



August 26, 2019

Dear Laurinburg Exchange,

An August 2nd article by Alexis Polson, “Monkeying Around,” spread inaccuracies and harmful information regarding “pet” primates as promoted by local unaccredited facility Valentine Primate Sanctuary (VPS.)

The practices VPS engages in, including dressing monkeys in clothing, taking them out in public, and promoting their use as “pets” are things a reputable sanctuary would never do. Such treatment is very dangerous for these monkeys and the humans around them due to the spread of disease and risk of bites and scratches. Information on how to identify a true primate sanctuary and the harms of keeping primates as “pets” can be found on our website at primatesanctuaries.org/advocacy.

I am the Program Director of the North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA), a coalition of eight of the leading primate sanctuaries who care for close to 800 monkeys and apes who are rescued and retired from biomedical research, entertainment, and the pet trade. Daily, we see how they suffer lifelong physical and mental ailments from their use in these industries.

If you want to write about monkeys, you can explore the skin ailments and bone deformities that come from forcing them to wear clothes and diapers and the diseases like diabetes and cardiac problems that arise from the diets they are fed as pets (very often their teeth are removed so they can’t hurt others when they bite, which limits their diets even further.) Depressions, obsessive compulsions, and self-harming arise when primates are torn from their mothers years before they would naturally separate. All of this is done in the pet trade, and your article encouraged this.

Please commit to no longer promote exotic animal ownership, and consider a report on the lifesaving work of accredited primate sanctuaries. We invite you to visit a bona fide, licensed and accredited NAPSA member primate sanctuary so you can learn the truth about captive primates. We will show you where “pets” like those at Valentine Primate Sanctuary ultimately end up.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Erika Fleury'.

Erika Fleury
Program Director