Preparing for Animal Rights Extremist Activities at Your Institution

Jim Newman
Oregon Health & Science University
Who am I?

- OHSU Strategic Communications, Assoc. Dir. for Media
- Specialty: Animal research, animal rights – internal and external communications
- Interface with researchers, security, legal and administration
- Background: TV news producing, science writing
- Spend time on 2 campuses
Our history/Our challenges

• One of 8 national primate centers
• Located in Portland, Oregon
• Prior to 2000:
  – Fairly low key, many Oregonians had never heard of us
  - Public tours, very limited media exposure
  - History as a stand-alone institution. Supported by a non-profit
Prior to August 2000

• Various small-scale protests

• Some extreme tactics:
  
• 8/3/1998: 6 activists invade OHSU President’s office

• 5/3/1996: Activists chain themselves to the ONPRC gate
August 2000: Everything Changes

- Former PeTA operative and current IDA employee holds press conference, reveals “undercover” video, makes countless false claims

- January 2001: A two month review clears ONPRC

- 2001 – : Various smaller protests at ONPRC, OHSU; lobbying by IDA; other legal activism
What we have faced since

- Two infiltrations (2000, 2007)
- Two ALF attacks
- Home harassment (over 50 incidents)
- Threatening calls, letters, emails
- Protests at OHSU events unrelated to animal studies
- Large records requests
- Speech disruptions
Nature vs. Nurture: The Importance of the Early Life Experience on Lifelong Emotion Regulation

Judy Cameron
Ron Dahl
Neal Ryan
David Kupfer
Pat Levitt
Karoly Mirnics
David Lewis

Oregon National Primate Research Center
OHSU
University of Pittsburgh
Vanderbilt University
How we responded

- New communications position - separate from tour position
- Responsibilities: Act as a communications hub
  - Media relations
  - Community relations
  - Internal communications
  - Govt. relations
  - Work with legal
  - Work with law enforcement
  - Track and prepare for future challenges
Public Outreach

• Tours: Over 3-thousand visitors per year
• Partnerships with schools
• Mentoring programs for teachers and students
• Projects with students
Our Stance

• We need to be proactive
• We need to be transparent
• We always need to respond
• We need to constantly build relationships
• We need to communicate about attacks
• We need to be strategic
• We need to do as much of this as possible when we are not under fire
What We Have Done

• **Proactive promotion of our research, excellent animal care**
• Relationships with press
• Transparency (with the press, with the public, with lawmakers, etc)
• Web pages (example)
• Monitoring the Web for future attacks, claims
• Internal communications
• Increased work with H.R.
• More collaboration with campus police and local authorities
• Proactive communication with reporters when we expect claims
• Response to media campaigns
• Toolkits for home harassment
Major stories:

• Stem cell breakthrough
• More than 700 stories worldwide
Media

Other major stories:

• Cloning
• Gene insertion
• Smallpox vaccine
Media

- USDA inspections
- AAALAC accreditations
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Transparency: Primate Center Records Release

• 113,000 pages, covering 7 years
• Animal histories (much more detailed than human health records)
• Court proceedings dealt with safety/security issues, cost of providing records – not activist right to records
• Activist claims that records demonstrate abuse
Setting the Record Straight

Oregon's Primate Center

The Oregon National Primate Research Center, part of Oregon Health & Science University, resides in Beaverton, Oregon. The center is one of eight national primate research centers funded by the federal government’s National Institutes of Health. The NIH leads the country in funding medical research. Oregon’s primate research center focuses on three specialty areas: neuroscience, (studies of brain function and diseases that impact the brain); reproductive sciences (such as preventing premature birth); and infectious disease (such as AIDS and the flu).

Animal Care Records

In Fall 2006 OHSU and the primate center released thousands of animal care records to the animal rights group In Defense of Animals (IDA) in response to their request. The records detail the day-to-day health care of our animals and illustrate the tremendous dedication of our staff to providing excellent, prompt health care and enrichment for the monkeys who live at the center. The records are essentially the same as a person’s medical record, however they are much more detailed because the animals live at the center and receive daily health checks.
Setting the Record Straight

Sample Animal Record
Below are excerpts from a typical animal record. This particular record was chosen because it represents the care and feeding of the average monkey at ONPRC. The record also demonstrates the tremendous amount of care each animal receives, from daily health monitoring to proactive veterinary care, to ensure continued health. In this particular case, the monkey is a female rhesus macaque that was involved in reproductive studies, specifically pelvic floor disorders which affect women. This monkey was sacrificed for research as in some cases it is necessary that an animal be humanely put to sleep as part of the research project. However, many times, animals live out their lives at ONPRC.

Below are excerpts of the animal record with explanations for entries most commonly found in animal records. Click here for a full glossary of additional terms commonly found in animal records.

Full copy of the animal record in PDF.

1. Animal numbers
Each animal is assigned a number, just as a hospital patient is assigned a number upon admission. While many animals are also given names by their daily caretakers, numbers are a more efficient way than names of ensuring that the right animal is receiving the right health care.

2. Rhesus Macaque
One of the most common non-human primate species involved in biomedical research is the rhesus macaque monkey. This is due to the many similarities between these animals and humans. There are also much established data on this species which allows for better
16043  
Female  
305 - RHESUS MACAQUE

SECTION I. 

Vital Statistics, Special Conditions, Project Assignments, & Transfers

16043

DEAD:  - Sacrifice for Experiment

Born: 2/26/1990  
Dam: 14438  
Sire: 14590  

Age at Death: 13/134

Type of delivery: Vaginal

Observer:  
Conceptual Age: 163

Birth Weight: 0.50

Age at Death: 13/134  Born at ONPRC

Died: 7/10/2003

Pathology No.: 2003A241  
Autopsy Status:

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

Last TB Test: 5/29/2003  
Last Weight: 5.600 Kg on 6/28/2003

CURRENT DIETS:

SPECIAL FLAGS: None

POOL ASSIGNMENTS:

Previous:

Pool  
Name  
Assigned  
Released

33  
Coral Breeder  
6/12/1992  
8/4/2000

11  
SPF Breeding Colony - Chinese  
10/13/2000  
7/24/2002

32  
Time Mated Breeder  
1/16/2001  
7/24/2002

201  
Nonrestricted  
7/24/2002  
7/20/2003

151  
Research Assigned  
1/17/2003  
7/20/2003

PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS:

IACUC  
Assigned  
Released  
Investigator  
Project Title

0508  
1-17-2003  
Macaque Model for Pelvic Floor Disorders

TRANSFERS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Transferred</th>
<th>Date Released</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Raw Cope</th>
<th>Age at Transfer</th>
<th>Cope Mates</th>
<th>Date Co-Coped</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-26-1990</td>
<td>4/18/1990</td>
<td>COL RUN 8</td>
<td>C-6</td>
<td>0 yr(s) - 0 days</td>
<td>14438</td>
<td>1/11/1990 - 4/18/1990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-18-1990</td>
<td>5/30/1990</td>
<td>COL RUN 6</td>
<td>C-8</td>
<td>0 yr(s) - 51 days</td>
<td>14438</td>
<td>4/18/1990 - 2/5/1991</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-04-1990</td>
<td>6/28/1990</td>
<td>15/OTCPE</td>
<td>C-5</td>
<td>0 yr(s) - 98 days</td>
<td>16034</td>
<td>6/28/1990 - 8/7/1990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-28-1990</td>
<td>8/7/1990</td>
<td>COL NURS</td>
<td>B-1</td>
<td>0 yr(s) - 122 days</td>
<td>16007</td>
<td>8/7/1990 - 8/28/1990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Animals set for lockdown are marked with this symbol ———
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The Facts About the Research

The purpose of this Web site is to provide the public with accurate details about humane animal research conducted at Oregon Health & Science University. For decades, animal-based studies have led to life-changing and life-saving health care improvements benefitting both humans and animals. These benefits can be witnessed through a variety of measures including:

- **Life expectancy**: The current average life expectancy in the United States is currently 77.9 years. In 1940, life expectancy was 62.9 years. In 1900, life expectancy was 47.3 years. Health improvements through animal research are greatly responsible for this improvement.
- **AIDS survival**: The life expectancy of a person diagnosed with AIDS is now 24 years, triple that of a person diagnosed in the early 1990’s. This is due to new treatments developed using animal research.
- **Vaccines**: Animals were involved in the development of vaccines to fight polio, tuberculosis, measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox and meningitis.

In addition to providing factual information about the benefits of animal-based research and the ethical treatment of animals involved in research, this Web site will provide information about highly publicized OHSU research. The Web site will also respond to myths about OHSU studies circulated by those opposed to the use of animals in research.
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Eugene Police Taser UO Student Organizer at anti-Pesticide Rally

From the open publishing newswire: On May 30 Eugene police repeatedly tasered a UO student organizer at a peaceful downtown rally supporting an end to toxic roadside pesticide spraying in Lane County, Oregon. EPO wrongfully arrested 2 students and one community member collectively known as “The Kesey Three” -- as the events took place at Eugene’s Ken Kesey “Free Speech Plaza.”

2 Gatherings for Peace in Support of “The Kesey Three”:

- Gather in Support of “The Kesey Three” on Saturday, June 7 in Kesey Square (Willamette / Broadway) at 12 noon. We will gather together silently. Many will have an “X” painted over their mouths or will be wearing tape over their mouths as a statement of how the police are trying to silence free speech with their violence.

Flyers will be silently handed to those with questions.

YouTube Video of May 30 events

NO LNG

HUNGER STRIKE DAY 4: Broken Feather Interview outside NW Natural

From the open publishing newswire: Two part video interview at the NO LNG Hunger Strike. This is a 10 day fast (Hunger Strike) that is “on going.” The next person will start after 10 days. I stopped in on Day 4 of the first person who is fasting on (Wed 6/4/08). It is in downtown Portland Oregon Right outside of the NW NATURAL Gas Company’s office. These two videos have lots of good facts about this ugly project Heidi and Broken Feather are two of the participants.
NEWS & REPORTS >>

MAY 23, 2006
MADISON ANIMAL RIGHTS GOES NATIONAL
"Michele Basso's experience made her consider leaving her field, and she said young scientists might shy away from such research for the same reason."

MARCH 5, 2006
DO YOU WORK IN AN ANIMAL LAB?
Your knowledge can be used to help animals.

MARCH 5, 2006
JOSEPH KEMNITZ: A PRESENTATION
Download a recent powerpoint presentation about the director of the PRC.

NOVEMBER 1, 2005
DAY FOUR OF TIGER TRUCK MAYHEM
Admits visit with winners Michele Basso and Ruth Benca.

OCTOBER 31, 2005
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• **Toolkits for home harassment**
Home harassment
Home Harassment at OHSU researcher's home

December 2006
Home Harassment Response

- Call lists/call system
- Pagers
- Staff meetings
- Email updates
- Lots of in-person communications
Home Harassment Response

Home protest kits
• Cameras
• Checklists
• Home safety guides
• No Trespassing signs
Home Harassment Response

You do not have my or my family’s permission to be on my property at any time.

My family and I find your presence on my property to be personally offensive, intimidating, harassing and threatening.

Legal warning
How We Have Learned

PETA infiltration in 2007

• Meeting with Ed board on same day as claims
• Many press members first heard about the claims from us
• Open access to reporters
• Press conference within half hour of PETA’s claims
We don't so much like animal rights activists. Mostly the rabid, obnoxious kind. Especially the rabid, obnoxious kind that makes accusations that seem more designed to raise contributions from a donor base than raise understanding in the general population.
## Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2000 Infiltration</th>
<th>2007 Infiltration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Slow, limited response</td>
<td>1. Immediate, overwhelming response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Press stories where we did not respond</td>
<td>2. We responded to all press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Small # of people involved in defense</td>
<td>3. Large # of people involved in defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Few visuals came from us</td>
<td>4. Just as many visuals came from us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Result: Years of bad press, mistrust</td>
<td>5. Result: Infiltration quickly forgotten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions?