

Human Ethology Newsletter, Volume 1, No. 1

by

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This newsletter is being proposed as a means of establishing contact among those interested in studying human behavior from an ethological or evolutionary perspective. At present Human Ethology is a rather nebulous area extending across Psychology, Zoology, Anthropology, Sociology and Education. For researchers in these disciplines personal contact is often within the discipline rather than interdisciplinary. Because Human Ethology has a powerful heuristic potential it is felt that inter-disciplinary contacts may aid in the development of research ideas, methodology, and techniques of analysis, as well as providing needed criticism of often far-fetched ideas. It is hoped that this newsletter can aid in this contact.

To establish this newsletter will require readers and contributors. If you know of additional people, including students, who would be interested in receiving it would you please send on this letter to them or have them write us. We have appended a short vita form which we would like you to fill out and return. This will provide us with information which we can then disseminate to others.

Ultimately, we would like to be able to:

- 1) provide brief summaries of current research activities so that people with similar interests can correspond;
- 2) reproduce abstracts of current papers and mail them upon request;
- 3) indicate who will be attending which meetings so that others can plan on meeting them there;
- 4) provide names and addresses of journals which accept ethologically oriented research; and
- 5) disseminate 'idea' papers for critical comment and discussion.
- 6) comment upon recent books in ethology and human ethology.

1) and 2) above will probably require classification into areas of interest to facilitate access and mailing. It may be too soon, or even unwise, to suggest segmentation into subdivisions and we would appreciate your comments on this. Over time and with the growth of the field it will probably be necessary. Four areas that have been suggested are: (A) the range from primatology to social anthropology with a basic concern being theories of evolution of society; (B) Bio-social/social anthropology with a focus upon comparative studies of child and adult behavior in more than one culture or species; (C) developmental studies using ethological methods in work on children; and (D) non-verbal communication. Other areas might be (E) examples of interesting new research methodologies; and (F) techniques for analysis of ethological and, especially, observational materials. Some research reports will have to be cross-indexed in more than one area. Initially we will place research titles in the area you designate, duplicate the area lists and return them to you. In time we hope to have a file on each so that you can request the appropriate file, as currently up-dated.

Outside of Social Science Information¹, there are currently no journals in which human ethological articles regularly appear. They seem to be scattered across many different journals. This presents two problems 1) where to look, and 2) where to submit. Please be sure to indicate where your material is published so we can mention it and others can then know about it. If you will send us reprints of your past and current articles we will reproduce the abstract and/or summaries in the mimeographed files. Anybody requesting a file can then receive titles and abstracts and further track down those that seem appropriate.

The next problem would appear to be that of making direct contact with each other. Because this is a new area it would seem imperative to establish a format within which we can confront and aid each other face-to-face. As a first possibility for such a meeting we have been tentatively invited to meet under the auspices of the Animal Behavior Society (ABS) at their next annual meeting in May, 1974 at the University of Illinois - Urbana, Illinois. What might be discussed at that meeting is whether we would want to be organized as a group, whether we would want to be organized as a sub-section of ABS, or whether we should approach some other organization.

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To facilitate any possibility of your receiving travel funds from your university, etc., we would propose two paper sessions at the ABS meeting: 1) Current research in Human Ethology, and 2) Methodological and Analytical Techniques in Human Ethology. The latter would include those studies which are in or near the pilot testing phase, but with limited data. If you or your students would immediately indicate a title for a proposed paper we will know whether to proceed in requesting space at the ABS meeting. As soon as possible thereafter we will return further details to you about the meeting.

A Human Ethology meeting is also being planned for Europe, probably England, sometime toward the end of summer. Studies will be presented and discussed at this meeting. More details on this will appear in the next newsletter.

The Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455), will hold a Summer Institute on Evolution and The Development of Behavior in the Summer of 1975. The focus will be on ethological, behavior genetic, and psychobiological approaches to human development. Graduate students from many developmental psychology programs will be selected to participate with scholars from other disciplines in the five-week session. Profs. William Charlesworth and Sandra Scarr-Salapatek are the principal organizers of the Institute, which is sponsored jointly by the W. T. Grant and Alfred P. Sloan Foundations. Additional information about this institute will appear in future issues of the Newsletter.

A word on funding. For the first year, expenses for the Newsletter (if not outlandish) will be borne by the Institute for Research on Exceptional Children,

College of Education, of the University of Illinois - Urbana. After that, if this newsletter grows and becomes as useful as we hope it will, we will apply for a small grant. At least two private foundations are interested in the area of Human Ethology so we hope that, at least for some time, the newsletter can remain free.

We will appreciate your response to this newsletter and welcome any suggestions that you may have. Please pass this on to anybody else who may be interested.

Sincerely yours,

Donald R. Omark
and
Robert S. Marvin II