



Welcome To Animal Culture

Patricia Denys, Creative Director, Karlie Kawa, Art Director and myself Mary Holmes, Editor in Chief welcome you back to *Animal Culture* magazine! *Animal Culture* aspires to educate, to motivate, and to celebrate! We are here to educate our readers about animal issues, to motivate you to act on these issues, and lastly, to celebrate victories for all sentient creatures.

As I compose this, I'm thinking about what we're all experiencing right now, globally. We're dealing with self-isolation, unemployment, fear, boredom, the specter of death, and a host of other things. Sadly, we also know that we are dealing with COVID-19 because we as a species insist on commodifying and consuming animals. Hopefully, reading this issue will give you a temporary respite from your pandemic concerns.

This issue is about Hope. And Compassion. In addition to our regular features, we are extremely proud to feature interviews with Paul Ramos, and the two founders/principal staff of Southern Cross Wildlife Care. Ramos, a wildlife vet who currently lives in the Cotswolds in England, traveled to Australia to work with Vets For Compassion and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to rescue wildlife affected by the recent bushfires. Howard and Glenda Ralph, of Southern Cross, live and work in New South Wales, and they too have been working tirelessly for Australian wildlife, bushfires or no bushfires. On the domestic animal front, we feature Tim Racer and Donna Reynolds, of BADRAP, who make the world a better place for Pit Bulls and others. Racer is also the artist in our Visual Culture section; he carves magnificent carousel dogs! Our book review is on *The Lost Dogs*, a compelling tale of the Michael Vick dogs; BADRAP played a big part in some of those dogs' rehabilitation.

We are supported by our Patreon page, where you can become subscribers, and gain access to *Animal Culture* and special content. Please consider being a Patreon subscriber, and share *Animal Culture* on all your social media, with all your friends and family. We have made great gains for the animals on many fronts over the years but there is much work to do. Please help us help those who cannot advocate for themselves. Join us to create a powerful voice for animals, a voice needed now more than ever.

For the animals,
Mary Holmes, Editor-in-Chief

Inquiries should be sent to
mary.animalculture@gmail.com.

DEDICATION

This magazine is dedicated to all sentient creatures; the young, the seniors, the wild, the captive, the abused, neglected, lost and the hidden. We, along with many others who are represented in these pages, will never stop working for you. We will never give up.

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2 | ANIMAL CULTURE | MAY 2020



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Mallacoota bushfires survivors;
a mother koala and her joey.

Photo © Jo-Anne McArthur/
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con ten ts

LEGISLATIVE ALERTS

RESCUE

TIPS FROM ANDY

VISUAL CULTURE

WRITINGS OF MARC BEKOFF

03 04 09 10 14

16 20 21 22

FEATURE

PLANT BASED RECIPE

BOOK REVIEW

SPECIAL FEATURE



BY DONNA REYNOLDS, AS TOLD TO
ANITA WOLFE/BADRAP

ALL PHOTOS ©KATHY KINNEAR/BADRAP



BADRAP'S BEGINNINGS

Starting BADRAP was a bit of an accident. We weren't diehard Pit Bull fans on a mission and to be honest, we didn't know much about them. We'd been busy working with birds of prey at a wildlife center for several years, but we did have one eye on these dogs and were curious about their situation.



1. Tim Racer and Della.
2. Donna Reynolds and Scooby during healthy play/exercise
3. Brody at a BADRAP event.
4. Snorkels and Big Elf enjoy the slide at the Rescue Barn.

I remember seeing some of my first Blocky dogs in our city shelter. It was a pair of young, beautiful dogs who were kenneled together, probably litter mates. They were clearly frightened and clinging to each other for comfort, and they stared at me with pleading eyes as I stopped to look at them. Any myths I'd heard about the breed just melted away in those 90 seconds. These were sentient beings, not monsters, and they were looking for comfort like any of us do when we're in a bad situation. Those poor pups were probably euthanized, since it was 1999, and most shelters blocked their adoptions back then, but that fleeting moment of eye contact busted it all open for me and I've never been the same

After rescuing our first Blocky dog from a local shelter that same year, she (Sally) was such a delight that we decided maybe we should put a little effort into helping others just like her – just a little bit of support, nothing major. But it snowballed, and suddenly more and more people started asking us to help them help their dogs. Husband Tim Racer adds, "I guess it's fair to say that the group's mission took on a life of its own and dragged us into the ride of our lives."

EVOLVING GOALS

Our goals have evolved as circumstances change for the dogs, both in our communities and in the larger animal welfare landscape. Twenty years ago, we wanted to help the dogs by helping people understand that so-called Pit Bulls and their mixes were individuals; these are sentient beings who deserve the same compassion and considerations as all dogs. That hope naturally lead us to throw our hat into the ring to assist authorities in the Michael Vick dog fighting case. Since that time, and partially because of the successes from that case, people really do get it and they've become one of the most popular 'breed types' in the US. So – mission accomplished in that regard. Now our goals are much more holistic and focus as much on the dogs' owners as we do the dogs. We've been very interested in creating solutions to some of the bigger obstacles people face getting the resources and support they need to keep their dogs, especially as the economic gap widens and the housing shortage grows.

BLOCKY DOGS

The dilemma has been, how do we label a massive number of dogs who can have any number of breeds in their genetic make-up? It's been a real puzzle.

We'll always love our 'true' Pit Bulls, the original American Pit Bull Terriers who are so common in the cruelty dog fighting cases we work on. With shelter dogs from unknown parentage, we know that unless we have their DNA results in our hands, all we really have to go on are outward appearances as a basis for identification. Since all dogs are individuals who don't come with cookie cutter looks or personalities, it's just impossible to make accurate breed guesses based on looks.

Humans are obsessed with wanting to label things though, so since we're both visually oriented, we started using the term Blocky Dogs to describe the shape of their noggins. We also use the term 'Pointy Dog' for Shepherd type animals. It's a bit silly since it still doesn't describe breed, but it seems to work for now.



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“KEEP ‘EM HOME”

The Keep’Em Home project has helped us up our game by helping the dogs in our communities. The goal is to connect with dog owners who love their dogs but who might need a little support at certain times in their life so they can stay committed. It might be training or a sponsored spay/neuter surgery or even a little food to get them by. Our hope is to reduce the number of dogs who have to be surrendered to our crowded animal shelters by offering their humans a little bit of a safety net.

We were definitely put to the test after the devastating Camp Fire left thousands of families homeless and stranded in their cars for weeks on end. (Ed. Note: The Camp Fire occurred in Butte County in Northern CA in 2018, devastating over 150,000 acres, causing massive property damage, and resulting in at least 85 deaths.) So many had lost everything but their dogs. The larger relief agencies just weren’t set up to respond to the massive need for housing and people were desperate, so we had to get creative. We worked to help several families find what little housing existed at the time, but our luck really changed when the county offered us a small, donated fleet of retired transit buses. Necessity is the mother of invention, so we watched YouTube videos to learn how to convert them into micro-homes, and we donated them to several fire survivors who owned dogs. We definitely went out of our lane with that project, but it was the right way to help both people and their pets.

YEAR 21

A lot can change in 20 years, so it’s pretty incredible to be able to look back and track the evolution of this country’s approach to helping Blocky dogs, and dogs in general. The two frightened pups who first made an impression on me so long ago would likely be rescued and found families in today’s world. Nowadays, their adopters would have a lot of support to help them succeed in their homes. It’s the dream we were after.



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5. The peaceful Rescue Barn.

6. James and family in a Bus Home donated to him courtesy of BADRAP’s “Keep em Home” work with displaced Camp Fire survivors in Northern California.

7. A foster mom and a dog she saved from the streets wait for his neuter at a BADRAP event.

8. Della and Scooby play at the Rescue Barn.

9. Lola trying out the slide at the Rescue Barn.

10. Dad Noble and pup, Nina waiting on her spay appointment during a Nut Truck/BADRAP event.

11. Scooby plays with puppy, Ting at the Rescue Barn.

12. Dr. Sequoia examines a dog before his neuter at a Nut Truck/BADRAP event.

RESCUE BARN

The Rescue Barn is a sweet little place in the semi-rural Oakland hills that serves as a halfway house for a handful of dogs who’ve fallen into crisis. It was designed to feel very homey, with dogs keeping each other company while they wait to be matched with adopters. Each dog has his or her own bedroom, which is basically a set of adjacent kennels tricked out with comfortable furniture and doggy doors. There’s a big play yard and lots of trees and room to run. Anyone looking in might think it’s a doggy daycare. While the dogs are with us, the volunteers’ focus is on a little training and a lot of fun and supervised play. Tim practices his guitar in the late evening, so they get serenaded before put to bed. It’s a pretty sweet little scene.

BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

I’m proud that, because we remember what it was like to feel

country to protect the dogs from bad laws, and we look forward to digging into that.

But clearly our greatest challenge ahead is going to be helping dog owners who are trying to keep afloat while staying safe from COVID19.

For example, this week we worked on helping a Blocky dog owner who lives in a van get fresh groceries so he doesn’t have to dumpster dive for his meals, as he’s been doing. Also, we matched a foster home up with a wonderful young woman named Rosario who’s been living in her car with her dogs. Now that her dogs are safe, she can shelter in place with a friend and stay healthy.

We’d love to help as many families as we’re able so they can stay at home. That means finding them and working out ways to get food and supplies to them safely and quickly. It’s tricky but the



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discriminated against simply because of the way our dog looks, we’ve been able to connect in meaningful ways with people in our community who we might never otherwise had anything in common with. That common bond has made us better at the job of being a human.

THE FUTURE

We’re at our best when we stay nimble so we can respond to needs as they come up. We’re converting one of our transit buses into our second spay/neuter van so we can reach more people within our local community, and in other counties. There’s still a bit of legislative work that needs to be done in certain parts of the

solutions are there and we just have to keep refining them.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If we can all just reach out a tiny bit and help one or two dog owners in our immediate circles, that little effort will ripple out and without too much trying, we can help untold numbers of dogs and families enjoy the bond we all enjoy with our own pets. It’s so easy to help and it makes these long days in self isolation feel so much brighter.

Website: <https://badrap.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BADRAP.org/>



Fifth Anniversary of the dogs' homecoming to California! Left to right: Gracie, Jonny Justice (upper left), Teddles, (white dog), Audie, Zippy, Uba, Hector (back row with hat).

RESCUE AND REDEMPTION

ANIMAL CULTURE'S INTERVIEW WITH DONNA REYNOLDS OF BADRAP

BADRAP proactively solicited a role in the Vick dogs assessment and rehabilitation

When we first learned that Vick's dogs had been seized, we realized that they would most likely be euthanized after the courts received custody. It was the way things were done. Since the entire country was watching, we knew that their fate would be a signpost for Pit Bulls everywhere, so we decided to hedge our bets and call in a few favors with contacts in the animal welfare field. To save them, we first had to identify the person or persons who would be responsible for decisions regarding their outcome. I stayed up all night writing a proposal that outlined ways we were willing to help – the most important proposal of our career. I think it was 5 pages long, and detailed our success rate with evaluating and placing dogs from similar situations, plus an offer to do the same for these dogs. We knew that, if just a handful of dogs could be saved, it could have a profound effect on how Pit Bulls everywhere were viewed, especially Pit Bulls from cruelty dog fighting cases.

Thankfully, the proposal ended up in the hands of Federal Prosecutor, Assistant U.S. attorney Michael R. Gill. He was a front man on the case. Even better, he liked dogs and agreed to let us fly out to VA to meet and evaluate the dogs, along with dog experts from the ASPCA. It had never been done before for a federal case, so of course we were elated to learn that the Feds had given a green light to proceed.

The road to rehabilitation

We took ten dogs into our program and all went into homes, first for foster care and then to adopters. They didn't need 'rehabilitation' as much as they needed to learn house manners as well as how to feel

comfortable in a much bigger world than the one they had come from. Some were bawdy and social, some were very frightened of everything, and the rest were somewhere in the middle. One commonality of the dogs we took in was that they felt much more comfortable in the presence of other dogs, so we used our own personal dogs to help them settle in and get adjusted to a new life.

We looked at the dogs through the same lens we use when meeting shelter dogs from animal shelters. The questions we ask are, "How comfortable is he or she with people? How does he or she feel about other dogs? And what do they need to help them gain confidence so they can be a whole dog again?"

Individualized care

Since dogs are very much individuals, they all need a little something different to succeed in homes. Hector was a wild child and wanted to chew up his foster home's houseplants. He needed a good outlet for his energy, and of course to learn house rules. Frodo was scared of his own shadow, so needed a quieter setting and a lot of routine to help him get his footing. Uba was also easily frightened, but he had a ton of energy. His adopter got him busy on a treadmill, but he really excelled once she got him into nose work classes. (Ed. Note: Canine nose work is a 'find it' game that asks dogs to use their sense of smell to locate a hidden scent target. It's gratifying to dogs since they always 'win' and it encourages them to be curious, which increases confidence.)

I have to say that I'm very proud of the job we did figuring out which dogs could go to homes with other dogs and even kids, and which had bigger problems and needed to live in a sanctuary. The real magic though was what our volunteers brought to the table as far as setting the dogs up to succeed.

PHOTO © MARK ROGERS

TIPS FROM ANDY

FOR A MORE HUMANE WORLD



PHOTO © JON KAWA

Our mascot, Andy, offers good advice

I Need Help With My Companion Animal!

YES! THERE IS HELP AVAILABLE TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY TOGETHER!

Any parent of a companion animal can face a difficult time, and may need a boost to get them on their feet so the family can stay together. There are many state and nation-wide organizations that offer support for food, pet supplies, medical treatment, prescriptions, transportation, micro-chip assistance, free spay/neuter services and even cancer care! In addition, there is assistance available for disaster victims, veterans, seniors, domestic violence victims, functionally disabled people with service animals, homeless and near homeless people and temporary housing for emergencies.

The Humane Society of the United States offers a comprehensive list of national and state run organizations who offer resources for those in need, and there are a lot of them! Note: each organization has its own rules and guidelines and one must research each to be sure the qualifications are met.

See the list here:

<https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/are-you-having-trouble-affording-your-pet>

A great example of an organization offering assistance in many ways is BADRAP, interviewed for this issue. Their "Keep 'Em Home" slogan is "Because Every Dog Owner Needs a Little Support at

Times." BADRAP offers assistance in the following: Help for stray (lost) dogs without homes, spay/neuter, vaccines, microchips, help for renters and people without homes, pet food banks, emergency medical services, dog training information, breed friendly insurance information and more!

AND they even have a beautiful Rescue Barn! From their website: This space was designed to serve as a modest but comfortable home for homeless dogs in crisis as well as a working classroom for adopters, shelter staff and rescue workers. The dogs stay in a structured, homelike setting for a few days or several months, and depending on what they need from us, rest, heal and recover before moving onto adopted families. In some cases, dogs with severe medical or behavior challenges stay here as a gentle ending to a difficult life.

What a wonderful model of giving, giving, giving! So there you go! Yes! There is Help Available to Keep Your Family Together! Stay committed to your family! Reach out when that times comes and keep your family together!

A MODERN ARTIST WITH OLD WORLD STYLE

BY ANITA WOLFE FOR BADRAP | ALL PHOTOS © TIM RACER

All sculptures sculpted by Tim Racer. Painting by Pam Hessey and/or Tim Racer as noted.



ABOVE: **Simon**
(Husky/Shepherd
Mix). Painting: Pam
Hessey.

LEFT: Simon, detail.

RIGHT: Tim Racer in
his studio.



Tim Racer's work burst onto the scene in 2004, shortly after a carving of his dog 'Sally' made its first public debut. The richly detailed rocker – a personalized portrait of his plucky American Pit Bull Terrier – first greeted shoppers from a store window in a high-end retail shop in Berkeley, CA. The piece was created using the same old-world techniques of the renowned master carousel carvers he admired so much, but was an exact life-size replica of his companion animal, down to her sparkling eyes, well-muscled thighs and turned up front paw.

The realism and whimsy of the piece drew happy smiles from onlookers, but the real break came when 'Sally' caught the eye of a magazine editor who happened by the store window during her lunchtime stroll. Claudia Kawczynska is senior editor of dog couture magazine "The Bark," an award-winning publication that calls itself "the voice of modern dog culture" and prides itself on a tasteful blend of "stories, essays, poetry, reviews and artwork."

After Kawczynska viewed his work, Racer was offered a multi-page article outlining his process in his studio with glossy photos of

Jonny Justice
(Pit Bull/X-Vick dog).
Painting: Tim Racer



Adrian
(Frenchie rocker).
Painting:
Pam Hessey



“...I’m much more attracted to carving the unusual and would jump at the chance to carve a warthog or a hippo.”

twenty years ago near his California home, and has had the pleasure of working with her in some capacity since that time. In 1993, he started restoring and painting her pieces and eventually took on only woodworking assignments when his carving career started revving up. He painted his first two carvings himself, but faced with an increase in commissions, eventually turned over nearly all his carvings to Hessey to paint. Racer feels blessed to have Hessey bring them to life. He said, “Pam’s a master of her craft. Her sense of color is exquisite and so in tune with what I imagine when I’m carving the dogs.”

The demands of running a non-profit while meeting carving deadlines can be its own challenge, and Racer burns a lot of midnight oil to meet his goals. He doesn’t have much time for larger restoration projects anymore, but he still manages to squeeze in a couple assignments in each year. He says that the joy of having the pieces at his shop to gaze at for inspiration is worth the juggling

necessary to get them done. Right now, a large Gustave Dentzel tiger is lined up in his studio for TLC for just that reason, and coincidentally he recently finished a priceless antique Dentzel lion. Racer has a special fondness for large cats and is presently designing a carving of a mountain lion with other California native wildlife entwined in the trappings.

Racer studied art and design, and graduated with his BFA from the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, MI. He worked as a commercial illustrator in Chicago, IL for several years before finally making his home in Oakland, CA. He now shares the responsibility of training the foster dogs of BADRAP.org and running its many education and advocacy projects. He’s married to fellow artist and non-profit director Donna Reynolds, and is happily owned by three personal dogs. When his workday is over, he can usually be found in his wood shop, carving away at his carousel animals with one or more dogs lying at his feet.

Website: www.timracer.com/
Facebook: www.facebook.com/timracer/

his pieces. “The Bark” also tipped a hat to carousel carvers from days past, and highlighted famous dogs including Bruno the Saint Bernard by PTC, and Loeff’s statuesque greyhound. The subject matter was a hit. Within days of the article’s launch, Racer’s mailbox filled with inquiries and requests for commissions from around the country.

It seems Racer’s work tapped a new vein in Americans’ fascination with animals. Where our society once idolized the beauty of horses and horsemanship, and celebrated them on popular carousels, a new generation of animal lovers seemed ready to combine a love for tradition with its growing passion for canine companions.

Racer’s love for his subject went beyond his own canine companion. Just as master carver Marcus Illions was considered to be an expert horseman, Tim is considered to be an expert dog-man in his own right, and was hired by the federal government in 2007 to assess NFL dog-fighter/football player Michael Vick’s dogs after his arrest. Tim later carved two of those dogs - Uba and Jonny Justice - who went to find families after their rescue. He’s not the only one to notice how everything in his life seems so very connected, and he was especially pleased with these two commissions, as these dogs are near and dear to his

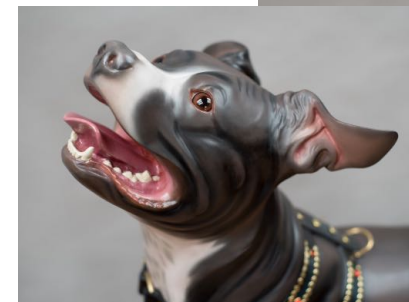
heart. Racer said, “I’ve always been a very physical person, so working with dogs during the day and banging away at wood with a mallet at night keeps me content. I have two jobs and I love them both.”

As the founder of a nationally acclaimed pit bull advocacy and rescue group called BADRAP, Racer has spent most of his adult life studying the body language and behavior of dogs. As a trained artist, his eyes naturally evaluate the structure and form of the animals he admires so much.

He may in fact be the only carousel carver who’s never actually carved a horse, something that suits him just fine. He told us, “I would be perfectly happy never carving a horse. I’m much more attracted to carving the unusual and would jump at the chance to carve a warthog or a hippo.” But just the same, the little free time he’s had since his 2004 ‘Sally carving’ was spent carving their Shepherd/Husky mix and first ever dog together, Simon - Sally’s partner in crime. It was a recent gift to his partner in crime and wife, Donna Reynolds.

Racer first learned the craft of restoring antique carousel animals from one of the industry’s best. He met artist Pam Hessey from Hawk’s Eye Studio more than

“I’ve always been a very physical person...banging away at wood with a mallet at night keeps me content.”



Uba head detail
Painting:
Pam Hessey,
Tim Racer



THE WRITINGS OF MARC BEKOFF

Marc Bekoff, Ph.D., is professor emeritus of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and co-founder with Jane Goodall of Ethologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. He has won many awards for his scientific research including the Exemplar Award from the Animal Behavior Society and a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 2005 Marc was presented with The Bank One Faculty Community Service Award for the work he has done with children, senior citizens, and prisoners and in 2009 he was presented with the St. Francis of Assisi Award by the New Zealand SPCA. Marc has published more than 1000 essays (popular, scientific, and book chapters), 31 books, and has edited three encyclopedias.



Jane Goodall Explains the Importance of Living in Harmony

Dr. Jane stresses why we must break down barriers and make wise choices.

Used by kind permission of Marc Bekoff | www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/animal-emotions

*I'm thrilled to post this inspirational interview with one of the world's most iconic women, **Dr. Jane Goodall**, DBE, Founder of the **Jane Goodall Institute**, and UN Messenger of Peace. I've worked closely with Dr. Goodall—or Dr. Jane as she is universally known—on a number of different projects, and her commitment to widespread humane education and spreading the message that every single person can make a difference is legendary. Here, she focuses on her global **Roots & Shoots** (R&S) program that in the United States alone has more than 2,100 groups and 63,540 youths taking action in all 50 states.*

Marc Bekoff: Why, where, and when did you found Roots & Shoots?

Jane Goodall: When I started traveling around the world to give lectures in the late 1980s, I met many students who had lost hope—they were depressed, angry, or (mostly) apathetic. Why? Because, they told me, we were compromising their future and there was nothing they could do about it.

Are we compromising their future? We have been stealing it for generations. But I did not agree there was nothing they could do about it.

Things came to a head in 1991 when 12 Tanzanian high school students from eight schools came to my Tanzanian home in Dar es Salaam. They were worried about things like the destruction of coral reefs by illegal dynamiting, lack of government will to clamp down on poaching in the parks and reserves, the plight of street children, and the ill-treatment of animals in markets. They wanted me to fix everything. I suggested that they might be able to do something themselves.

So they went back to their schools, gathered together their friends who were also concerned, we had another meeting (about 20 of us)—and Roots & Shoots was born. We decided that each group would choose three projects so that, between them, they would be improving

things for people, for animals, and for the environment—because everything is interconnected. They would have meetings to discuss local problems, decide what was most important, and make plans and then take action.



SOURCE: JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE

Most importantly they would all share an important truth—that “every single one of us makes an impact on the planet every single day. And we have a choice as to what sort of impact we will make.” R&S groups are now in more than 65 countries, with members from pre-school through university (even some adult members)—thousands of groups and the collective impact of their projects is huge. Also, there are the “alumni,” those adults who went through the program at school or university. And so many of them retain the values they learned when they were members. “Of course I care about the environment,” say many people in China, “I was in R&S in school.”

There is a theme running through R&S of learning to live in peace and harmony with each other—breaking down barriers between nations, religions, cultures, old and young, rich and poor, and between us and the natural world.

MB: How do you explain the global success of Roots & Shoots?

JG: I think R&S is growing fast because it is youth-driven. We do not dictate what they do, so long as, between them, they choose three projects—one to help people, one to help animals and one to help the

environment—because everything is interconnected. There are always some young people who want to work in each of these three areas. Of course, children in pre-schools and kindergarten need guidance, and in some parts of the world, children are not used to making plans themselves so teachers make suggestions. Teacher training workshops are important.

MB: What are some of their projects?

JG: Some groups tackle long term projects such as removing invasive species from an area of prairie in Texas or a wetland in Taiwan. There's also lots of tree planting—last year our R&S groups around the globe planted (and cared for) around 4 ½ million trees. They also grow organic vegetables in school gardens, raise money for earthquake or hurricane or war victims in other countries, and volunteer in animal shelters or sanctuaries. Some groups work on reducing the use of plastic bags and bottles, and stress the importance of recycling and reusing. University students may start groups in primary or high schools. Many older students work on spreading awareness about wildlife trafficking, the destruction of forests by palm oil plantations, the need to end wildlife meat markets, and factory farming of domestic animals. Many of our groups in Asia work on educating people about the cruelty involved in shark finning and poaching for ivory and rhino horn, helping to reduce the demand.

MB: Why are youngsters important for generating respect for other animals, other people, and other nature?

JG: It is important to reach children as early as possible and help them understand that animals feel pain and can be frightened and sad or happy—just like us. Children are very good at influencing their parents—and sometimes the parents may be influential people, in government or CEOs of big corporations. Or teachers. Children can be very persuasive.

One of the first places I introduced R&S in the U. S. was a very disadvantaged school—with fantastic teachers—in the Bronx. I shall never forget that first group of 12- to 14-year-olds, a mixture of African Americans and Hispanics, performing a little play where one was the head of a large company, and another was a R&S student informing him about the environmental harm caused by his product. In the end, they succeeded in banning polystyrene from their boxed school lunches and got to perform in front of the mayor. Think what a difference that made to them, their pride. Also it is the children who will grow up to inherit a planet so damaged by previous generations. It is desperately important that they believe in their power to make change. If they lose hope, that will be the end.

MB: Roots & Shoots has expanded from working with youngsters to involving humans of all ages and living in different situations including people in refugee camps and inmates. Why is it important to have everyone working for the goals of Roots & Shoots, regardless of where and how they live?

JG: The goal of R&S is to make the world a better place for people, animals, and the environment. Those should be goals for everyone. We have started groups in four prisons, but only one is still running—the others ended when the people keeping them going left, or when Wardens changed. The **only one still active** is the one that you, Marc, started and it has been super successful. In China, one group is formed of retired people and they told me how it had given them a new lease of life—they feel useful again.

MB: Are you hopeful that things will get better and how do you maintain this steadfast belief in the future of life on our magnificent planet?

JG: I am hopeful firstly because of the young people. I visit R&S gatherings as often as possible. Once they know the problems, we listen to them and empower them to take action. Their energy, passion and belief in their ability to make change is inspirational. Secondly, there is this amazing intellect we have been gifted with—and science is beginning to use it in ways that will enable us to live more sustainable lives, such as using clean green energy, new environmentally friendly city planning, ways of cleaning contaminated water, and so on. And we as individuals are using our brains to try and live more sustainably and questioning the consequences of our small daily choices—what we buy, did its production harm the environment or lead to cruelty to animals. Is it cheap because of child labour or sweat shops. If millions of people make ethical choices it will make a difference. Thirdly, the resilience of nature is amazing—places we have destroyed can, when given time and perhaps some help, once again become green and beautiful, and animals on the very brink of extinction can be given another chance. There are many examples. Finally, there is the indomitable human spirit, the people who tackle what seems impossible and, because of dogged perseverance and faith in the importance of their mission, very often inspire others to join them and ultimately succeed.

MB: Is there anything else you'd like to tell readers?

JG: That people living in poverty cannot be expected to make ethical decisions as to how they live—they just have to do what it takes to keep them alive in the short term—like cutting down the last trees in desperate efforts to grow food even though this will result in future environmental harm. If they are in an urban area they will buy the cheapest food. They cannot afford to ask if its production harmed the environment, led to cruelty to animals, as in factory farms, or is it cheap because of child slave labour, because they have to feed their families

And, something to think about: There are 7.2 billion people on the planet today with 9.7 billion predicted for 2050. Already, in some places, we are using up the planet's finite natural resources faster than nature can replenish them so that it does not make sense that there can be unlimited economic development if we continue with business as usual once the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Unfortunately, that is exactly what so many political and corporate leaders are just waiting to do, all around the world.

But, as a last word, never forget that you make a difference every day. And you have a choice as to what sort of difference you make. For the sake of our children and the health of Mother Earth, choose wisely.

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BY MARY HOLMES

MIRACLES HAPPEN BEYOND THIS GATE

DR. HOWARD RALPH, OAM AND HIS WIFE GLENDA RALPH, RN AND PHYSIOTHERAPIST, ARE THE PRINCIPAL STAFF MEMBERS AT SOUTHERN CROSS WILDLIFE CARE IN NEW SOUTH WALES. THIS COUPLE WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN SAVING MUCH WILDLIFE WHO WERE AFFECTED BY THE RECENT BUSHFIRES. THEY BOTH WEAR MULTIPLE HATS.

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He is a veterinarian and a medical doctor; she is a nurse and a physiotherapist and both work part-time – he as an MD, and she as a nurse and physiotherapist, and the money they earn from those jobs helps support their facility. For Southern Cross, which is an all-volunteer organization, they are on call 24-7. It has been in existence, formally, for 15 years but the couple were working to save wildlife long before that. It was pure kismet that they founded Southern Cross; both bring much experience to the table that they utilize to help the animals in their care.

Glenda commented that everything she's learned in her two professions brought her where she is today in terms of helping the

animals. The work she does as a physiotherapist is useful, "mainly because we do a lot of musculoskeletal injuries, so certainly fracture management, my nursing comes in, skills and knowledge come in when we're looking at wound management. I've spent many years administering anesthetics to those that are critically ill. I suppose I'm combining all that knowledge and skills. I've certainly learned a lot working with Howard. It's a really good combination, I think." Howard commented on his skill set, "In medicine I did a lot of work in plastic surgery, emergency medicine, anesthetics, and so on. And all of those things that I've learned are now applied to wildlife."

An all-volunteer organization, they have five or six nurses who come on a rotating basis, all of whom had veterinary nursing training at the facility. In addition, there are another five or six volunteers who come to do tasks like cleaning and repairs.

Like all nonprofits, fundraising does not come easy. They spend so many hours working with the wildlife it leaves little time for fundraising. They do not get government support, nor underwriting from major companies. Some funds come because of word of mouth. Some because Howard lectures to community groups and corporations. "I give those talks freely, and I'm quite happy to do it. What we do is try to spread the word, number one – about the importance of wildlife and number two – the importance of the fact that wildlife can and should be treated with respect and dignity. Most people to whom I speak are quite happy to accept that and it's often an eye-opener to them that these people like us even exist because they've never thought about it before. Glenda shared a story. One of the groups Howard spoke to had someone

in the audience who later brought an animal to their facility for care. After the animal was treated, Glenda said his rescuer "put on his Facebook page a little picture of our front gate. Under that he wrote, 'Miracles happen beyond this gate.' I was really touched. That was just wonderful thing he did."

Howard compared the recent bushfires to ones of the past. "I've been through all the local bushfires, all the recent bushfires all over the East coast of Australia at least, and these fires were much more frightening, extensive, rapid, and nasty. I mean, bushfires are always nasty, and they cause a terrible lot of pain and suffering. Even in the bushfires in Victoria years ago, where many lives were lost, and countless numbers of wildlife. The problem with the bushfires we've had recently is they were very extensive, and to some extent a bit unpredictable, and we lost millions and millions of wildlife patients in the fires. In Victoria, it was a bit more contained, in the previous fire. But, in terms of fatalities and pain and suffering they all affect the wildlife in the same way. Those that survive need a lot of care and pain management because it is such a nasty business." Glenda added, "Whereas fires in the past have been in the news, I think this was different. It was so big that it actually got national and international attention, much greater than it had in the past. A huge amount of habitat was lost – to the point that for those who did survive, who were treated, we're now posing where do they all go to, because all that habitat where they used to live is gone." Ralph and Glenda were in the thick of it, and breathing the smoke-filled air for weeks on end.

Both commented how the drought that they experienced prior to the advent of the



Dr. Ralph consults with a koala patient.



Dr. Ralph with a very curious koala patient.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Dr. Howard Ralph, Glenda Ralph, RN and vet tech Tania Duratovic treat a young possum under anesthetic. The possum suffered severe burns to his tail and all four paws from the bushfires. PHOTOS ©JO-ANNE MCARTHUR/WE ANIMALS



bushfires exacerbated the fires' savagery. Howard shared, "Prior to the fires beginning to take hold, the fact is that a lot of the wild critters were suffering from the effects of the drought, which meant they had nothing to eat, the water was limited, and they were heading off to the edge of roads. Sometimes they were accidentally smashed by cars, and sometimes un-accidentally. Glenda elaborated, saying, "One comment that was made, certainly I had observed it, you would drive along and you'd see all these scattered eucalypts which were brown, and you'd think, no, there

hasn't been a fire there. What was happening? All these established eucalypts were all dying from a lack of water, on a scale that many people had never seen before. River systems were drying out, which we hadn't seen before to the point I think a lot of the aquatics, a lot of the frogs, the wildlife ecologists were thinking to relocate because they were on the threatened species list, and if it were to continue they would become extinct."

Asked how many animals they saved during the recent brushfires, Howard first responded, "It's difficult to put numbers on it,

but we've seen at least a minimum of twenty-five a week." After being asked how many animals Southern Cross had saved over the years, he recalculated, "We work on the figure of about between two and three thousand per year, which adds up to quite a lot over fifteen years, so I'd say my estimate of a hundred a month before was a minimum number, it could be up to forty a week."

What animal stood out most during the course of the bushfires? Howard responded in his usual sensitive manner. "The level of dignity and quiet suffering was the thing that



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Orphaned and almost furless macropod joey in for care.

Post operative recovery of a juvenile wombat following repair of a fractured humerus.

Post-operative review of a blue-tongued lizard following repair of a fractured maxilla.

A juvenile wombat during treatment who was injured while fleeing the bushfires. PHOTO ©JO-ANNE MCARTHUR/WE ANIMALS

Ultrasound investigation on a bushfire affected koala under general anaesthetic.

The level of dignity and quiet suffering was the thing that is always dramatically obvious to us in these patients that come in; they're not complaining. All they want is a bit of tender and appropriate care, and a bit of relief from the suffering.

is always dramatically obvious to us in these patients that come in; they're not complaining. All they want is a bit of tender and appropriate care, and a bit of relief from the suffering. If we think about the patients, and many of them... for example, a little wombat with a number of injuries, like respiratory burns, so struggling to breathe. It had burnt feet; therefore, it's got the pain associated with that, which we deal with. Also, having suffered an injury in the meantime with a broken leg, all of that has to be treated. This little wombat stayed in care for some time, initially in intensive care for the respiratory damage. Then, to treat the burns over a period of time. Then, to concurrently operate and treat the fractured femur, which required orthopedic surgery. All of this goes along with a little patient who weighs about five or six kilos (Ed. note: 11 to 13 pounds), and he's generally not complaining, and just getting on with life. All he wanted was a bit of tender, loving care and a drink." Glenda remarked on a koala, "He was so little, he was either with his mother at the time, or had lost his mother shortly before the fires affected him, because he was starving to death. I suspect he lost his mother.... He was rescued on the edges of a fire, and then I think it was about the chain of events that helped him get to that point, and a number of people. One picked him up and then passed him on to another person. And another person took him to get him out of that fire zone. Because a lot of the roads were blocked, and he eventually comes to us to have intensive care and treatment. It's just thinking about that whole story of why he was there by himself. He's starving; he's lost his mother. Then there's the fire, and then in the middle of nowhere this chain of events of all these people picking him up, moving him place to place to get to help."

The most difficult part of the job is, according to Howard, "The suffering, the emotional trauma that's involved in watching these critters suffer so badly, and yet do so with dignity. As I said, you know, they never complain. We, of course, treat them to the best of our ability to relieve their suffering. But the emotional toll that takes on all of us is quite dramatic. But we keep going because we know that, if we don't, then the suffering

of our patients will be worse. It's a combination of those two."

Asked what role climate change played in these bushfires, Howard answered plainly, "The fact is that the prelude to the fires was a drought. If we know, or we're told, we feel that climate change is contributing to the drought and a change in the weather everywhere, then of course that makes a big difference to the advent of the fires, and the continuation of the fires, and the dramatic effect of the fires on what's left of the environment that has suffered badly from the drought. Of course, then we get this topsy-turvy weather we have. In some places we've had the drought, then the fires, and then we have a flood. Whatever's left gets washed away. We know that where we live, out in the country down South, it's very obvious to us that over the last at least a decade, or fifteen years there's been a change in the environment which is quite obvious. And that is – we've had less rain, it's not as cold. The environment has definitely changed."

Glenda responded, "It's certainly been recorded, particularly in Sydney, around Canberra, in our part of NSW, that where as we would get hot days, we're getting a larger number. I know in Canberra they had something like two weeks of excessive temperatures, over 40 degrees Celsius (Ed. Note: 104 degrees Fahrenheit). I think that combined with the lack of water it certainly did affect the environment so that more was able to be burned, and then we just didn't have the water to actually put out some of these fires. They had to prioritize where they could actually use the water. That was a real challenge for those fighting the fires."

Howard and Glenda did their part, bringing food and water to the animals in need.

Howard summarized the role of Southern Cross, "We are here to protect wildlife in general, and also deal with the welfare of individuals so that they can contribute to the whole of the spectrum of the wildlife communities for the future. We feel, and I think there's been a bit of a change in attitude, since the bushfires and the drought, that wildlife

actually are important, and there's been a bit of a wakeup in certain parts of the community that wildlife are sentient beings and they do have sensibilities that allow them to feel when they're suffering – it's painful and unpleasant, and that people like ourselves do have a role in protecting our wildlife. Treating individuals that are in trouble, and the more people can support that, the better off everybody will be, including ourselves, because I strongly believe that if we don't protect our environment then



Dr. Ralph during a consultation with a wedge-tailed eagle.

we as a species aren't going to do well. What we do is very good for the individual patient, it's good for the community of wildlife, but it's good for the wider community, and if you consider that humans are part of the planet, then they need to be aware that they're not the only part of the planet." Glenda concluded, "I think that other living creatures are just important because they are living creatures. They don't have to be useful to us, as such. They just are, and they are valuable."

Website:

www.southerncrosswildlifecare.org.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/southerncrosswildlife/>

Lisa Karlan's

Plant Based Recipes



Lisa Karlan, Certified Food for Life Instructor with Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine and contributor to JaneUnChained News Network, JNN.



Vegan Jalfrezi Curry with Maya Kaimal's Jalfrezi Curry Sauce.

Vegan Jalfrezi Curry with Chickpeas

INGREDIENTS

- 12.5 oz. jar Maya Kaimal Jalfrezi Curry Indian Simmer Sauce (Medium) - Sweet Red Pepper & Tomato
- 1 1/2 cups organic garbanzo beans (chickpeas), washed & drained
- 4 medium sized Yukon Gold potatoes, fork-sized cubes, cooked
- 1 cup organic celery, lightly steamed
- 3/4 cup organic peas
- 1 cup organic sweet red pepper, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup organic spinach, packed
- 1/4 cup organic parsley, minced (garnish)
- 4 cups organic brown rice, cooked

DIRECTIONS

1. Place potatoes in enough boiling water to cover them and cook until fork tender
2. Add diced celery to the sauce pan with the potatoes during the last 5 min to soften, then drain in a colander
3. Place Maya Kaimal Jalfrezi Curry Indian Simmer Sauce into pot with potatoes, celery, chickpeas, peas, sweet red pepper and garlic; cook on medium heat until thoroughly heated (about 5 min) gently folding mixture, so potatoes remain intact
4. Fold in spinach and cover for 2 additional minutes, until wilted
5. Heat rice separately
6. Place 1 cup rice in large soup bowl and cover with vegetable curry mixture
7. Drizzle Lemon Tahini Sauce over the top and garnish with parsley

LEMON TAHINI SAUCE

- 1/4 c tahini
- 4 Tbsp organic fresh squeezed lemon
- 2 Tbsp organic parsley, minced
- Blend sauce ingredients with small whisk or small food processor and set aside



Ingredients for Vegan Jalfrezi Curry with Chickpeas.



Vegan Jalfrezi Curry with Fresh Spinach Added in to Wilt Before Serving.

This recipe is a great example of a whole food plant-based meal, where ordinary inexpensive food when combined with an incredible sauce makes an extraordinary dish. Check out <https://www.maya-kaimal.com/product/medium-spice-indian-jalfrezi-curry-sauce/> to purchase this and other sauces directly from the website, or see if the store locator has place near you. These sauces come in shelf stable packaging that doesn't require refrigeration.

THE LOST DOGS

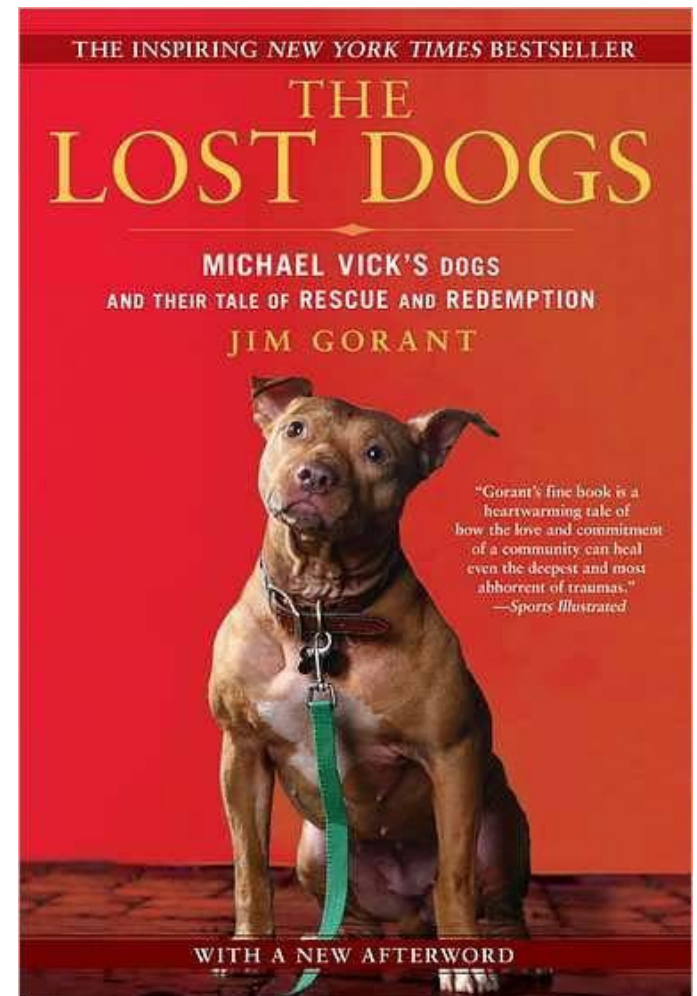
MICHAEL VICK'S DOGS AND THEIR TALE OF RESCUE AND REDEMPTION // BY JIM GORANT

BADRAP, featured in this issue, has a section on their website featuring this book. It seemed like a good pairing – reviewing this book in the same issue. Jim Gorant, a writer and editor by trade, was inspired to write this book after an article he wrote about the Michael Vick dogs for “Sports Illustrated” in December of 2008. According to Gorant, the response to the article was overwhelming, more than any other issue had received that year. Most of the response was favorable. The few negative responses he received fell into two categories – “What does this have to do with sports?” and “Why does it matter, they're just dogs?” When he started writing the book, he pondered the answer to the second question, doing much research on the history of the relationship between man and dog. He discusses the deep bonds between the two, concluding with the paraphrased Gandhi quote – you can judge a society by the way it treats its animals.

The book is divided into three sections *Rescue*, *Reclamation*, and *Redemption*. The *Rescue* section describes the conditions the dogs were found in, the legalities involved, and the mixed feelings in the surrounding community about the process. It was time-consuming and complicated, and when the dogs were finally removed from the property they went to various locations to be housed while their fate was decided. The author paints a compelling, often distressing picture of the rescued dogs. The amazing part was, even in the beginning, most of the dogs did not have an overall fear or anger towards the human species.

Reclamation describes the initial reaction of the dogs to their caregivers, transporters, and fosters. Some of the dogs, specifically the BADRAP dogs, made a journey all the way across the continent. What struck me, again, was how remarkably adaptable most of the rescued dogs were, despite their previous circumstances. As heartbreaking as many of the stories were, one couldn't help but be filled with hope. The consensus of opinion, prior to the Vick dog rescue, was that no fighting dogs could ever be rehabilitated and live even partly normal lives. This proved not to be the case. It's not that every dog's story had a happy ending, but a surprising number of them were assessed as having a chance to live relatively normal, happy lives.

Redemption follows many of the dogs as they went into foster settings, and the trials and triumphs that entailed. The striking part of this section is the dedication, tenacity, and overwhelming care and empathy the caregivers/fosters had for these dogs. All had extensive experience training and handling canines, but the challenges they faced often required sheer ingenuity. This section has a chapter called, Where Are They Now?, which gives an update on each of the dogs. Some happy endings, some sad endings, but a victory nonetheless.



Prior to the Vick case, the common practice with fighting dogs was euthanasia. This case set precedents in many ways; the fact that at least some of these fighting dogs could be rehabilitated gives hope for future cases.

The Lost Dogs gives an even-handed, factual, sensitive portrayal of all parties involved in the Michael Vick dog fighting case. It gives hope for all fighting dogs, especially Pit Bulls. It should be widely read; anyone who harbors Pit Bull prejudice should take these lessons to heart.

THE LIFE OF A PANTOMATH; **PAUL RAMOS, BVSC, MVSC**

BY PATRICIA DENYS
AND MARY HOLMES

ALL PHOTOS ©PAUL RAMOS,
DVM UNLESS NOTED



A joey koala getting her weight checked at Mosswood Wildlife in Koroit, Victoria.

SPECIAL FEATURE

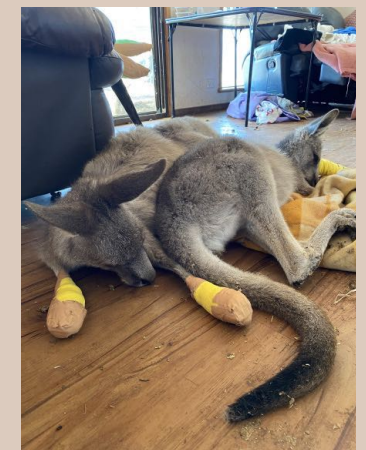
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The day I started to work with wildlife, it was so obvious that we are so profoundly connected to each other, to the natural world, and to the environment, that whenever you see something wrong oftentimes with wildlife it's because something isn't quite right in the environment.
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As a child, Paul Ramos was fascinated by nature, snakes, keeping pet spiders and the like. According to him, "I was always looking under rocks, looking in the water, had my head underground. That was my childhood." Nonetheless, he never anticipated being a veterinarian, much less a wildlife veterinarian. Instead, he said, "I've always been either along the track of either medical school, because my dad's a doctor, or maybe doing a PhD with animals or in conservation somehow."

Ramos became a vet almost by accident. He was on the University of Melbourne campus looking for a PhD counselor. He went in the vet school building to ask directions. The woman at the front desk apparently planted a seed, and he ended up in vet school instead. As he put it, "It's one of the times when my keen ability to get lost paid off."

is where I did my vet degree and also my degree to be a wildlife vet, so I did a zoo residency. Within my 15 years there I was heavily involved in wildlife, wildfire bush response in that industry and in government. But that was mainly in a preparation role. There were no major bushfires in the three to five years I was doing that. But I had done the bushfire response for the smaller bushfires."

Comparing these fires to previous experiences, Ramos stated, "The difference between this bushfire response and the other animal responses that I've attended in the past was mainly one of scale. In the past we would rescue animals that were on the fringe of the isolated forests, and they were koalas stuck in trees that were starving that we had to get down. The forest was fairly small compared to this. These fires were the same sort of land mass as all of England and Ireland." Most of his time was spent in



FAR LEFT: Dr. Ramos gently triaging a koala who is hugging a towel with her joey on her back at Mosswood Wildlife in Koroit, Victoria.

CENTER: A kangaroo mother under the care of Dr. Ramos at Possumwood Wildlife in NSW with burned feet and hands from the bushfires.

RIGHT: The mother and her joey resting at Possumwood Wildlife.

Ramos was on-ground in Australia during the recent bushfires, working principally with Vets For Compassion, but also with the International Fund for Animal Welfare, or IFAW. He anticipated a fruitful partnership with these two entities. "Neither of those groups are interested in playing politics, both of them love to collaborate, and, as long as whatever they're doing is for the animals, they're happy to form partnerships. So, it was a good sort of combination for me."

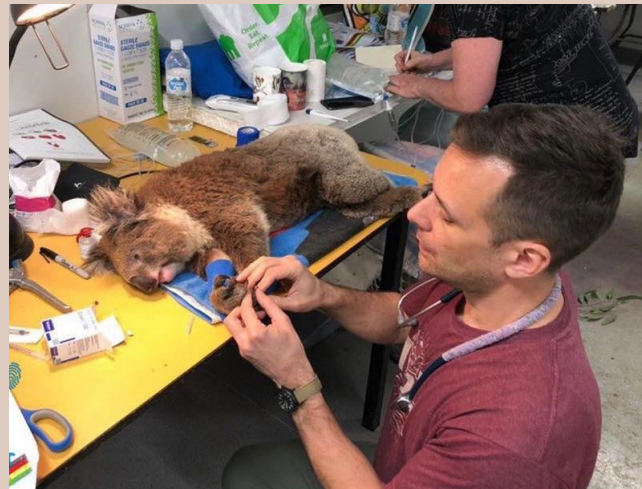
Most of his rescue efforts were in New South Wales. "I went to the place where those American firefighters died in their plane crash. That's actually the location that I went to. I went to help with a sanctuary called Two Thumbs (Trust) Koala Sanctuary and those servicemen were trying to save this man's home, and save these animals. And unfortunately, in the process they tragically lost their lives. That's where I was. It was kind of like Ground Zero in terms of the bushfires in New South Wales."

His previous bushfire experience was on a much smaller scale. As he explained, "Prior to this I'd spent 15 years in Australia, which

Cooma, with the rescue teams based at Two Thumbs Trust Koala Sanctuary and a couple of other places, and in the triage center in Cooma where the rescue teams would bring the animals, mainly macropods and koalas.

He admitted this work takes an emotional toll, "In the moment, when it happens, you might be sitting there, and it's midnight, and three or four animals come in at the same time, and everybody has to be on their game and step up. In that moment all you're concerned about is the job before you, and saving this animal's life. When that's finished and the adrenaline wears off, then eventually sometimes the emotion hits you." But, he added, "I also realize that I'm one of the few who can actually be in this position to make a difference, so it's more important that I think about the animal than my emotions. I definitely let my emotions run through me. If I need to have a cry I'll have a cry. I have no problem with that at all."

On a much more positive note, when asked if he could identify a moment that he felt was a big win, he responded, "Yes,



FAR LEFT: During a search and rescue in a burned-out forest at Two Thumbs Wildlife, 2 hours south of Canberra.

CENTER: Dr. Ramos treating a koala victim during a disaster response in Koroit.

RIGHT: Dr. Ramos at a triage centre in Cooma, NSW with a team of nurses from Vets For Compassion, and members of the Australian Army Defence Force. The triage centre was run by a local group, LAOKO Snowy Mountains Wildlife Rescue.
Photo ©IFAW

LAOKO Snowy Mountains Wildlife Rescue
<https://laokosmwr.org/>

Vets For Compassion
<https://vetsforcompassion.org/>

IFAW
<https://www.ifaw.org/>

Possumwood Wildlife
<http://possumwood.com.au/>

Two Thumbs Wildlife
www.facebook.com/Two-Thumbs-Wildlife-Trust-372228552860643/

Mosswood Wildlife
<https://mosswoodwildlife.org.au/>

absolutely. I think when you have a mother kangaroo and a baby, you didn't just rescue that one life; you rescued generations of lives. And keeping them together, as well, so one day the baby can be released back into the wild. Those moments where it's almost like you're rescuing a family are really rewarding."

Ramos concluded with some final thoughts about the Australian rescues. "The devastating thing I saw was an entire landscape of just stillness, and silence, and black. You go out, and where, a few weeks before, you couldn't even move three feet. It was completely bare ground and black trees. The silence was so eerie, it was so unnatural it really made you feel uncomfortable. So eerily silent. That, though, was balanced with the people that I worked with. Some people even lost their homes; they were impacted by the fires. They were out there trying to save animals. They were trying to make a difference. And they'd lost everything. We're working with these types of people that just want to help others, to help animals. It was really inspiring to me. What helped to lift myself up were the people around me. Surrounding myself with these people who were trying to make a difference – it makes all the difference for me."

He talked about the role climate change and the drought played in the bushfires. "There was some funny talk in the media about how the bushfires were a result of arsonists. And it ended up not being true at all. Even sort of as a gut reaction, my reaction was, 'Did arsonists bring in the fire seasons earlier? Make them hotter and leave later? Have they been involved for the last decade? The last ten years?' I think undoubtedly climate change has a significant role in all of this, and I think what we need to do is to stop talking like scientists and start talking like normal people. We need to stop saying, 'It's a 99% probability that climate change is ...' Just look. Here's the reality. Climate change is a factor. What are we going to do about it?"

Originally from Seattle, Ramos took off with a backpack some 20 years ago. He ended up in Australia, where he pursued his veterinary education. Now he's living in the Cotswolds with his family, practicing regular veterinary medicine. In Ramos' words, "When I left Australia I was heavily involved in a direct capacity with wildlife, including my residency, and with bushfire response. When I came to the UK it was more like a time in my life to make a personal decision and step back and settle down for the kids. Right

now, it's been more about working in kind of a regular vet, but doing my wildlife stuff on the side. For example, I went to Borneo in 2018, and I made a film around orangutans and deforestation. I went to India in 2019, and helped make a TV series around India with the animal rescue and wildlife. I've definitely kept active in wildlife, but my day-to-day is more about being a dad. At the moment it's the best phase of my life. We all have to slow down and take the slow lane for a while."

Asked what he'd like to share with our readers, he responded, "The day I started to work with wildlife, it was so obvious that we are so profoundly connected to each other, to the natural world, and to the environment, that whenever you see something wrong oftentimes with wildlife it's because something isn't quite right in the environment. The idea that we're all so connected – it's always been that way. It's only now becoming more and more obvious. Whether it's bushfires, whether it's coronavirus, whether it's bird flu. These things happen because we upset the balance that has been there for millennia. It would be good as a human society if we acknowledged that we're much more connected to nature than we realize, and if we can try to get back to that."

Ramos added, in regards to COVID-19, "This didn't just happen out of the blue. There are seven coronaviruses that affect humans, three of which can cause really significant illness, and that's MERS, SARs, and this COVID-19. All of them have jumped from an animal to people, and that's because of how we've been treating animals as pure commodities. We keep them under really highly dense and stressful situations in unnatural ways, where viruses will jump from one species to another, mutate, and then cross over, and then infect humans. So again, it's about seeing ourselves a part of nature – when we disrupt the balance too much we all pay. Coronavirus is just an example of that happening, just like bushfires."

Project Borneo film
www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvcT1VQS8KY

Kangaroo Mum
www.instagram.com/p/B8f_gQHAR-bh/?igshid=1owky17bmn9tk

Koala
www.instagram.com/p/B8OSGIHg4Eo/?igshid=oomii5yqlqoy

THE "Project Pongo" FILM

Paul Ramos was also featured in a short documentary called "Project Pongo". He went to Borneo and worked with BOSF (Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation) to help treat orangutans whose habitat is being threatened by the deforestation of the rainforests in their native Borneo. Like many other countries with rainforests, the quest for palm oil is threatening to many native species.

To help BOSF:
<https://orangutan.or.id/>

See the incredible film here:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvcT1VQS8KY



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ALL PHOTOS ©PAUL RAMOS, DVM

1. During the making of the "Project Pongo" film in Borneo.
2. Orphaned sun bear baby at BOSF.
3. Dr. Ramos and medical supplies he brought over to help resupply the vets at BOSF (Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation).
4. A BOSF (Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation) vet trying to give a "forest school" orangutan orphan medicine.