

BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2009 – 31ST MARCH 2010

Another year has passed and once again Beauty Without Cruelty has proven itself to be leaders in defending the interests of animals in this country. Our main objective is to educate and inform people about the suffering of animals used in vivisection, factory farming and the exploitation of wildlife, but we also provide hands-on help to animals when this becomes necessary and as a result we have a cat rescue sanctuary in Hout Bay and, over the past year, have subsidised the sterilisation of numerous dogs and cats, in an effort to reduce the problem of stray and abandoned animals.

The year has been both busy and productive with plenty of publicity being given to the issues we address, through the media via newspapers, radio and television and hundreds of pamphlets, magazines and other literature has been distributed to the public. BWC has a very popular Facebook page, with approximately 1000 members and a completely new web site, which provides information and updates on various animal issues. We also send out a free monthly online newsletter to over 450 subscribers and this number is growing every day. Our recent membership drive was successful despite the fact that most people are able to receive all the information they need from web sites, Facebook and the internet and therefore see no reason to pay membership subscriptions. Our bi-annual COMPASSION magazine is now designed in-house, thus saving on expenses and, together with the newsletter, enables us to keep our members and supporters completely up to date with animal rights issues nationwide.

Another avenue used to inform the public about animal suffering is Cape Town TV which has been kind enough to show a number of animal rights films such as the BWC film "Living Without Cruelty", Bad Medicine and Behind the Mask and the Beauty Without Cruelty advert, which may be viewed on our web site, all free of charge. There is so much work to be done in educating people about animal abuse and we thank CTTV for all their help and support in this regard.

We must also thank Radio Today for its on going support. A new radio advert has been drawn up to replace the old one and we are most grateful for the opportunity this allows us to advertise our organisation and the work we do to improve the lives of animals. We have been asked to speak on a number of radio shows, including Radio Sonder Grens, Cape Talk, Bush Radio and SAFM. We have also been fortunate enough to have had numerous letters and articles printed in various newspapers around the country. We were also delighted to be told that a DSTV advert had been changed after our complaint regarding its promotion of cruel foie gras, which is obtained through the force feeding of ducks and geese and results in their livers increasing to ten times the normal size.

I am delighted to announce that 1st April 2009, Toni Brockhoven joined Beauty Without Cruelty on a full time basis! Toni is a respected animal rights activist and leader of the highly successful No Foie Gras Campaign, which is also affiliated to BWC. After working in the same company for the past fifteen years, Toni decided to devote her considerable energy and talents to promoting the rights of animals and we are thrilled that she has chosen to leave the commercial world to help BWC in furthering its aims and objectives. She will be managing BWC's public relations, fund raising, research and much more and we believe that, with her efficient manner, undoubted people skills and selfless devotion to the cause, BWC will go from strength to strength.

One of Toni's first actions was to join a number of business networking groups, on behalf of the charity and this has proved very useful, as help has been offered by various professional people and companies, all free of charge. The No Foie Gras campaign is associated with Beauty Without Cruelty and we are delighted that so many celebrities have signed the pledge not to eat foie gras again. The Cape Town City Council has agreed not to serve foie gras at any city events and both Premier Helen Zille and Mayor Dan Plato have signed the pledge.

BWC has also had meetings with the Mayor of Cape Town regarding the banning of circuses on Council grounds and the banning of fireworks. Both of these issues are on going and it seems that it will take a while before any positive action is taken by the authorities to ban these activities. BWC attended a workshop to discuss the fireworks issue and letters were written to the press. A petition and letter has also been handed to the Mayor in this regard. We are still awaiting national government contacts to which we will appeal for a ban on the importation and use of fireworks. The noise made by fireworks causes a tremendous amount of stress to animals and circuses are devoid of any entertainment value and cause much suffering to the animals, who are forced to perform unnatural tricks and are kept in small cages for months on end.

The Cape Town City Council draft by-laws have been under discussion for some time and BWC attended a workshop at which public concerns were aired. Unfortunately, it appears that Council is determined to enforce laws that will, in many people's opinion, infringe basic human rights and this issue will not be resolved soon. BWC will continue to be involved in getting the best deal for the animals, while making sure that their welfare is not compromised.

Every year BWC organises peaceful protests against vivisection, the fur industry, factory farming and other issues. This year our World Laboratory Animal Day protest was well attended and many leaflets were handed to the public. We also arranged some anti-fur protests and one protesting the killing of rabbits on Robben Island. The rabbits have been killed in the same heartless manner as the feral cats were some years ago and the authorities have rejected or ignored humane removal options that have been suggested by animal interest groups.

Our investigation into the humane status of cosmetic and household product manufacturers is on going and we are happy to report that some new names have been added to the BWC approved product guide. BWC's humane criteria only allow products that are suitable for use by vegans and vegetarians to be endorsed as humanely manufactured and approved products must also comply with strict non-animal testing criteria. We are in the process of expanding the guide to include humane investment options i.e. investments in companies that are in no way linked to animal exploitation or cruelty to animals, such as the pharmaceutical industry, which is heavily reliant on animal testing during the developmental stage of medicinal drugs. We also intend including "humane charities" on the list, which would exclude organisations that conduct, support or subsidise animal experiments. Investigation into these two areas is slow, but we hope to have some positive results soon.

Another issue, which will take time to fully address, is the fact that the public, through taxes, subsidise animal based research conducted at universities and other institutions, yet no information or statistics are made available by the government for public scrutiny. BWC has tested the waters by approaching the Medical Research Council for statistics and other information on animals used annually by the MRC and we were pleased that this information was forthcoming. We will be asking other institutions for similar statistics and campaign for government to provide such information to the public in the interests of transparency.

We attended discussions regarding the proposed legalisation of greyhound racing and have written letters to the relevant authorities, but this issue will not be resolved quickly and we are keeping a watch on the situation and will keep speaking out against the government allowing this cruel industry to be introduced to this country. The argument has been made that illegal racing is already taking place and that making it legal will allow for monitoring of the industry, but illegal activities are a matter for the police to address and cannot be used as justification for legalising the industry.

We have also actively opposed the City Council allowing animal circus' to set up on public land and protests have been organised to inform the public about the hidden cruelty that circus animals have to endure. As a result, McLarens circus has stated it will not be visiting Cape Town for two years, due to "harassment"! While the circus appears to be of the opinion that this will be a punishment for the Cape Town public, animal interest groups see it as a resounding success of our anti-circus campaign.

Our very successful education programme continues to evolve and we thank Denis Fajans and Heather Howe for their commitment to informing young people about the suffering and exploitation of animals and for donating their time to give talks at schools and other social groups. In April, we were invited to give a presentation to about 200 people at the Muslim Women's Group; this is the second invitation we have had from this group and we appreciate their interest in our cause. We were also asked to speak at Stellenbosch University, which has resulted in us forming a positive relationship with

students that will, no doubt, result in further interaction between BWC and the university's animal interest group.

BWC approached a number of restaurants in the Western Cape, Gauteng and KZN, to participate in promoting Vegan Week and we commend those who took part by offering vegan alternatives on their menus. Often people are sceptical of the quality and tastiness of vegan food and vegan week allows meat eaters and vegetarians the opportunity to sample not only nutritious vegan food, but to also to see just how many amazing dishes one can offer that contain no animal protein or by-products. For national Braai Day, Toni Brockhoven hosted a vegan braai for journalists, to show that we can celebrate this national pastime in a humane and compassionate way and still enjoy the social interaction for which the braai is famous!

Also, to celebrate our commitment to promoting a cruelty-free lifestyle, Beauty Without Cruelty published its first "Living Without Cruelty" vegan cookbook, for which we must convey our deep appreciation to BWC endorsed Charlotte Rhys cosmetic company for making a generous donation, which helped so much with printing costs. The book contains vegan recipes, all tried and tested by our versatile PR person and gourmet cook, Toni Brockhoven, and nutritional tips and other interesting information. This is the first of a series of cookbooks, which will contain all new information, recipes and tips, to help people choose healthier, more humane lifestyle options.

In July, BWC received a request from the National Chairman of South African Association Against Painful Experiments on Animals (SAAAPEA) for a meeting to discuss BWC taking over the management of SAAAPEA, as the chairman and her committee wished to retire and there was nobody in the organisation who wished to continue running the charity. A meeting between the committees of BWC and SAAAPEA was held in Johannesburg and an agreement was reached to hand over the management and assets of SAAAPEA to BWC. Unfortunately, the agreement fell through a week or so later, when the SAAAPEA chairman advised us that she had decided to withdraw the decision taken at the meeting, because BWC had made it clear that we would not be willing or able to transfer money, collected in South Africa, to a specific individual and organisations overseas. We believe there is so much work to be done in South Africa for which funding is needed, that it would be unacceptable to subsidise overseas organisations and individuals, at the expense of local animal welfare needs. We are deeply concerned at the decision the SAAAPEA chairman has taken, especially in view of the unacceptable lack of action shown by that charity over the past decade and more and the fact that it appears that their considerable funds are being "stockpiled" instead of being used to help animals.

BWC also convened meetings between interested parties, to discuss the trapping, rehabilitation and relocation of stranded, sick seal pups who wash up on the Cape coastline. While the meetings were very informative and a number of misconceptions regarding the seals historical natural habitats and the rehabilitation process were resolved, in the long term we found that the various organisations and individuals taking part, all had their own agendas,

which meant that in reality not much cooperation was achieved. We will be observing the only officially approved seal rescue programme that is presently in operation and take further action if need be.

There has been much public concern over the poor conditions in which some zoo animals are forced to live and BWC has been in contact with Tygerberg Zoo in Cape Town regarding the unacceptable conditions in which a lone chimpanzee, Angus, has been living for some time. Angus is kept in solitary confinement in a cage, which in our opinion is much too small and has absolutely no environmental enrichment, nor does he have any contact with his own kind. We have had talks with the owner of the zoo, who is very uncooperative and unresponsive to any suggestions on finding ways to improve conditions for Angus. BWC has also made extensive enquiries into finding an alternative home for Angus and we have been in contact with Chimp Eden, Monkey World in the UK and other chimp sanctuaries in Africa, however Tygerberg Zoo is not interested in handing this lonely animal over to an organisation better able to provide for his needs. The Zoo has since informed us that, instead of allowing Angus to leave the zoo, they have found another chimp who will share his already too small cage! We will keep addressing this issue until some acceptable solution is found, but with SPCA tolerance of the situation and Cape Nature approving the cage size and conditions in which Angus and his companion live, it will be difficult to make any positive progress on their behalf.

Our Johannesburg office was kept busy throughout the year providing information to school students and members of the public and a number of talks were given at schools and other institutions, including Ishta Yoga and at Roedebeek Girls School, which was followed up by an art competition for a t-shirt design and a number of very thought provoking entries were received. Information tables were taken at various events and information on BWC's work was distributed to the public, these included the Co-Sanc Animal Day and Urban Market, Midrand. The World Day for Laboratory Animals protest was well attended and a bus was hired to take protestors through town in order to address a wider audience. BWC also attended a protest against the Canadian seal killing, which is much like the annual seal killing spree that takes place annually in Namibia. The Jo'burg office has also had a car door panel made which will help to advertise the name of BWC. Donations from collection tins in various outlets have proven to be quite successful and an amount of just over R2000 was collected during this period.

Many of the issues BWC addresses cannot be resolved in the short term, but some are - and these successes are the inspiration that keeps us motivated. I would like to thank all those members and supporters who, through their financial contributions, make it possible for us to continue our work; they are an indispensable part of our success and for this we thank them. Thank you too to all those people who attend our protests, help us with fundraising and other events and who support our work so encouragingly. Thank you too to the volunteers who help the National Committee to implement our goal to improve the lives of animals and to fight against the exploitation, abuse and suffering of those who cannot speak for themselves.

Lastly, I would like to thank Toni Brockhoven for making such a positive contribution to the relevance of our organisation, in the short time she has worked for the charity and to our the national committee members for their hard work, loyalty and support over the past year and for their dedication to achieving the goals we have set ourselves.

Thank you.

Beryl Scott
National Chairperson
Beauty Without Cruelty