

Four Decades of Tragic Abuse Finally Ended

New Name, New Start on Better Lives as Last Air Force 'Chimponauts' Are Free from Labs **By Kim Proescholdt**

Finally, in September 2002, the infamous Alamogordo, New Mexico-based Coulston Foundation (TCF), one of the country's largest primate-testing laboratories, ceased operation. The Center for Captive Chimpanzee Care (CCCC), the primate-sanctuary located in St. Lucie, Florida, the DDAL and others have long supported freeing the primates; and the CCCC took over immediately. That meant, at last, that each of the remaining 266 chimpanzees and 61 monkeys, including 16 original Air Force chimps and/or their descendants, could live without the threat of ever returning to a testing lab.

That is a paragraph the DDAL has dreamed about writing for a long, long time. As most of our readers know, these chimps and monkeys have spent most of their lives in cages, cement under their feet, and low ceilings above their heads. They are human's closest living relatives, sharing all but 1.4% of our DNA. They are mentally and physiologically similar to humans. Ironically and unfortunately, because of these similarities, chimpanzees are used and abused by humans in the name of science, entertainment and education.

Freedom and better lives for the Air Force Chimps have been long-time goals of many people and organizations. Following years of work, this is the reality of life for these primates, as for their counterparts rescued earlier.

Soon, the chimpanzees will experience what their former fellow cap-

tives have: the unfamiliar feeling of sun on their faces, a spacious, outdoor habitat, people who care for them. A non-profit organization, the CCCC was established in 1997 under the leadership of Jane Goodall, Dr. Carole Noon and other experts, in response to the plight of the Air Force chimpanzees.

History was not kind to these animals.

Going where no man has gone before In the late 1950s, the United States Air Force established a chimpanzee colony consisting of 65 infants who had been taken from their mothers in Africa. Housed at Holloman Air Force base in New Mexico, the chimps were subjected to tests that measured the effects of space travel on the human body. Spinning in giant centrifuges, exposure to powerful G-forces, and measuring the length of time it took to lose consciousness in a decompression chamber were only a few of the tests they endured.

On January 31, 1961, three-year-old Ham was the first 'chimponaut' sent into space. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) archives, "Ham's survival, despite a host of harrowing mischances, raised the confidence of the astronauts and the capsule engineers alike." Just three months later, Ham's human counterpart, Alan Shepard, became the first American astronaut in space.

On November 29, 1961, NASA launched five-year-old Enos into space to attempt to orbit the Earth in a capsule. Due to a malfunction in the capsule's monitoring system, the

reward-punishment responses Enos had learned during a year of training were reversed and he received an electric shock for every correct maneuver he made. Instead of altering his behavior, the brave chimp endured the shocks and performed the required flight tasks. After a two-orbit ride, Enos landed alive, qualifying the system for a manned flight. The following year John Glenn orbited the earth three times.

Four million people gathered in New York City in March 1962 to shower confetti onto John Glenn and fellow astronauts Alan Shepard and Gus Grissom, true American pioneers. However, not only were the chimps not honored, they were reassigned to other, more hazardous missions such as testing seat belts.

The fight begins By the 1970s, the Air Force stopped using chimps in aerospace testing. That sounds like good news, but it wasn't. The chimps went to research facilities for biomedical purposes.

Many years later, in June 1997, with authorization from Congress and a great deal of pressure from the public and humane community, the Air Force announced it would dissolve management of its "surplus" inventory and offered the space chimps and their offspring up for bid.

Despite a Congressional mandate that required the Air Force to award the chimps to an organization that would serve in the animals' best interest, the military instead granted ownership to The Coulston Foundation, a controversial primate-testing facility specializing in insecticide, cosmetic, pharmaceutical and biomedical research.

In 1997, two months after the chimpanzees were transferred to TCF,

the Center for Captive Chimpanzee Care, and its founder Dr. Carole Noon, a primatologist who studied under the legendary Jane Goodall, filed a lawsuit in the Court of Federal Claims against the Air Force, arguing that the award to TCF violated both federal law and the Air Force's own divestment criteria. The Doris Day Animal League played a major role in the lawsuit, as well the Washington, D.C., law firm Spriggs & Hollingsworth, which provided its services *pro bono*.

In 1999, there was a major victory when Noon and TCF entered into an agreement that gave the CCCC custody of 21 of the former Air Force chimpanzees. It was a good start, but the battle to save the remaining chimps had a long way to go.

Fred Coulston, now 87, started conducting tests on primates when he was 15 years old. He funded his own disease research on chimpanzees by supplying primates to other testing facilities. As AIDS research expanded in the early 1990s, Coulston sought to gain possession of more chimps to lease to others.

However, research later revealed that chimps rarely develop the human form of AIDS; and even when they do, the evidence was of little use to researchers competing to be the first with a marketable cure. Therefore the need for chimps in AIDS research tapered off. Coulston experienced financial problems and began cutting back on vet care and maintenance for these testing subjects.

Beginning in 1997, TCF was investigated at least 10 times and formally charged an unprecedented four times by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for "multiple and repeated" violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act. Charges included the negligent deaths of ten chimpanzees and four monkeys. Before Ray, 10, died, he had no veterinary care, despite the fact that he was ill for days; Donna, a 36-year-old formerly owned by the Air Force, died

from a massive infection and uterine rupture after carrying a large dead fetus in her womb for up to two months. Robert, James and Raymond also suffered horrific and tragic deaths when they were literally cooked to death when a malfunctioning heater sent the temperature in their cages soaring to 150 degrees.

As TCF's problems continued to mount, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) warned Coulston in 2001 that it would no

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longer accept study results from the lab if Good Laboratory Practice violations continued. To further its downfall, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a major contributor to TCF, discontinued all funding to the facility. This crippled Coulston's foundation, which had received nearly two-thirds of its annual income from the federal agency.

Combined with the critical loss of NIH's funding and the inability to attract private clients due to the FDA sanctions, TCF faced a final blow when its major creditor, First National Bank of Alamogordo, filed for foreclosure in December 2001.

Unable to find a buyer for his facility, and facing bankruptcy and foreclosure, Coulston approached Noon and the CCCC in Spring 2002.

A second – and lifelong – chance With an unprecedented grant of \$3.7 million from the Arcus Foundation

of Kalamazoo, Michigan, the CCCC was able to purchase TCF's facility. Its primate occupants were, in fact, donated to the Sanctuary. The Animal Rights Foundation of Florida, Doris Day Animal League, Friends of Washoe, In Defense of Animals (IDA) and New

England Anti-Vivisection Society provided additional support.

Dr. Noon wants everyone to know that, if the Arcus Foundation, the CCCC, the Doris Day Animal League and other animal welfare organizations had not stepped in, the future for TCF's chimps would have consisted of continued misery and exploitation. The addition of the 266 TCF chimps means the CCCC will care for 291 individuals who will be housed at expanded facilities in Florida and, at

least temporarily, in New Mexico.

The CCCC will provide the chimps with a secure and enriching environment, spacious outdoor enclosures, and encourage them to express natural behaviors. There won't be any instant solutions, though. Poked, prodded and caged for many years, research chimps don't have the opportunity to develop the social bonds of chimps in the wild. With Noon's guidance and support, they will be encouraged to groom one another, play, even squabble and reconcile. It's a painstaking process that may take seven to eight years, but she is ready for the challenge. Plans are in the works for more places for them to run and play, including specially-built hills and jungle gyms to permit the chimps needed recreation.

There are many challenges ahead for all the organizations and individuals who are dedicated to enhancing these animals' lives. The DDAL provided an initial grant of \$34,000 when the New Mexico facility became the CCCC. Although it sounds like a lot of money, the care and feeding of the primates is an expensive proposition. For example, bananas are \$13 a case and the new rescues in New Mexico

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Book Bag



By Lisa Gallo

Note: We heard from many elementary school teachers and students across the country when we introduced them to Hey, Little Ant as part of the 2002 AnimalsAloud! program. For more information, see pages 20 and 22. Here's a review, so our Animal Guardian readers can learn more about this book.



Hey, Little Ant

To squish, or not to squish? That's the question facing the unnamed young boy in *Hey, Little Ant*.

He and his friends make a game out of squishing ants, as many children do. But then the "kid" encounters an ant who asks him to imagine how it feels to be an ant, and to think twice before squishing. *Hey, Little Ant* is a creative, fun story with great illustrations that teaches children tolerance and respect for diversity, as

well as the importance of resisting peer pressure to do what's right. The book also includes a song that can be used by teachers and humane educators. Recommended for ages 4-8, but fun for all ages.

Hey, Little Ant, 1998

Phillip and Hannah Hoose

Tricycle Press (a little division of Ten Speed Press)

P.O. Box 7123, Berkeley, CA 94707

24 pages: \$14.95

Beauty in the Beasts

Beauty in the Beasts by Kristin Von Kreisler is a collection of true stories about animals helping people based on feelings of compassion, courage, and loyalty. Combining anecdotes with comments by animal experts, Von Kreisler presents heartwarming, inspiring, and sometimes miraculous accounts that provide readers with beautiful examples of how animals are companions and deserve our deep respect.

Beauty in the Beasts, 2001

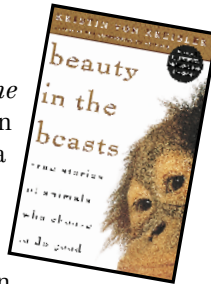
Kristin Von Kreisler

Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam

375 Hudson Street, New York, NY

10014

226 pages: \$23.95



Shadow Horse

Shadow Horse by Alison Hart is the suspenseful, fictional story of 13-year-old Jasmine Schuler, who is determined to prove that the wealthy owner of a horse farm deliberately poisoned her favorite horse, Whirlwind. Jasmine is placed in foster care at a sanctuary for abused animals following the death of her parents, the collapse of her grandfather, her legal guardian, from a stroke, and being placed on probation for assaulting the horse farm owner. There she deals with a range of emotions such as loneliness, anger and despair as she unravels the mystery of the horse's death. She gradually learns to trust and care about the people on the farm, and to bond emotionally with the animals, who are "rejects," just like her. *Shadow Horse* is a suspenseful mystery as well as a touching story about getting a second chance at life. *Shadow Horse* was nominated for Best Juvenile Novel by the Mystery Writers of America.

Shadow Horse, 1999

Alison Hart

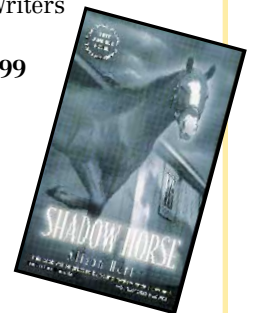
Random House

1540 Broadway

New York, NY

10036

261 pages: \$4.99



CCCC, continued from page 11

need six cases a day. Green peppers are \$10 a case, and they also consume six cases a day. Oranges run about \$12 a case, and at least two cases are needed each day. They like yams, which cost \$13 a case for each of the five needed daily. Children's chewable vitamins are also good for the chimps, and it takes five bottles each day at \$5.29 per bottle. The price of Monkey Chow varies, but an average is \$20.69 per bag — and thirteen bags a day are necessary.

We did the math. Food for just one day for the rescues is \$522.42.



Dr. Carole Noon, Liz Clancy Lyons and Holly Hazard at CCCC present a sampling of the rescued chimpanzees' new daily diet.

The inhumane treatment of the Air Force Chimps and their descendants continued for almost half a century. That chapter is over. The sequel offers these chimpanzees the beginning of the new life — the one that they should have had all along.

For more information or to make donations, contact The Center for Captive Chimpanzee Care at info@savethechimps.org; telephone number 772-429-0403; fax number 772-460-0720, or write to P.O. Box 12220, Fort Pierce, FL 34979, to help both the Florida and New Mexico chimps. 🐾