

BEAUTY WITHOUT CRUELTY CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

31st March 2010 to 31st March 2011

Beauty Without Cruelty has had another successful year educating and informing the public about the suffering of animals in areas of abuse that are often hidden from public scrutiny. Being primarily an educational organisation, it is often difficult for us to assess the success of our educational activities, but if a reputation for credibility, integrity and compassion is a yardstick for our achievements, then we have been very successful indeed. We have received plenty of publicity through the media via newspapers, television, radio and hundreds of leaflets, magazines and other literature has been distributed. Our web site is full of interesting and informative information and our Facebook page too provides useful updates for the public, enabling them to keep abreast with what is happening countrywide. Membership of the charity not only provides us with a support base, but through the magazine and our e-newsletter, people are able to keep up to date with the work we are doing and with news and events all over the country.

Our humane education programme is on going and our thanks go to Heather Howe and Di Smith in Cape Town for their invaluable help in managing the programme so proficiently. A number of talks have been given at schools and other institutions during the year and Heather is constantly looking for interesting ways to get our message across to pupils. Thanks too to Johannesburg national committee member Dennis Fajans who has also given a number of talks at schools and has taken hours off work in order to do so. Our mandate is to educate and everything we do is geared to informing people about the issues we address, specifically vivisection and cosmetic testing, factory farming and wildlife exploitation.

Our investigation into the humane claims of cosmetic and household product manufacturers continues and we are pleased to have been able to add a few more companies to our approved product guide. As our humane criteria only allows for products that are suitable for use by vegans and vegetarians, as well as compliance with our strict animal testing restrictions, to be endorsed as being humanely manufactured, our list is not as extensive as we would like, but at least caring consumers now have a wide choice when it comes to making humane lifestyle decisions and do not have to rely on products that have been developed through the cruel exploitation of animals.

World Day for Laboratory Animal was observed on the 24th April and we were interviewed on radio, which gave us the opportunity to let the public know about the suffering of laboratory animals and the misleading results obtained from their use in research into human disease. A number of letters were also written to the press and members and supporters were asked to set up information exhibits in libraries around the country. We were happy with the response we received and supporters were keen to send us photographic proof of their efforts. Other protests organised by BWC against animal suffering for this period include anti-seal clubbing in Namibia, world farm animal day, where the cruel meat and dairy industry was exposed, and no foie

gras demonstrations outside restaurants that serve this cruel and unhealthy product. Our Animal Rights Day protest focused on the wearing of fur and leather and was well attended.

BWC's 'Living Without Cruelty' cookbook is selling well and we have had many compliments regarding the delicious vegan recipes, handy hints and other information contained in its pages. Another book is in the pipeline and we are sure it will be as successful as the first. The book received a very positive review in a local weekend newspaper and in Odyssey magazine. We are proud to report that, because of our strong commitment to supporting a vegan lifestyle, BWC had an amazing opportunity to be interviewed by and give a cooking demonstration for Supreme Master TV, which was also aired on Cape Town TV. Media liaison person, Toni Brockhoven, gave a very professional demonstration of vegan cooking in her own home and this was later aired to an international audience.

BWC received more media publicity with a half page article in the Islamic Times on animal rights and Islam, which has afforded us an opportunity for regular submissions to the paper. Soon after, BWC was asked to present a talk to Muslim women on animal rights and women's right to health. There was also an article in the Animal Talk magazine about the work of Beauty Without Cruelty and in travel e-newsletter 'Weekend Away' on the same subject. Other letters to the press include ones on the killing of the Cape Peninsula's endangered baboons who so often come into conflict with humans who share the animals' natural habitat, but are less than generous when baboons scavenge for food in villages dotted along the coast. Humans, who disobey existing regulations, which prohibit the feeding of baboons, have largely caused the problem and this has resulted in the animals identifying humans with forbidden foodstuff. The animals are also suffering from the effects of unhealthy human eating patterns and obesity is not uncommon in the troops.

Another issue that received a lot of press coverage is the killing of Egyptian Geese in local wetland areas and this is another example of the intolerance of local conservation bodies of so-called alien species, which has resulted in the killing of thousands of animals of different species over the past few years. BWC has worked together with other organisations in trying to protect these animals from being slaughtered, which has resulted in the suffering of innocent animals caught up in the authorities' bid to cleanse the country of non-human aliens. We have also continued to have meetings with Cape Town City Council regarding the fireworks issue as well as the newly proposed animal by-laws, which have received much criticism from the people of Cape Town and many animal welfare and rights organisations. These issues will take a while to resolve, but BWC will continue presenting the facts in the hope that compassion will override human selfishness and stupidity.

Other issues that were addressed through the letter pages of various national newspapers and on various radio stations were about animals used in circuses and fireworks that cause so much stress and harm to domestic and wild animals, birds in particular. We received four radio slots on the Voice of

the Cape during which we discussed the circus, vivisection and wildlife exploitation. Just Ice, on Radio 2000, interviewed BWC on the issue of animal sentience animal rights and the importance of humane education, which emanated from an incident where Metro Police denied an elderly man the time to get his dog to the vet timorously, after being stopped at a police road block, which resulted in the animal's death. A letter was also sent to Fundsilie Mketeni, deputy director of biodiversity, about the sterilisation of elephants, instead of the horrific culling method of population control presently favoured by authorities and conservationists. A letter was also sent to the South African representatives of CITES, the international wildlife monitoring organisation, regarding ivory sales which will lead to the prolonged perception that ivory is acceptable for use as trinkets, jewellery and ornamental carvings etc. BWC also confronted Dr. Motsepe of the African International Fashion Show about the use of fur, which they condemn, but still allow fashion designers to choose to use in their range.

BWC was invited to present a paper at an animal rights symposium held in the Eastern Cape which focused on the history of animal rights. A number of very useful contacts were made and we certainly hope that more meetings of minds such as this will take place in the years to come. We were also invited to Rhodes University to speak about vivisection and dissection with a view to eliminating dissection for first year Bsc students. We are grateful to Rhodes, not only for turning to BWC for support on this issue, but for their on going interest in improving the lives of animals and for being involved in discussions aimed at eliminating the exploitation of animals for human benefit.

In October BWC presented its annual Animal Rights Film Festival and our guest speaker was Shannon Keith, American lawyer, documentary filmmaker and animal rights activist. This year we presented the festival in Cape Town, Johannesburg and, for the first time, in Durban. In Cape Town we were delighted to engage the Wellness Warehouse to supply delicious vegan food for the Cape Town event. Organic wine was donated by Stella Wines, for which we were very appreciative. The film *The Skin Trade*, which was directed by Shannon Keith, was shown and we are certain it made a profound impression on the audience. It is difficult to comprehend the fact that people are willing to inflict such horrendous cruelty on living sentient beings and this film is a must see for anyone who believes the wearing of fur is acceptable. The Festival was well received in Durban, but unfortunately, due to a family emergency, Shannon was unable to attend the Joburg leg of her visit and had to return home without presenting her talk there. We are very grateful to committee members Zelma Opland and Joe who so ably saved the day by rearranging the various events that had been arranged in Joburg and for making sure the festival went off without any further problems. Since the festival, the films *Bad Medicine*, *Behind the Mask* and *Skin Trade* have been aired regularly on Cape Town TV at no charge to BWC. We are always grateful to Cape Town TV for their support and for kindly allowing us to show films and adverts on their channel at no expense. Our grateful thanks also goes to Durban supporter Anne Barnard Campbell who arranged the Durban festival and gave so much of her time in doing so.

Another very successful event was the first African Vegan Pride March that was held in Cape Town and supporters are keen that this should become an annual event. Marchers gathered at the bottom of Long Street in Cape Town, dressed in amazing 'fancy' costumes depicting fruit, vegetables and animals. We were a happy crowd and the music and chanting of Hari Krishna supporters added to the amazing vibe created by people who are opposed to exploiting other beings for our own selfish ends. The march made its way up Long Street, ending at the Wellness Warehouse food fair, in the grounds of Jan van Riebeeck School, which BWC was part of. There was some wonderful vegan food available with a particularly tasty vegan raw pizza becoming the highlight of many people's day. Due to the success of this event, we will most certainly be inviting people to join us again next year.

During Vegan Week, BWC successfully persuaded Steers, Global Wraps, and other food outlets, to be part of the promotion of vegan foods during the week. We are proud of these food outlets for being part of the promotion and hope that in due course many more businesses will not only join us for this event, but will provide amazing vegan options for consumers in the long term. In line with these humane gestures from eateries, we are pleased to report that various restaurants not only took part in Vegan Week, but also have permanently removed the cruelly manufactured foie gras from their menus and shelves. These include the well-known restaurants Blonde, which is part of the Beluga/Sevruga group, hugely popular Willoughby's at the V & A Waterfront, Emily's at the Waterfront and Myoga at the Vinyard Hotel. All these well known establishments have taken a humane decision not to serve the diseased livers of force fed geese and ducks, popularly known as 'foie gras' and we congratulate them for their stand. The No Foie Gras campaign, which is affiliated to BWC, has made huge inroads in getting foie gras removed from menus and shelves of South African shops, restaurants and hotels and some very influential people have signed the "no foie gras" pledge, including latest supporter singer Mynie Grove. Our thanks to all who have chosen compassion over cruelty. Another coup for the NFG campaign was persuading DSTV to change their advert, which had previously listed foie gras as a desirable food, to a less contentious product. Television exerts a significant influence on the public's view and attitude towards animals and BWC is always on the alert to change negative perceptions. Other events that have taken place this year are a successful fundraiser at the Baxter Theatre and the selling of Christmas cards at a number of venues in Cape Town.

Fundraising is always an important issue and new ideas are constantly being sought to keep the charity financially sound. Seeking corporate sponsorship for specific projects is one way of generating funds and more effort will be made in the forthcoming year to increase the number of projects we are able to initiate with the support of local businesses. BWC is now a beneficiary of My Card and while it will take time for consumers to support us through this medium, we are certain that in the longer term My Card will benefit the animals on whose behalf we work. We thank members and supporters who, through their generous financial support, make it possible for us to continue our work - they are an integral part of our success!

While the issues that BWC addresses are mostly long-term problems, we are always happy when we are successful in either improving the lives of animals, or persuading people to change their lifestyle choices by adopting more humane options. We are committed to educating young people about the way in which animals are abused and exploited for human benefit, with special emphasis on the fact that animals are sentient beings and are capable of feeling both physically and emotionally in the same way as humans and thus deserve our respect and compassion.

Thank you too to those people who support our protests, attend our events and encourage us in so many other ways. Thank you to the volunteers who help us implement our goals and objectives and give so generously of their time and expertise. Lastly, I would like to thank our PR and media liaison person, Toni Brockhoven, for her unwavering commitment to the charity and for going well beyond the bounds of duty to promote our organisation. Thank you too to the national committee who are always so supportive and who give their time and commitment to achieving the goals we have set ourselves.

Beryl Scott

National Chairperson - Beauty Without Cruelty