

# **TAKING THE MORAL LOW ROAD ON THE PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL: Special Interests, Indifference to Suffering, and 'Olympian' Inaction**

If the report in the Tacoma News-Tribune [1] was correct, sometime during the evening of August 7, Pierce County Councilman Terry Lee, in an *apparent* last-minute change of mind, decided to form a critical-mass triumvirate with Councilmen Dick Muri and Roger Bush. The provision of this swing vote allowed them to defeat the proposal of Councilwoman Barbara Gelman and Councilman Farrell for an Ordinance which would license breeding exotic birds (most notably, parrots) in Pierce County and thereby provide the most minimal of protections against abuse and neglect. Instead, the Public Safety and Human Services Committee voted to recommend the proposal of Muri and Bush-- to form an Aviculture Advisory Commission to study the issue further. According to this plan, during the ensuing year or two [2], an august body would look sage and practice omphalology while solemnly cogitating about an issue which the Council has already been considering since 2004. The problem is, it seems that they would be ruminating over conclusions which would, in essence, be preordained. That is because the very composition of the committee would be so weighted towards self-interest as to turn a serious issue almost into a joke; Mr. Muri *insists* that it be this way [2]. This proposal is, in essence, a thinly (if at all) disguised effort to kill-by-apathy-and-delay any hope of providing meaningful protection against abuse, suffering and death for some of the most intelligent, beautiful and prized creatures on earth--parrots. Rather than taking the moral high road, the prevailing majority of this Committee chose, for the third time, to take the easiest possible road to the most convenient cul-de-sac.

Congratulations, "gentle"men, on your decisive and compassionate action.

## **What would make some elected officials turn such a blind eye to suffering?**

Throughout the past two years, the members of this Editorial Board and others have been struck by the egregious shortage of facts which have been brought to bear on the "debate" about the need to protect parrots from abuse in Pierce County, although it would be far too easy to blame the outcome on this deficiency alone. One expects one's elected leaders to be both informed and objective, especially in an emotionally-charged issue such as this one. Rather, there was a singular lack of incisive questions asked of speakers at public meetings, coupled to an apparent lack of preparation (and/or concern) by the Council members themselves. Or to put it differently, the outcome of this matter seemed to have been decided based on political exigencies and personal preferences, rather than hard cold facts and an earnest consideration of their relevance to the case.

Let's take, for example, the Council meeting of 2004, at which a revision of current ordinance to cover birds was first to be discussed. That meeting was dominated (both in length and tone) by a single speaker--Laurella Desborough, who is a noted antagonist of virtually any legislation designed to protect the welfare of parrots [3a-c]. Incredibly,

Desborough was apparently *invited* to speak by the Council even though she lives neither in the County nor the State, and attended the meeting with the stated objective, not to objectively discuss the issues, but to kill the Ordinance [4]. Even someone moderately versed in the biology of psittacines (parrots) and in previous legislative attempts to assure their welfare will, upon reviewing the videotape of that meeting, recognize the generous sprinkling of disinformation and outright fabrication. This deception included the misrepresentation of the positions of both the American Federation of Aviculture at large (Desborough was subsequently censored by its President) and the US Department of Agriculture [5]. However, an uninformed Council fell for it hook, line, and sinker...or were they merely overly receptive?

[In 2006, at the August meeting of the Council, she resurfaced, in writing at least, in two undated documents, in which she implied that her views represented those of the Model Aviculture Program: she used their letterhead and the letter was written in the first-person *plural*, yet it was signed only by L. Desborough. It would appear that history is repeating itself as Ms. Desborough once again attempts to employ the same unethical tactics used in 2004 by implying in this letter she represented all members of the Model Aviculture Program. More cogently, it contained the following statement, a lie straight out of the 2004 meeting:

*"The U.S. Department of Agriculture is presently writing the regulations for the inspection of commercial aviaries throughout the United States...These regulations are expected to be completed **before the end of the year.**" [emphasis ours]*

"Another bold-faced lie", said Dr. Stewart Metz, who has been in touch several times with Dr. Jerry dePoyster, the 'point-man' from the USDA on this matter. Dr. dePoyster writes:

*"Having a rule by the end of this year is **just not possible,**" and then goes on to describe in detail the lengthy process still remaining.]*

The next guest speaker at the 2004 meeting was Julie Corwin, who just happens to be the major re-seller for Scudder bird farm (the aviary which is at the center of much of the controversy and which can be safely said to have played a major, albeit not total, role in sparking the outcry for the very legislation under consideration to prevent the mistreatment of parrots.). After a lovely presentation about *pet* parrots and their needs, she managed to imply that *breeder* parrots need not be provided with most of the same care. While it is true that *some* of the coddling provided to pets clearly cannot be provided to breeder birds, the rule more relevant to the current debate is that both breeder parrots and companion parrots are biologically indistinguishable--both are undomesticated animals, with similar, genetically-determined *basic* needs. A failure to meet these *basic* needs is at the core of the definitions of abuse and cruelty which animal welfarists hope to prevent by passing an aviary licensing ordinance. As often happens, the mantra "I love parrots" is not always matched by "I will protect parrots" [*cf.ref. 6*]. Yet the Council never asked hard questions about Ms. Corwin's verbal distinctions.

It is probably no coincidence that both of these invited "keynote" speakers at the 2004 meeting (Desborough and Corwin) also just happened to be witnesses on behalf of

Martha Scudder in *Scudder v. Gallawa*, a civil suit (see below). Thus, already by 2004, an earnest and impartial consideration of fact seemed to be taking a back seat in the Council's deliberations to an ill-concealed preference for the desires of breeders. Since the purpose of an Ordinance was to protect innocent and helpless captive birds from those few rogue bird keepers who abuse or harm birds, such a preconceived point of view and such one-sided presentations directed *away from the best interests of the birds* would seem to abrogate the very purpose of the meetings. Such an unbalanced, even biased approach might even suggest the presence of some conflict of interest operative on the Council's part or on that of at least some of its members. This concern is one which recurs with the many heads of Medusa. The question is not as much "if", but "why".

## **DICK MURI**

Mr. Muri seems to have opposed the Ordinance from the start. Judging by his published comments thus far, when it comes to the care of exotic birds, Muri apparently never met a fact which he deems worthy of his consideration nor an expert whom he deems worthy of his time. Mr. Muri was quoted in the Tacoma News-Tribune [7] as praising the conditions of the birds at the infamous Scudder farm [now called Scudder Parrot Depot], saying that "The *birds are real healthy. Their feathers look good. They look normal.*" Of course, that conclusion is patently unjustified, since the condition of a parrot's feathers is only one indicator of its care or health, and a crude one at that.

Ignorance is even worse when compounded by arrogance. Muri was asked whether he intended to take an avian expert with him on an inspection of Scudder Parrot Depot.. He is quoted [7] as replying that "I don't need a vet...I'm going to make decisions as far as regulations and changing the way things get done." When asked whether he would call an animal control officer to accompany him to Scudder's Parrot Depot, Muri is quoted as saying "I don't call staff; they call me." [7] However, by his own statement, Muri has not been inside many or all of the buildings where most of the breeding birds are to be found. It is not even totally clear whether the birds which he refers to so glowingly, were breeder birds at all, or rather, Martha Scudder's pet birds. Asked to add a person knowledgeable about the humane treatment of parrots to his Advisory Committee, he again refused [2, 6]. " 'Muri's adamant about having the representation he's proposed,' she [Councilwoman Gelman] said. 'When I mentioned adding an animal control representative he said there was no need for them to be involved.' "[8]. In other words, let's not let either other views or facts interfere with his preordained conclusion.

This website [9] has chronicled an encyclopedic volume of damning witness-based and objective findings testifying to the presence of both animal abuse and cruelty in his district. Furthermore, the Editors of this website have reported evidence that abuses continue to occur in Pierce County. However, the system to correct them remains broken. Birds in outdoor structures apparently were observed as recently as this March exposed to freezing temperatures under windy, wet conditions at Scudder's Parrot Depot [10]. A formal report was filed with Animal Control (now under the aegis of the Sheriff); however, it either was ignored or, if any action was taken, no courtesy was shown to the person filing the complaint, in response to her queries about the outcome.

Even some local breeders are sickened by conditions in several notorious 'parrot farms', but some have not spoken out for fear of being ostracized in this small community. One breeder in the area that did speak up in favor of the aviary licensing Ordinance reported having been run out of the bird club of which she had been a member. How *dare* she support regulation of their operations? was their position; hers was that the Ordinance was necessary to not only ensure humane treatment of parrots, but also maintain proper disease control protocols to protect all birds in the area from spread of illness. Other breeders have commented that breeders have actually moved north from California to this area because the parrot business is so unregulated in Washington State. But Mr. Muri remains unfazed, and seems to have recruited both Bush and Lee to his stance of tolerating abuse to helpless animals. But curiously, notice that it is not abuse to *all* animals--just exotic birds. He seems to have no problem with licensing dogs and cats, despite the fact that the Pierce County Code already includes birds in its Code: that Code defines "animal" as "any nonhuman mammal, *bird*, reptile or amphibian excluding livestock and poultry" [11 ; emphasis ours ].

Why might this curious exception with parrots exist? What could contribute to Mr. Muri's refusal to protect some pitiful, cage-bound creatures from suffering? If one asked him, one suspects that his reason might be something like "following the correct political process." When asked about his proposed Avicultural Advisory Commission [2], Dr. Stewart Metz told the Editors that Muri replied that such a committee might well deliberate for "16 to 18 months" before even reaching conclusions--in other words, well into 2008, before taking any legislative action. Why? Because there are "56 or 57" pieces of legislation before this one, he explained, and this issue would simply have to wait its turn. Asked why, Muri is said [2] to have responded with a hint of a snarl, "Because that's the way it's done around here." **This, of course, doesn't address the question of why he couldn't have initiated such an Avicultural Advisory Commission at one of the Council meetings which preceded the one in August, 2006-- in 2004 or even February 14 of this year.** So it may not be the political process that is as important as maintenance of his control over it, perhaps for the reasons discussed below. The selection of an Advisory Commission would keep the issue under his thumb--right until his re-election campaign in 2008.

One can't say that Muri hides his opinion. At a meeting to discuss both his proposal and that of Councilwoman Gelman regarding breeding aviaries [2], he walked in the room practically arm-in-arm with Robert Vincent and Natalie Frumin. Vincent, as we have noted, manages the parrot farm which precipitated both the legislative and legal firestorm due to allegations of gross neglect and cruelty. Frumin, as we noted, participated in the celebration over the defeat of the Ordinance "by" the AFA in 2004 [4]. By associating himself spatially with these two figures, Muri seemed to be giving overt notice to whom he gives his allegiance--ie, who comprises his Special Interest group.

Surely he must realize that bringing Vincent to a meeting to decide how to prevent future abuses to parrots would seem to present a flagrant conflict of interest. Apparently not. Indeed, sources maintain that Mr. Muri maintains an active personal social relationship

with Mr. Vincent and Mrs. Scudder, visiting them at home and engaging in frequent phone calls; they have allegedly been seen together at Arnold's Country Inn. His personal secretary, L. Swallie has been to the Scudder Parrot Depot several times [12]. The issue to be raised is not whether such interactions are legal, nor does it provide unequivocal proof *per se* of a conflict of interest. However, at the very least it would present the *appearance* of a conflict of interest, which seems unbecoming an elected official involved in resolving a contentious issue during which he is allegedly fraternizing socially with two of the (if not **the** most) pivotal figures. His purported social interactions with Scudder and Vincent might, at the least, sway his interpretation of the facts about the humane treatment of breeder birds--'facts' which he seems to be getting solely from Vincent, who in turn admits that he knew nothing about parrots before coming to Scudder's farm in 2003 and then learned everything that he knows about the subject within two months-- from Martha Scudder herself[13]. It would seem to be the blind leading the deaf.

Later, Muri stated [2] that he would not allow any persons directly concerned about, and knowledgeable in, the humane treatment of exotic birds onto 'his' Advisory Commission. Rather, the Committee was to be heavily weighted in favor of breeder and business interests [14]. He was challenged about the propriety of this by Dr. Metz [2]. Wouldn't that be akin to a murderer or rapist demanding that a "jury of his peers" be comprised of murderers or rapists? He replied to the effect that it was their birds and so it was *their* right and in *their* interest to regulate themselves. Yes, it certainly is in their best interests--there's no denying that-- and that is why his "Commission" is a sham. **It seems obvious to us that you don't give the fox the job of counting the number of chickens left in the henhouse, or is that "the way it's done around here"?**

What about pleasing the constituency (the reader might ask); is that not a legitimate goal for an elected politician? As a general rule of thumb, an elected official must try to serve his or her constituency, of that there is no debate. Many parrot breeders live in Pierce County; many (but clearly not all) of them are against any regulation, even if it might improve the welfare of some of their "beloved" parrots. In contrast, many (but not all) of the so-called Animal Welfare types are from outside the County. So politically this might, at first glance, appear to be a political no-brainer. However, the Aviary Licensing proposal Ordinance was supported by both repeated Editorials and citizen polls in the Tacoma News-Tribune. Additionally, if Martha Scudder and Robert Vincent were to be personal friends of Muri, he should recuse himself from decision-making concerning the Ordinance. In a republic (such as the USA), we elect officials in whom we place our trust to do the right thing, not just cow-tow to political futures. Again, that is why we call them "leaders". Stalling for years and years a measure which only involves the provision of the most *minimal* protections against the suffering of sentient beings can scarcely be said to characterize a leader. Furthermore, and more damning, Muri gives the appearance of courting not so much the citizens, as he does of courting one single Citizen --namely, Mr. Vincent. Government is supposed to be "By the People; For the People" not "By the Person; for the Person." In fact, the Editors have learned from a source who is in very good position to know this to be true, that **Muri promised Vincent ( well before any proposals were formulated , no less voted on) that no Ordinance would ever pass in**

**Pierce County --that he would see to that, and that people on the Council "owed him" If that allegation is true, it appears to comprise a promise to obstruct due process, if necessary.** If so, then it would appear that Mr. Muri does not really have the slavish dedication to "the political process" which he implied. Recall that "political process" was the very reason he gave [2] for delaying any Ordinance until his 'Aviculture Advisory Commission' could first putter about for another year and a half or so. Mr. Muri's two antithetical approaches would seem to be hypocritical, at the very least.

We expect much more of our "leaders." We should expect, for example, that they will follow the highest *moral* principles and that sometimes such principles "trump" the wishes of individual constituents in their voting district. That is why we look to them as leaders, not followers. Some on the Council did take the higher moral ground: Council members Barbara Gelman and Tim Farrell sponsored the proposal to license aviaries for breeding birds but they have had a persistently uphill battle on their hands. [The positions of Councilmembers Goings and Bunney are not known as of the date this piece was written].

Washington State has laws against animal abuse and cruelty; the facts indicate that the authorities in Pierce County have neither the desire, nor mechanisms in place, to enforce these laws. Likewise, it is alleged that the locations of the aviaries of some of the breeders of exotic birds violate zoning restrictions of Pierce County yet apparently, Mr Muri has no desire to see these laws enforced either. If this is true, then again, one finds law enforcement to be a poor second cousin to business interests in this county. **The citizens of Pierce County should, at the least, demand that their "leaders" uphold the laws; we have learned from this debacle that it's too much to ask them to show compassion as well.**

In fact, Muri has used his office for more than decision- making concerning the proposed Ordinance. Shortly after Mr. Vincent arrived at the Scudder farm, Martha Scudder promptly sued Mr. Larry Gallawa for damages which she and Vincent said were incurred as a result (in part) of Mr. Gallawa's accusations of animal abuse and cruelty at the farm [15]. In fact, at the trial of *Scudder v. Gallawa*, Mr. Muri appears to have sent his own Personal Assistant Leslie Swallie (who herself has no apparent knowledge about exotic birds) to testify on behalf of Scudder. Ms. Swallie is on the record signing in as "Administrative Assistant to Councilman Dick Muri, Pierce County Council." Here we have Mr. Muri using his office, while cleverly leaving *himself* out of court. At the least this represents very poor judgment on Muri's part, since the proxy visit of his Personal Secretary (whose salary we assume is paid for using taxpayer funds); at worst **it might represent a misuse of his office.**

### **Robert Vincent— Mr. Muri's Special Interest 'Group'?**

Can politics alone explain Muri's inexplicably stolid refusal to help these birds at all? We believe that a better insight might have come from a talk Dr. Stewart Metz had with Robert Vincent after the meeting of July 24 in Council chambers [2]. Dr. Metz provided the Editorial Board with the following report on that meeting,

*"During the meeting itself, Vincent did not overtly raise many objections to the Ordinance proposed by Councilman Gelman. In fact, he implied that he would support it. The suggestions for revision which he turned in to the Council members contained a number of legitimate questions and suggestions, as did mine. (Some were already in process). If one were to read his written suggestions "blind", one might have concluded that, overall, he supported oversight of aviaries. Indeed, at the end of the meeting, "Bob" (as he asked me to call him) called me aside (twice) and said he'd like to meet privately with me to see if we could work together to improve the Ordinance-- which he thought basically was a good thing but could be improved. I was cheered: If **together** we approached the proponents of the Ordinance before the next meeting, and indicated that both sides wanted to work together for an Ordinance, we might suggest either that some revisions be incorporated immediately (**or**) that the vote on August 8 be for a provisional Ordinance to be revised afterwards by "both sides of the aisle" working together. My spirits were buoyed! Could I have misread this man's intentions?"*

*However, when we actually met for the next ninety or so minutes, Vincent never again raised the topic of the Ordinance. Ms. Natalie Frumin was present and can attest to the veracity of my description of what ensued.*

*After the usual pleasantries (including revelations about his performing an internet search into my past biomedical research and my long association with the Veterans Administration), he began to talk quite loquaciously about himself. As he rambled on, it became clear that Bob not only wasn't interested in seeing an Ordinance passed, but that he wasn't really talking to me, but rather, at me. It therefore seemed appropriate for me to say little, and instead, just sit back and mostly listen and nod, perhaps akin to a psychiatric intake interview. I should note that part of my medical licensure included formal training in Psychiatry at Yale Medical School, one of the best programs in the country."*

Dr. Metz then decribed his impressions of Mr. Vincent and of the rest of the meeting in detail. His first impression was that Mr. Vincent could be charming, even ingratiating. His **style** , Metz noted (underscoring the word "style"), was smooth and persuasive; he told the Editorial Board that he could understand how Vincent could elicit the trust of someone he had just met.

*"Bob explained to me plaintively how he didn't know anything about parrots until he came to Roy; how Martha taught him so much; how he and Martha were misunderstood by people who wanted to hurt them; how he really, really wanted to help the birds, not hurt them, how it was difficult because he also had PTSD. He almost convinced me--that all those necropsies didn't exist; that all those birds hadn't died of disease, suffocation, and starvation; that significant numbers of other birds hadn't disappeared into the trash. But I knew those facts , and many more like them, to be true , because , for more than a hundred hours , I had dutifully pored over **all** the sworn and written testimony in Scudder v. Gallawa -- so as to be absolutely certain that my Declaration was as complete, factual, and unbiased as I could make it. "*

Metz indicated that it was when Vincent almost had him convinced that the facts were wrong, that he realized how possible it was that Vincent could have "snookered" Mr. Muri, and possibly others [16]. He referred to a particular personality type which goes by several names [17] which was compatible with all the traits he had observed in Vincent, especially the deceptiveness. He emphasized that he could only make informal comparisons, and not make any formal diagnoses, but that "*the impressions to that effect which I drew from this 'interview' were very strong.*"

If Dr. Metz' inference is correct, we wonder, Mr. Muri:

When the brouhaha between Gallawa and Scudder erupted-- which was just about the exact same time that Vincent arrived on the scene in Roy--did he approach you as Councilman to help rescue "poor Martha" from all those horrible Animal Welfare people "wanting to hurt her"? Did he sway you with glib talk? **And is that why a source swears that you promised them that no Aviary Licensing Ordinance would ever pass in Pierce County?** If this allegation is correct, it would explain a lot.

### **A Pyrrhic Victory**

The fact that certain members of the current council do not realize why this is an important issue--indeed, some may question why it is worth their time to have to consider--is only testament to the paucity of vision of those members. A pending question for the current members of the full Council is whether each of them wishes to be known, in their legislative legacy, as "the Councilmember who voted to abet cruelty and suffering for helpless creatures." There is a saying that is pertinent here: "Do not destroy what you cannot create." The passive version, "Do not let be destroyed what you cannot create", would seem to carry pretty much the same meaning. It is worth remembering these truths when the full County Council casts its final votes on October 10. Albert Schweitzer's "A reverence for all life" would also seem to be a motto worth remembering in this time of purported "family values".

According to what Mr. Muri himself stated [2], if Ordinance #2006-82 is passed on October 10, it would take approx. 18 months for this Commission to be formed and (presumably) carry out even some of its deliberations. Obviously it would take even more time to implement the Commission's recommendations (if there are any, short of disbanding). That period of time, therefore, would approximate the time from the first Council meeting in February, 2004 (when such a proposal *should* have been introduced) until the present. During that period of time, a considerable number of necropsies had been performed on dead parrots from just a *single one of* Pierce County bird farms [18], and even this large group excludes a substantial number of additional dead birds which, suspiciously, were discarded in the trash (for unknown reasons) and never submitted to examination by pathologists, as documented by several witnesses [for example, ref. 19]. It is therefore possible that a similar number of birds may die--and that many more birds will be mistreated--while we await the conclusions of Mr. Muri's business-oriented commission. Parrots are dying and suffering in their County seemingly as do dogs or cats, which the Council has no qualms about protecting. How they can, in good conscience, let



this issue smolder from 2004 until 2008 or later--a total of 4 years or more-- when the template for a solution, even a temporary one--sits at their fingertips is beyond the comprehension of the members of the Editorial Board of this website.

There was a chance to do some good on August 8 but three members of the Committee voted for inertia and the status quo as their collective political legacy in this matter. Sources within the Council chambers tell us that the votes for October 10 have already been decided. However, if ever there was a pyrrhic victory, it was Muri's and Bush's and Lee's. Any "victory" based on taking the moral low road can *only* be a pyrrhic victory--"gentle"men, because you'll have lost a much more important war. Perhaps you'll prove us wrong on October 10, maybe even be open to the comments of *all* the people this time during the meeting rather than allowing Muri to show his disdain for members of the public when he didn't like what they had to say.[19] One can only hope.

Perhaps Messrs. Muri, Bush and Lee should have gotten the input of a constituency within Pierce County which is important in this issue (except that they cannot vote)--and that is the children of Pierce County. Our recommendation is that, prior to the final vote on October 10; the Council take a day trip to the Point Defiance Zoo or even a good pet shop. Let them watch the look of awe and wonder on the face of the children as they watch, play with, and talk to a parrot. Then ask them if their Moms and Dads should have to take good care of birds, just as they do of dogs and cats. Ask them whether *they* think that it's OK for people to be able to starve or suffocate [20] birds to death, and then throw them in the freezer [21] or trash [22], all with virtual impunity. Perhaps, "gentle"men, you should poll *that* constituency.

### *Illegitimi non carborundum*

## **DOCUMENTATION AND FOOTNOTES**

- [1] M. Tweti, "County to hear bird law plans", August 7, 2006
- [2] D. Muri, personal communication to Stewart Metz, MD, meeting in Council Chambers, July 24, 2006. Also present were: Councilwoman Gelman; Inga Gibson (the Humane Society of the United States); Natalie Frumin (American Federation of Aviculture); and Robert Vincent (property manager of Scudder's Parrot Depot); Ms. Susan Mathew (Assistant to Ms. Gelman); Ms. Carolyn Pendle (Sr. Legislative Analyst). The report of the content of this meeting was provided by Dr. Metz at the behest of the Editorial Board.
- [3a] vis., <http://www.nfss.org/Legis/AFA-Alerts/AR-09-02-A.htm>;
- [3b] <http://www.birdmag.com/hr5360.htm>;
- [3c] "MAP Overview Regarding Proposed Ordinances RE Aviaries in Pierce County, WA"; also see Ref #4. All of these documents are characterized by disingenuous mischaracterizations and inflammatory generalizations concerning people working on behalf of the welfare of birds.

Amazingly enough, Desborough's distortions have actually been outdone--by Sue Beaulieu, "Legislative VP" of the Organization of Professional Aviculturists. OPA (<http://www.proaviculture.com/>) is an ultra-conservative avicultural group, so paranoid that it won't let out the names of its Board Members unless one joins OPA and is accepted into its 'elite' upper echelon. However, the Board is known to include Desborough and Howard Voren, among others. A letter, dated August 4 and received by the Pierce County Council on the day before the August 8 meeting, includes some of the following conclusion or statements [the entire text of the body of the letter is reproduced at the bottom of this document]:

- I. This legislation was being driven by "individuals with personal axes to grind...to bear false witness (and create endless harassment) against innocent citizens...to influence legislators ...[and] ultimately drive people out of business or cause them to give up hobby breeding or even their pets."
- II. That this is, in fact, "animal rights terrorism" and a "crime"
- III. That "the push for a "bird" ordinance in Pierce County is a direct result of lies, innuendos and dirty tricks that were propagated by a small group of animal rights extremists and carried out for their own personal reasons and agendas."

Note the total absence of concern for the welfare of the birds (as usual) from this patently misguided, fear-mongering diatribe. The sad brainwashed regurgitation of Voren-Desborough doctrine by Ms. Beaulieu merits only a single response: stand up, Ms. Beaulieu, and put specific names and places to your accusations of criminal animal rights terrorists actively backing this specific bill, with specific descriptions and evidence of "lies, dirty tricks and personal gain", if you can. Then we will be certain that you will be willing to defend such inflammatory slander in an appropriate venue.

While you are at it, we suggest that you read both of the Judge's decisions in *Scudder v. Gallawa* and the entire contents of this website, so that we can be certain of the kind of treatment of birds that you and your ilk condone. YOUR Rights, and those of Martha Scudder, do not extend to breaking the provisions of Washington State Law describing the minimal requirements of animal care, as was determined to be the case at Scudder Parrot Depot by an Avian Board-certified veterinarian, whether or not they cleaned up their parrot mill before the visit of Ms. Desborough.

- [4] A brief of the American Federation of Aviculture, dated March 2004, was titled "Pierce County Council Table Proposed Ordinance After AFA Presents Position." It noted that "representing the AFA, Regional Director Natalie Frumin, AFA Washington State Co-ordinator Wendy Crane and AFA Legislative VP Laurella Desborough attended the meeting....Their joint effort was successful" This brief, originally found on the AFA website, has subsequently been yanked but can still be found at <http://www.feathers.org/pdfs/april04.pdf#search=%22laurella%20desborough%3Banimal%20rights%22>
- [5] A phone call by Dr. Stewart Metz to Dr. dePoyster of the USDA after the 2004 meeting confirmed that Desborough's statements about the proposed role of the

USDA in protecting the welfare of exotic birds locally, to be gross misrepresentations

- [6] For example, re Ms. Corwin, see the discrepancies between her words and her response to the proposed Ordinance, as noted by the Editors of the website at <http://parrotprotection.org/en/envelope.php?./Projects/ParrotDepot/pd-20-court.ssi>
- [7] Tacoma News-Tribune, December 21, 2005
- [8] The Tacoma News-Tribune; July 31, 2006
- [9] [www.ParrotProtection.org](http://www.ParrotProtection.org)
- [10] <http://parrotprotection.org/en/Projects/ParrotDepot/Documents/file-2006-03-10-705FDavidsoncomplaint-upd.pdf>
- [11] Pierce County Code , Title 6.02.010c
- [12] <http://parrotprotection.org/en/envelope.php?./Projects/ParrotDepot/pd-20-court.ssi>
- [13] <http://parrotprotection.org/en/Projects/ParrotDepot/Documents/decl-2005-08-05-704DecofVincent1.pdf>
- [14] See [http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/council/Recent\\_Legislation.htm](http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/council/Recent_Legislation.htm) for composition of the proposed Commission
- [15] For a chronology and further details, see: <http://parrotprotection.org/en/envelope.php?./Projects/ParrotDepot/pd-03-chrono.ssi>
- [16] There was another worrisome aspect of the discussion that Mr. Vincent shared with Dr. Metz during that conversation, which Metz indicated caused him great concern. There is a species of parrot called the Red-fronted macaw (*Ara rubrogenys*) which is extremely endangered in the wild and found only in a small area of Bolivia about the size of Phoenix. Although an exact census of these macaws remaining in the wild has not been carried out, most estimates are about a thousand, possibly less. Vincent indicated to Metz that he had convinced the holder of the major captive breeding population of these precious parrots to turn them over to him for breeding at Scudder Parrot Depot. To make matters worse, he claims to have convinced (or plans to convince?) the Fish and Wildlife Service to turn over federally protected land in the middle of the country--THIS country--for the release of rehabilitated macaws. Keep in mind that Vincent totally lacked experience with parrots before he came to the area. The Red-fronted Macaw Project was an AFA undertaking, touted as being a conservation project initiated and carried out by aviculturists but originally designed to benefit the true stakeholders (the Bolivian natives; <http://www.silvio-co.com/cps/articles/1994/1994desborough1.htm>). There are, in fact, several in situ conservation projects in place (<http://www.birdbolivia.com/Red-fronted%20Macaw%20Lodge.htm>; <http://www.rufford.org/rsg/Projects/TriciaJ.Peterson>; <http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/national/bolivia/>). Mr. Vincent did not adequately explain the need for, or advisability of, a scheme to release captive-bred macaws into the American forest.

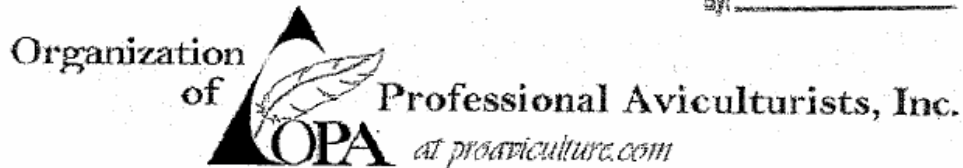
- [17] vis., <http://www.geocities.com/lycium7/psychofacts.html> and <http://uimc.discoveryhospital.com/main.php?t=enc&id=2797>
- [18] <http://parrotprotection.org/en/envelope.php?./Projects/ParrotDepot/pd-30-nec.ssi>
- [19] Sources that attended the meeting on August 8 to discuss both proposed Ordinances reported that Muri interrupted members of the public that spoke in favor of aviary licensing. One such County constituent reported that while she was speaking, Muri leaned back far in his chair, rolled his eyes, and even leaned past another Councilmember to speak with the Committee Chair, throwing off her concentration. His entire demeanor while pro Aviary Licensing Ordinance speakers were giving their short presentations was described as agitated, impatient, irritated, and totally disinterested in what they had to say.

In stark contrast, however, when Mr. Muri's alleged friend Bob Vincent spoke, we're told Muri leaned forward with rapt attention, index finger on his cheek, and thumb under his chin in total concentration. Mr. Vincent was never interrupted from his full time speaking at the "public" meeting. How sad that so many of this Council's constituents showed up thinking their voices would be heard; not only does it appear that the vote was already preordained, but Mr. Muri appeared to blatantly steer the meeting to only one voice....one vote. Once again, Muri has shown us that in Pierce County, rather than a government "By the People, For the People", it can all too easily turn into "By the Person, For the Person."

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AUG 07 2006

PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL  
By \_\_\_\_\_



August 4, 2006

Pierce County City Council  
930 Tacoma Avenue South, Room 1046  
Tacoma, Washington 98402-2176

FAX (253) 798-7509

Public Safety & Human Services Committee  
Barbara Gelman, Chair  
Timothy M. Farrell, Vice Chair  
Roger Bush, Member  
Terry Lee, Member  
Dick Muri, Member

RE: Pierce County Proposed Bird Ordinance

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*TAKING THE MORAL LOW ROAD ON THE PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL:  
Special Interests, Indifference to Suffering, and 'Olympian' Inaction*

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Aviculturists nationwide wish to thank you for your sincere efforts to be fair and impartial in this very emotionally-charged issue. All too often, city councils across the United States have been pushed into passing bad legislation based on little more than mis-information provided by animal rights-based organizations which are driven their own personal doctrines and agendas. As Legislative VP of the OPA, I hereby offer these suggestions and information for your serious consideration. (See attachments for citations and complete documentation)

At issue is whether or not individuals with personal axes to grind will be allowed to bear false witness (and create endless harassment) against innocent citizens. These people should not be allowed to influence legislators, who may be swayed to endorse skewed legislation that could ultimately drive people out of business or cause them to give up hobby breeding or even their pets.

**The Pierce County Council is in the position to write ground breaking legislation that could serve as a crucial model law for our entire nation; i.e. legislation that would protect citizens who own animals from the misrepresentations, accusations and harassment of extreme animal rights activists. A fair and equitable ordinance would serve to legally place shelters, rescues and sanctuaries under the same laws as any other animal owner, keeper or guardian.**

The Washington State Constitution provides that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and are established to protect and maintain individual rights. No person shall be disturbed in his private affairs, or his home invaded, without the authority of law.

(See Attachments 2 & 3) whereby the state of Missouri and the state of Ohio have passed protective measures that not only make animal rights terrorism a crime (i.e. the outright destruction of personal property not belonging to them), but also make it a crime to trespass animal related facilities under false pretenses for the purpose of taking and distributing photos of same. Based on these laws, successful legal arguments can be made that would also make it a crime to distribute "edited and doctored" photos or photos that are intentionally made in order to misrepresent actual facts.

Violating right of privacy – Civil action – Liability for damages (Attachment 4)  
According to the Revised Code of Washington Statutes [RCW 9.73.060]:

"Any person who directly or by means of a detective agency or any other agent [i.e. animal rights "investigators"], violates the provisions of this chapter shall be subject to legal action for damages, to be brought by any other person claiming that a violation of this statute has injured his business, his person, or his reputation. A person so injured shall be entitled to actual damages, including mental pain and suffering endured by him or her on account of violation of the provisions of this chapter..."

**Note: The entire purpose of underhanded AR investigations is indeed to cause injury to a business, individuals and to their reputations.**

The OPA applauds your effort to incorporate a model provision that can be introduced in other cities and states throughout the nation. It is imperative that all U.S. citizens have legal remedies and protections against the unethical tactics of animal rights activists. All too often these people and organizations are exempt from the same laws they impose on others.

I have attached an abbreviated HSUS FAQ (#5) for your information. Most animal lovers (including myself at one time) are unaware that the HSUS raises enough money to finance animal shelters in every single state, with money to spare, yet it does not operate a single one anywhere. Yet, the "Humane" Society of the U.S. has accumulated millions of dollars in assets while capitalizing on the concept its name implies. HSUS reported \$125,213,932 in total assets at the end of 2004 according to their IRS 990.

The push for a "bird" ordinance in Pierce County is the direct result of lies, innuendos and dirty tricks that were propagated by a small group of animal rights extremists and carried out for their own personal reasons and agendas. I contacted one of their victims in the winter of 2001. At that time, I e-mailed Bob Walter of the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County to ask whether they were affiliated with HSUS. He told me they were not.

However, please note that his email BobW@thehumansociety.org is listed as a contact for the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County (HSTPC) found on a list of Pierce County Resources at <http://pawsitivealliance.org/Pierce.html>. The Tacoma & Pierce County is indeed a member of the HSUS affiliated Federation of State Humane Societies. (Attachment 6)

In fact, the HSTPC and Washington branch of HSUS State Federations of Humane Societies share some Officers and Board Members. (Attachment 7) For instance, Steve Pierce, the President of the

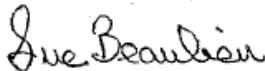
WSFHS is also the Executive Director for the Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County Humane Society and received \$92,050 as compensation for his duties in 2004. Phil Olsen, the Treasurer for the WFSHS is also the Director of Operations for the HSTPC.

I realize that the proposed bird ordinance is the focus of the upcoming hearing, but we cannot totally ignore the incidents which led up to the push for bird licensing in the first place.

The bird ordinance should not be passed because of undue influence generated by the most wealthy and powerful animal lobbying organization in the country.

Thank you for taking these particular points into consideration.

Best regards,



Sue Beaulieu  
Legislative VP  
Organization of Professional Aviculturists  
Researcher and freelance reporter  
SiouxB@cox.net  
316-283-3854

- [20] [http://parrotprotection.org/en/Projects/ParrotDepot/Documents/court-2005-01-12-pt1\\_515MarthaScudderDeposition,Pt.1.pdf](http://parrotprotection.org/en/Projects/ParrotDepot/Documents/court-2005-01-12-pt1_515MarthaScudderDeposition,Pt.1.pdf)
- [21] <http://parrotprotection.org/en/envelope.php?./Projects/ParrotDepot/pd-40-feed.ssi>
- [22] Mira Tweti, Tacoma News-Tribune, December 18, 2005 ; also:  
[http://parrotprotection.org/en/Projects/ParrotDepot/Documents/court-2005-01-13-zpt1\\_519KathrynPhillipsScudder,Depos.pdf](http://parrotprotection.org/en/Projects/ParrotDepot/Documents/court-2005-01-13-zpt1_519KathrynPhillipsScudder,Depos.pdf)