25 baby monkeys, actually wrote that, “[I]t remains prudent to supplement human infant formula with taurine levels matching those of human milk.”

Sometimes we hear about things that seem unreal . . . a serial killer, a child molester, someone locked in a basement for years. Since most of us live in an orderly and seemingly sane world it is always hard to imagine that these stories are about real people and real events. Maybe TV is partly to blame for this disconnected sense of unreality.

I felt none of this as I sat listening to Dr. Speede. For some reason I am still unsure of, I did not feel a sense of distance from what I was being told. I connected. Was it because I was being told at school that teaching kindness was wrong? Or because the abuse she was describing was taking place even as she spoke just a couple of hours away? I don’t know. But for whatever reason, as I sat listening to Dr. Speede and seeing the frightened and tormented babies in my mind, I knew that I could not just go home and continue to fight for the right to keep kids from killing insects in my classroom. The institutionalization of this abuse chilled me. The insensitivity shook me to the core of my being. How could anyone allow such a thing to continue?

### Thirty-three

My mother was raised a Seventh Day Adventist, and my father a Methodist. They raised their children as nondenominational Christians. My mother's knowledge of the *Bible* always impressed me. One of the copies we grew up with was especially worn and had been her mother's. Whenever a Biblical question arose my mother always seemed to know just where in that well-worn text we could find the answer.

My father seemed no less knowledgeable and between them we received a Christian indoctrination even though it entailed no formal visits to a church.

As I grew up I became more interested in spiritual questions. In sixth grade I began going to a Southern Baptist church with a neighbor. In high school, my longtime girl friend and I visited many churches, attending one for a few weeks before moving on to another. In high school I read much of the *Bible*, the *Book of Mormon*, and even Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health and Key to the Scriptures*.

After I returned from The Bahamas I was led to Eastern religions due to my interest in ethical vegetarianism. My readings in Hinduism led me to Mohandas K. Gandhi and his teachings about civil disobedience, which were inspired in part by Thoreau. It was many years later, after moving to Oregon, that I discovered Buddhism.

Christmas Humphreys, Alan Watts, and D.T. Suzuki introduced me to a philosophy that is based on compassion and selflessness. Over a period of years I read a great deal of Buddhist literature. In 1994 I finally began a personal meditation practice, which I learned from an audio tape of teachings from Thich Nat Hahn, the Vietnamese Zen Roshi. Basically, it is a practice of sitting quietly and stilling one's inner chatter.

Prior to the beginning of the school year I had gone to a Buddhist retreat in Corbet, Oregon led by Dr. Jan Bays, a pediatrician who works with abused children. The three-day retreat was a series of long sitting spells (seshin, in Zen parlance), a few silent work periods, silent meals, and

a couple of talks by Dr. Bays. Most of the weekend was spent in a silent effort to become mindful of every moment. It was an intense experience.

Between our marathon meditations we rested in small simple communal cabins. A wooden gong of sorts would be beaten as a call to meditation. We would silently walk up a path to begin the next sitting period.

Corbet is in the west end of the Columbia River Gorge less than an hour from Portland. To describe the vegetation as lush is an understatement. Everything is green, wet, and mossy. Slugs abound.

Walking up the path to the zendo, or meditation hall, it was impossible not to notice the slugs along the way. By being the least bit careful though, it was quite easy to refrain from stepping on them. Buddha said that all beings simply want to be happy; indeed the first precept of Buddhism is: Harm no sentient being. As I walked up this path I began to notice that more and more slugs were being mashed. This bothered me.

One of the traditional parts of a Buddhist retreat and Buddhist monastic life are private interviews with the teacher. This is typically a brief conversation about the problems you are having keeping your mind stilled and a suggestion for overcoming the difficulty. When my time came to meet with Dr. Bays I was less concerned with stilling my mind than with the avoidable harm we were doing to the other beings on the path to the zendo – on our path to enlightenment. I was a bit worried about this interview because, during a work session, I had been asked to straighten up a work shed and was surprised by the quantity of pesticides and fly tapes. I suppose I expected her to say something about people not being mindful enough while walking and that we should all pay more attention to the other beings around us. What she said to me was a surprise: We cannot avoid harming other beings and so should be unconcerned when we do so, and only humans suffer.

Only humans suffer? I had expected to hear something a bit more enlightened than the tripe I was having hurled at me in Prairie City. When I got up from the interview I went outside her little audience chamber, rang the bell to signal the next seeker of knowledge, and went back to

my cabin, packed up and left. Within an hour I was sitting in the bar on the top of a Holiday Inn in Portland drinking a cold beer and wondering why kindness and concern for others seemed to be such a difficult path.

### Thirty-four

As I at listening to Sherri Speede talk about the infant monkeys having their brains and lives shattered in a series of redundant federally funded experiments I began wondering what I could do. Another letter? I know some people believe that writing letters to their legislators gives results, but to me it has basically seemed a futile act with little real results. Generally, you get a form letter back with little connection to the letter you wrote. And, in any case, this seemed to warrant more than a simple missive. But what to do? I asked myself what the Buddha would have done. I asked myself what Gandhi would have done. What would Martin Luther King have done? What would Jesus have done?

Scott Beckstead, the attorney I had retained, was speaking at the same time as Dr. Speede and Dr. Fouts, but in a different room at the conference. I had not yet met him and wanted to be sure of speaking to him before he left. As the session with Fouts and Speede ended a few people stayed to talk with the presenters. I would have liked to have spoken with Dr. Fouts about the TV program I had watched but walked quickly up to Dr. Speede instead.

“Dr. Speede, you don’t know me, but I’d like to help you fight the Primate Center,” I quickly began. “I apologize for being so abrupt, but I need to go meet someone. If you think it would help draw attention to the situation I would be willing to sit in front of the center for two weeks. I need to go, but here is my name and stuff,” I handed her a slip of paper. “Listen, I gotta go, but I really want to help.” I suppose I had answered the question as to what I expected my heroes of the past to have done.

I can only guess what she might have thought as I hurried away to catch Scott Beckstead.

### Thirty-five

During the five-hour drive back home from Eugene I continued thinking about what I had offered to do. I had experienced enough negative publicity over the year that the thought of people thinking of me as some sort of fringe kook just did not bother me. My main concern was the accuracy of Dr. Speede's description of the research. The more I thought about this the more worried I became that she might be, perhaps, bending the truth a little. Or maybe her facts were presented in some way that made the situation and experiments appear worse than they really were. I realized that I needed to do some of my own research before I decided to make some sort of spectacle of myself.

### Thirty-six

*Prior to the L.A.W. conference, my mother passed away. She was still living in my hometown of Lockport, Illinois, near Chicago. I was fortunate to be by her side when she died, and Rick flew into Chicago to be with me for the funeral. Living in Oregon was somewhat difficult for me because my mom, sisters, nieces, and nephews, not to mention dozens of aunts and uncles all lived in the Midwest. I would fly home at least once a year and spend time being a "daughter" instead of a "wife".*

*After she died, I felt lost. With the experience of her funeral and being so far away from my family I began to question our being in eastern Oregon. Where would we be buried? Who would come to my funeral? We were always outsiders in John Day, and I needed to feel like I belonged somewhere.*

*With Rick's troubles getting uglier and uglier, we both had a feeling that a change was about to come about. Perhaps this was just the kick we needed to move us on in our lives. On our rides home from school, if Rick would be worried about losing his job, I'd just say, "Let them fire you. They're all assholes anyway." Our marriage was so strong, that we'd just say, "What's the worst thing that could happen because of this?" And with all of our scenarios, we'd still end up being together. Destitute, poor, and unemployed maybe, but still together.*

*As Rick began to hear about other people in the animal rights movement, he began to feel less alone, less weird. The actions of Shannon Voigt and his cronies actually empowered Rick. He began to see that there were many opportunities to reach more than a few people, and to make more of a difference in the mistreatment of living creatures.*

*So, with the job queries all over the United States, with him meeting people from various A.R. groups, and with my disillusionment with eastern Oregon, we were ripe for a move. Now, he needed to become informed, to find the facts about the use of primates in medical research.*

### Thirty-seven

Back home I started looking around for information. One of the first places I checked was my old *Encyclopedia Britannica*. I had received this set of encyclopedias in 1964 for Christmas; the same year my sister got her piano – my father must have had a good year. Of course, *Britannica* did not have any information on the Oregon primate center, but it did have an article discussing emotional research using monkeys. The picture it painted was disturbing, but still I was having a few second thoughts about doing the Gandhi thing without some real evidence of current abuse.

I had received a pamphlet from the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS) as a result of my earlier job queries. This was certainly more current and even more unsettling, but it was impossible to discount the possibility they too were distorting the truth in order to generate donations. It was during this same time that I read Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation*. The second chapter of this work focuses on primate research. It was the most damning evidence yet that something terribly wrong was going on, and it had been for a very long time. Still, AAVS and Singer were clearly animal rights advocates, and while their data was well referenced I still needed something more solid.

I called Dr. Speede a few times to discuss my offer, but she seemed very difficult to reach and was not returning my calls.

I had received a small booklet produced by a group of medical doctors calling themselves the Medical Research Modernization Committee entitled *A Critical Look at Animal Research*. This

was a discussion of current research and focused on primate studies. There did not seem to be much discussion of ethics but was instead an argument with multiple examples of why research on these (and all) animals was misleading or dangerous when applied to humans. It gave me some encouragement to find out that medical doctors were becoming more skeptical of non-human-based research as a basis for human medicine.

Marvin Northcut, the middle school social studies teacher was also a computer nerd. One morning before school I was talking to him about the trouble I was having finding out about the primate center. Marvin had written the Forum survey question about primates so I guess I should not have been surprised when he offered to see what he could find on the Internet. The next day he came in with the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center Fact Sheet, and said that he had found a lot, would I want some more information? I told Marvin that I would.

## **Fact Sheet**

What is the Oregon Regional Primate Research Center?

Mission: To advance knowledge about health and disease in humans and animals through basic biomedical research with nonhuman primates.

- research focuses on reproductive biology and behavior, neurobiology, and pathobiology and immunology

Research Interests: ORPRC scientists are studying. . .

- what causes premature birth.
- how the ovary functions.
- how male and female gametes develop.
- how steroid hormones act in the reproductive tract and in brain cells.
- how neurotransmitters modulate the differentiation and functions of brain cells and regulate sexual maturity.
- how immune responses are regulated.

- what causes cardiovascular disease.
- how infant nutrition affects visual development.
- how HIV causes tissue-specific diseases.
- how hormones affect growth and development and sexual and aggressive behavior.
- how hormones controlling fetal brain development contribute to the biological basis of psycho-sexual orientation.
- how the brain regulates the secretion of prolactin, a hormone that directs the production of breast milk.
- how growth factors stimulate normal and cancerous development of the brain, lung and gastrointestinal tract and regulate the onset of puberty.
- how to correct involuntary movement disorders.
- how the brain regulates pituitary function in the reproductive cycle.

Research Accomplishments: ORPRC scientists have. . .

- provided a basis for understanding differences in the development of male and female brains at the chemical and cellular level.
- identified an immunosuppressive virus in monkeys that is a model for understanding the mechanisms of HIV infection and disease in humans.
- found evidence for important roles of taurine and omega-3 fatty acids in infant diets that helped lead to the inclusion of taurine in all milk formulas and increases omega-3 fatty acid content in many.
- developed procedures to study factors that control the beginning of labor -- a study that may help prevent premature birth.
- developed and refined surgical techniques that have provided models for research on the causes of female infertility and have helped pave the way for corrective surgery in human fetuses.

- made progress in identifying a gene involved in the growth of lung cancer.

Animals and animal care:

- four veterinarians and 44 laboratory animal support staff, including specialists in psychological well-being, care for four species of 2,200 nonhuman primates.
- All research proposals involving animals are reviewed by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, which includes a lay person representing community concerns for animal welfare.

I have always been able to read between the lines.

### Thirty-eight

When my students and I have discussed slavery and the Holocaust, when we have discussed the Cambodian Killing Fields and the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and central Africa, they invariably ask the same question every year.

They ask, “Mr. Bogle, why did people let that stuff go on?”

And I always say to them, “I don’t really know, but maybe everyone was afraid.”

They always go on to tell me that they would have done something to try to stop it. They would have been brave. They would have been one of the people along the underground railway helping others to escape from slavery, or one of the people who hid someone else from the Nazis during the insanity of the Third Reich. I think we all want to believe that we would have been one of those brave people of conscience too.

If I did not act after learning about the horror occurring in these publicly funded laboratories, maybe I would have been quiet during the nightmares in the past as well. I had no choice; I knew I had to act.

### Thirty-nine

About a month after the L.A.W. conference was held in Eugene, another conference was held in Portland; a group calling itself the Liberation Collective organized this conference. The conference was titled: Against Animal Testing. I had called and spoken with Craig Rosebraugh, one of the organizers, and he had offered to let me stay at his house during the five-day event.

When I got to Craig's house I was, at first, put off by the appearance of some of the people who were also staying there. Black leather-look vinyl seemed the fashion statement of the day with multiply pierced body parts and a rainbow of hair colors acting as accessories. I felt I had stepped into a crack house or some even less respectable domicile of ill repute. But, I learned that many of the critics of federally funded cruelty are young people who are questioning the fundamental assumptions most of us think of as normal.

Many of these "kids" as they often refer to themselves, lead lives of moral rigor and actively work to improve the world. They generally decry the use of drugs, lead a vegan life-style, and refrain from promiscuous sex. Instead of walking into a crack house, I had discovered a group of young activists who believed their social studies teachers when they had been told that in America people can change the things they find disturbing if they will organize and assert their constitutional rights. These "kids" were idealists who had decided to change the world into a more caring and inclusive place. How different they seemed from the young adults in Prairie City who were intent on shooting the big buck or finding a job with a logging company.

Craig Rosebraugh was a product of this new activist culture and had become an organizer and theorist who had crossed the boundaries between youthful enthusiasm and mature resolve. Craig and Katie Lewis had founded the Liberation Collective on the outlandish notion that all matters of abuse and dominance are related. Animal abuse, environmental degradation, sexual

discrimination, child abuse, economic inequalities, rampant consumerism, all these problems seemed to the Collective as interrelated and needing to be addressed.

The conference brought together activists from around the Northwest and offered a variety of speakers knowledgeable about biomedical research. The conference was organized around the effort to end the Emanuel-Legacy Health System's research on cats. The Emanuel-Legacy Health System is Portland's largest health care supplier. A researcher at Emanuel-Legacy was destroying the inner ear of cats in an effort to mimic the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. The research had been going on for years and had been one of the reasons the Liberation Collective had come into existence. A series of protests at Emanuel were held during the conference.

In the second of three protests that week, over a hundred people marched through the streets of Portland with a police escort and ended up at the doors of the laboratory. Here, for the first time, I saw people put their freedom on the line and get arrested for speaking out against institutionalized cruelty. They were nominally arrested for stepping into the driveway – called trespassing by the police, and sitting in a doorway blocking the entrance to the building. Regardless of their law breaking, they seemed to be doing the only thing that made any sense to me. These people will be seen as heroes one day.

#### Forty

I remained estranged from my colleagues at school, and if anything, was moving even further away from them. I continued to educate my self about the Oregon Primate Center and in the process learned that there was a network of these laboratories around the United States. The more I learned the more disturbed I became and the more my resolve to fight against this cruelty grew. At some point I made the decision to not limit my protest to the Oregon center. This was not really a hard choice. I learned that a sister facility was located in Seattle, only a two hour drive from Portland; surely those monkeys needed my efforts too.

Lynn's mother died suddenly and unexpectedly. Lynn wanted to move nearer to her sisters so we decided upon Madison, Wisconsin, only a couple of hours from each of her two sisters. And, Madison was the home of another primate center with thousands of more tortured monkeys.

I wrote to the Liberation Collective and explained my resolve to take my disdain to the gates of the seven NIH Regional Primate Research Centers. A short time later a reply came from Craig telling me that I was up against a very large multi-billion dollar opponent and that success was not going to be easy or even likely, but that he would like to help. And shortly, I sent a brochure to every animal rights group I could think of explaining my intentions of sitting nearly around the clock for nine days in front of each of the seven centers. I explained to them that I would be gathering an army of stuffed toy monkeys to carry with me and would accept donations of posters and literature but was not interested in any monetary help. Marvin Northcut put up a web page explaining the idea and motivation behind the Ape Army.

#### Forty-one

The school year ended with a whimper. The Oregon Education Association attorney, Margarete Olney was frightened off by the school's lawyer; Scott Beckstead said that maybe I should just write a book. I packed up my belongings and left Prairie City School a day early to drive to Portland to speak out against the U.S. government's modern day holocaust.