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News and Notes From ISAZ



Register for ISAZ 2018

ISAZ 2018 will be July 2nd-5th in Sydney, Australia



isaz
international society
for anthrozoology

2ND - 5TH JULY 2018
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
27TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Animals in Our Lives

Registration for ISAZ 2018 is now open. Go to the [ISAZ 2018 website](#) to register. The deadline for early bird registration is March 29, 2018. The [abstract submission system for ISAZ 2018](#) opened on Tuesday October 17th (Australian time). **The deadline for submissions is January 18, 2018.**

Take the ISAZ Survey

The ISAZ Membership Committee is conducting a [survey](#) to gather information about researchers, scholars, and others in anthrozoology. The goal of the survey is to inform efforts to develop new opportunities for networking and professional development among individuals in anthrozoology. You do not need to be an ISAZ member to respond. Go to tinyurl.com/ISAZmember to participate. Please note that there is a [separate survey](#) for student members, administered by the ISAZ Student Committee.



This Month On The Student Blog

The ISAZ Student Committee is excited to announce the January edition of [Becoming an Anthrozoologist: The ISAZ Student Blog](#). This month's post comes from [Megan LaFollette](#), a PhD student in animal science at Purdue University, mentored by Drs. [Brianna Gaskill](#) and [Marguerite O'Haire](#). Megan studies the intersection of human-animal interactions and animal welfare, with a focus on rat tickling. Megan's post covers what rat tickling is, why it's beneficial to rats, and the evidence behind it.

Curious? Be sure sure to check out [Megan's post!](#)



Meet the Anthrozoologist:

Hal Herzog



University: Western Carolina University

Location: Cullowhee, North Carolina, United States

Position/Title: Professor Emeritus of Psychology

What is your research focus?

I've studied a variety of aspects of human-animal interactions over the years. I started out investigating people with morally complicated relationships with animals such as cockfighters, animal rights activists, and circus animal trainers. And recently, I've been looking at the impact of pets on human health. These days much of my time is devoted to communicating the latest findings in anthrozoology through writing, public speaking, and [my Psychology Today blog](#) on human-animal interactions.

What is a recent research project/paper (published) that you are especially excited about? Why?

I'm particularly excited about a project I'm working on with my colleague, [Chris Holden](#) at Appalachian State University. We're looking at what people consider "natural" and "unnatural" when it comes to animals. For example, how natural is an elephant in a zoo? How natural is a genetically modified featherless chicken? People's views on naturalness lie at the root of many disputes over the treatment of other species.

Dr. Herzog's research on animal "naturalness" was presented at the [2017 ISAZ conference](#) in Davis, CA, with the title, "Perceived "naturalness" of animals: the impact of domestication, captivity, and genetic modification.

What are some examples of current issues that are affected by this idea of "naturalness"?

One example is the debate over allowing pet cats to spend time outdoors where they can express their natural predatory instincts. Another concerns the "all natural" or "cruelty free" labels you see on chickens in the grocery store meat counters. These labels are basically advertising ploys which allow us to maintain the convenient yet erroneous belief that the chicken we are going to eat for dinner had a good life.

How did you get started in anthrozoology?

It's a funny story. In 1987, completely by accident, I found myself in Boston giving a plenary address at one of the first major conferences on human-animal relationships. The organizers really wanted the prominent ethologist Gordon Burghardt to give the plenary. Gordon was my mentor and PhD advisor, and we had co-authored an early paper on the psychological underpinnings of attitudes towards other species. Luckily for me, Gordon had a scheduling conflict. So he told the conference organizers, "I can't give the

talk, but there is this other guy, Hal Herzog”... No one at the meeting had ever heard of me, and I was terrified at the prospect of giving a plenary. But my talk went over well, and I met researchers who are still my friends today and who have been instrumental in the development of my career. That conference changed my life.

What do you see as the most pressing (or interesting) current public debate/discussion related to anthrozoology? Why?

I am concerned with the strength of the evidence for the beneficial impacts of pets on human health. Media headlines extoll the notion that pets are a panacea that will extend our lives and even reduce national health care expenditures. And the public has totally bought into the idea that getting a dog or a cat will make you happier and healthier and that equine therapy is an effective treatment for PTSD. (John Bradshaw discusses this problem in [his new book](#) on people and pets). However, I seem to be a bit more skeptical about these claims than many of my colleagues in the field.

The positive effects of pet ownership and animal-assisted therapies have certainly been hyped by the pet products industry. The paradox is that good studies require money, and a major source of research funds is the 60 billion-dollar (in the U.S.) pet products industry. It is certainly true that industry funding has played a critical role in raising the quality of research in our field. But I think there is a potential downside to taking corporate money; sometimes it comes with subtle strings attached. We all know that money from Big Pharma can have a corrupting influence on the reporting of the results of clinical trials in medical research. I hope studies of the “pet effect” and the efficacy of animal assisted therapies can avoid this problem. But this issue remains a major concern of mine.

What advice do you have for students in anthrozoology?

I regularly get emails from students seeking advice about undergraduate or graduate degree programs in anthrozoology. This may make me unpopular in some circles, but given the costs of higher education, I think they need to carefully consider their career prospects after they graduate. Presently, job opportunities in anthrozoology are, at best, limited. So, my advice to students is to have roots in a mainstream academic area—for example, psychology, sociology, anthropology, or social work. Then they can look for a mentor in that field who is open-minded and will let them pursue their interests in human-animal interactions.

What about advice for early career researchers?

Conduct rigorous studies and don't "spin" your results to fit what you hoped you would find. In my experience, the vast majority of people who go into anthrozoology have deeply held *a priori* beliefs about the positive impact of animals on human health and happiness. But deeply held convictions that pets are good for people does not necessarily make for good science. I've seen way too many journal articles in which researchers either downplay or completely omit inconvenient null and negative results. The good news is that partly because of the influx of smart and well-trained young investigators into the field, the quality of research in anthrozoology is rapidly improving.

What is one thing that people may not know about you (e.g., what is your favorite thing to do outside of studying anthrozoology)?

I have been an enthusiastic white water kayaker for a long time, and I still spend a ridiculous amount of time upside down in cold rivers with my head banging on rocks. It helps that I live fifteen minutes from a white-water river.

Anything else you would like to share with readers of the ISAZ newsletter?

As I look back on my career, I think made three big correct choices. First, I

married the right person. Second, I found a great job in a regional university in the southern Appalachian Mountains. The third was becoming involved in study of human-animal interactions. The field has taken me places I never dreamed of. I've been very lucky in that respect, and I hope I've had a positive impact on the development of the field. For a researcher, what could be better than that? I was fortunate to get into anthrozoology at exactly the right time. And to my shock, our field has turned out to be a big damn deal. Who knew?

"Meet the Anthrozoologist" features prominent researchers and professors in anthrozoology and will appear in each edition of the ISAZ newsletter.

For Students

Are you a student who is interested in anthrozoology? Take the [ISAZ Student Survey](#), join the student [Facebook group](#), consider submitting to the [ISAZ Student Blog](#), or join the [ISAZ Student Google Group](#).

The Communications Committee is also looking for a student member to help out with the ISAZ social media. If you're interested, contact communications@isaz.net.

Professors, please share the ISAZ Student Survey with your students. They can find it at tinyurl.com/ISAZstudent.



Introducing the Martha Bryant Student Travel Award

The Martha Bryant Student Travel Award was established in 2016 in memory of Martha (Marty) Bryant. Marty Bryant was our ISAZ beloved office manager and dear friend for many years. She passed away days before our 2016 annual conference after a severe stroke. Marty served as office manager for ISAZ for many years and was involved in most organizational processes. She is fondly remembered for her kindness, patience, and understanding. Students were particularly dear to Marty and in her honor, ISAZ established the Martha Bryant

Memorial Student Travel Fund.



Above: Martha Bryant, namesake of the new Martha Bryant Student Travel Award

The 2017 award will grant \$500 each to two students in support of their travel to the 2018 ISAZ Conference in Sydney.

Criteria:

1. Students must be current ISAZ student members.
2. Students must not be supported by grant or other full travel support for attending the ISAZ Conference.
3. Students must not have received previous support from ISAZ in the past 2 years.
4. Students must be the presenting author on a 2018 conference presentation or poster.

As this is a merit award, recipients will be selected based on extent of ISAZ

involvement, quality of presentation or poster abstract, and statement of need.

Application Procedure:

Applicants will submit a letter (1 page maximum, 12 pt. font, 1 inch margins, saved as a pdf file) with separate paragraphs using the following headings:

- Personal information: name, contact information, name of college/university, degree program and area of study (e.g., Master's Degree in Social Work), interest in anthrozoology.
- Involvement in ISAZ: student membership, ISAZ involvement, title of presentation and/or poster submitted (attach copy of abstract), other involvement activities in ISAZ.
- Confirmation statement: current ISAZ student membership, no grant or other full travel support for attending the ISAZ Conference.
- Statement of need: need for conference travel assistance.

Application Submission: Submit applications in PDF form to awards@isaz.net

Submissions are due with abstract submissions on January 18, 2018.

Anthrozoös Featured Article

[Refining Online Communication Strategies for Domestic Cat Management](#)

[Lynette J. McLeod](#), [Aaron B. Driver](#), & [Donald W. Hine](#)

School of Behavioural Cognitive and Social Sciences

University of New England

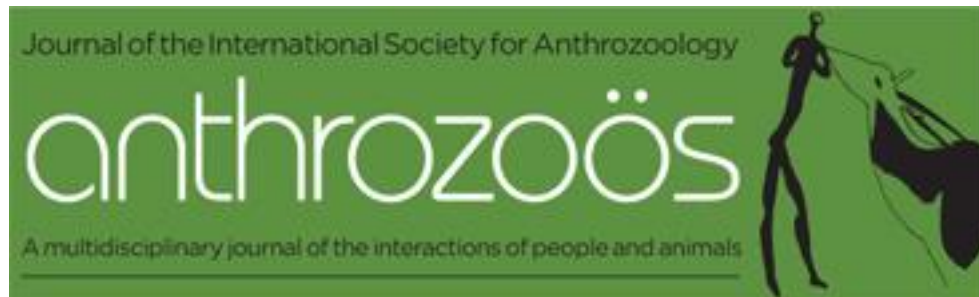
[Andrew J. Bengsen](#)

Vertebrate Pest Research Unit

NSW Department of Primary Industries

This paper assesses interventions aimed at changing management practices for companion cats, and suggests strategies for improving the behavioral effectiveness of cat management interventions.

The full article is available in the [latest issue of Anthrozoös](#) (available free to ISAZ members).



Opportunities and Resources

Funding Opportunities in Anthrozoology:

NICHD has 3 funding opportunities in Anthrozoology: an [R01](#), an [R03](#), & an [R21](#).

Interested in additional resources?

Mars-Waltham has put together a [comprehensive list of resources](#) in anthrozoology.

Become an ISAZ Member!

Not an ISAZ member? Find [applications for membership](#) on the ISAZ website:
<http://www.isaz.net/isaz/membership/>.



Membership benefits include:

- Six (6) issues per year (starting 2018) of Anthrozoös; the leading journal on human-animal interactions and relationships;
- Online access to the full back catalog of Anthrozoös;
- Eligibility for membership in the ISAZ listserv;
- Access to the Society's annual membership directory;
- Substantially reduced registration fees for all ISAZ conferences;
- A 35% discount to Society and Animals, a social science journal of the human experience of other animals; and
- A 20% discount on books published by Routledge.