

**Ottawa Humane Society**  
**Presentation to Emergency and Protective Services Committee**  
**September 24, 2002**

Good Morning Councillors, my name is Bruce Roney. I have the honour of being the Executive Director of the Ottawa Humane Society.

I would first like to congratulate Council, this Committee and City Staff for producing an excellent set of proposals for the City's harmonised Animal Care and Control Bylaws. The proposals are progressive, moderate and address both the needs of the human residents of Ottawa and the welfare of animals in your jurisdiction. They will provide the City and the OHS with better and simpler tools with which to carry out our respective mandates. The Ottawa Humane Society encourages you to pass and implement these proposals without delay. 2005 is simply too long to wait.

Included in the package sent several months to Council, are letters from 15 expert organisations urging you to end dangerous and cruel wild animal entertainment in our community. Among them are the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, the Jane Goodall Institute and the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre. The report outlined the severe safety risks and appalling cruelty associated with these activities.

I wish to stress here that our concern is with wild animal performances - not circuses in general and not domestic animal shows. I also wish to stress that even animals born outside of their natural habitat remain wild. Domestic animals have been bred over thousands of generations to enhance physical or

behavioural attributes such as docility, reliability and predictability. Circus animals are not domesticated - they have been trained to do tricks but they still remain wild animals.

In front of you is a summary of the incidents involving captive wildlife since 1990, showing the 59 human deaths and 120 injuries from captive elephants, the 46 human deaths and 150 injuries from captive big cats and the 13 human deaths and 40 injuries from captive bears. Eventually, a serious incident will happen here and our city is not prepared. The threat is real. As close as Mississauga, only months ago, a tiger in a shopping mall injured a young girl. Just 2 weeks ago, a tiger escaped in British Columbia. The Humane Society investigated a tiger in a bar in Ottawa last New Year's Eve. 2 weeks ago, the Society was contacted by the Ottawa Food and Wine Show about bringing a tiger to their event.

When an incident does occur, the consequences can be devastating. In front of you, you have a letter from police officer Blayne Doyle describing his involvement in an elephant incident. Despite 31 years of experience, he tells us that he has never seen a more frightening situation than when an elephant rampaged. Officer Doyle is referring to Janet, a 4 tonne pound African Elephant that rampaged in Florida in 1992. 50 rounds of ammunition proved too little to stop her rampage. Janet was eventually killed with armour-piercing artillery.

A rampage or escape is not the only threat. Zoonotic disease is also a concern. In front of you is a picture of Joyce, an Asian elephant owned by Circus Vargas, days before her death of Tuberculosis. She was giving rides

to children up until the day before her death. Last month, 3 elephants were expelled from Canada because of fears of tuberculosis. Please act now, **before** a serious incident occurs. I have no desire to appear before you in the future accompanied by a grieving mother or a young boy who has had his arm torn off.

In my career, I have seen a great deal of suffering. Few things that I have seen have been as shocking as the so-called training of wild animals for our amusement, the details of which are chronicled in our report.

In front of you is a picture of an ankah. It is the principal training tool for captive elephants. It is used in two ways: The sharp pointed hook is used to inflict pain or to pull on the delicate areas of the elephant's skin – behind the ears, inside the ears or mouth, in and around the anus and on other tender spots. The blunt end is used to beat uncooperative elephants. In addition to the ankah, other 'tools' are employed, including whips, electrical prods, baseball bats and metal pipes.

Pat Darby, a former trainer is quoted in our report, "To get an animal to perform on cue requires cruelty...elephants being beaten and electro-shocked in the vagina, ears, mouth and anus, bear's noses broken and their feet burned and big cats being struck with baseball bats."

Why does the bear dance? He dances because he has been trained with hot metal disks burning his paws.

After training, animals in entertainment can look forward to lives trapped in unnaturally small spaces. The majority of their lives will be spent moving between cities in ‘beast wagons’ – freight cars and trucks where their movements are severely restricted. Between shows, animals that would naturally migrate tens of kilometres a day, wait in leg irons for their next performance.

As a child, my grandparents took me to exotic animal circuses. They also took me to Algonquin Park and on the way, we would stop to see the bear chained in front of a roadside diner. I cannot judge the past. **But the time for this is over.** We no longer allow bear baiting in our community. We don’t allow dog fights. These cruel and dangerous activities have been relegated to history. So should wild animal acts. Their time is over.

Some have argued that these acts teach us about the natural world. There is nothing natural about a bear in a skirt dancing for our entertainment. It teaches us nothing but that the natural world exists solely for our amusement and that we can dominate and exploit animals for a laugh. The existence of these cruel and dangerous acts diminishes our community. It diminishes our own humanity.

Ottawa **must** join the 30 municipalities including Vancouver, Victoria and Windsor to do the right thing. The City should not licence dangerous activities for which there is no credible plan to ensure safety. The City should not license animal cruelty.

Councillors, there are very few opportunities in life -- even for community leaders like yourselves -- to make a small step to end suffering.

Please take this one.

Thank you.