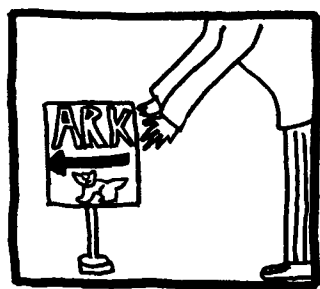




ARK's location in a small farming hamlet in the mountains makes it difficult for first-time visitors to find us once they turn off the main road. Because there are no conspicuous landmarks we can mention when giving directions over the telephone, we have placed signs at all the major turns on the way.

Somebody has been destroying these signs. Although we had put up small signs with arrows indicating the way to ARK before, the number of people visiting us rose dramatically after the Great Hanshin Earthquake, when we took in many animal victims of the disaster. These visitors tended to get lost in the village and often stopped locals for directions, so the village council asked us to put up easily recognizable signboards. In response to this official request, we put up wooden signs at four locations in the village.

One morning soon before the Obon holidays this summer, all four signs were gone:



someone had ripped them out, posts and all. ARK gets especially many volunteers and other visitors during the summer holidays, so the timing was truly unfortunate. We had no choice but to put up new signs, and this time we paid professionals to make heavy-duty signs consisting of acrylic boards on steel posts that were embedded in a concrete base. These signs cost ¥ 10,000 each, and we again got the official permission of the village council to place them along the way to ARK.

Less than three days later, we found the acrylic boards had been broken off, and all that remained were the posts and concrete bases. Vandalism of ARK's signs is not a new phenomenon, actually: this attack was the fifth time such a thing has happened. In the past, we swallowed our anger and simply replaced the signs, but there is a limit to our patience: this time, we notified the police. Considering that the cost of making the signs was paid with money received from membership fees and donations, we could say that all of ARK's supporters are victims of this vandalism as well.

Who would repeatedly do such a mean

EMERGENCY BULLETIN I

Who is Destroying ARK's Signboards ??

and stupid thing, and for what reason? It goes beyond plain mischief, and it would be hard to imagine anyone with no connection to ARK to go to such lengths. All we can imagine is that this is deliberate harassment or an attempt to hinder our activities by someone with a grudge against ARK. Or could it be that someone profits in some way through the destruction of these signs?

Besides such vandalism, there have been poison-pen letters slandering ARK and representative Elizabeth Oliver that were sent to NHK and other media organizations. ARK has obtained copies of these letters, which were predictably puerile in both style and content. They listed a litany of charges against ARK in which facts were deliberately and maliciously distorted or totally disregarded, and took NHK to task for airing a program about ("giving publicity to," to use their term) such an organization. We could have sued for libel or defamation of character, but felt that the time and money required for such a case would be better spent protecting animals. Moreover, we knew that truth is on our side, and that if we continued steadfastly with our activities, we would win in the court of public opinion. Consequently, we decided to ignore these hateful and offensive letters.

In addition, we have reports of malicious rumors regarding ARK being circulated since last year in the Kanto region particularly, and have even heard that someone has recently declared they will destroy ARK. Although we haven't confirmed the rumour, if true it is a serious cause for concern. Several years ago, there actually was a group with that very aim.

It was a fascination with Japanese culture that brought Elizabeth Oliver to Japan from England thirty years ago, but one aspect of Japanese culture for which she was not prepared was the often callous attitude towards animals which she encountered. Unable to turn a blind eye to the tragic state of the many abandoned dogs and cats she found, Oliver began taking them into her care. ARK thus began originally as the individual efforts of one woman, a foreigner who was forced to act by the shameful irresponsibility of Japanese people toward animals. Eventually, with the help of people who supported her aims, ARK was established as the purely volunteer organization it is today. Housed in very modest facilities at first, the organization grew through dedicated efforts and the media attention it received for its prompt animal rescue activities after the

Great Hanshin Earthquake. (It was around this time that the poison-pen letters appeared.) As a result, ARK's name is today widely known.

Why would someone try to obstruct the activities of an organization such as ARK? Such actions bring shame upon the people of Japan (we are reasonably sure the person is Japanese), and injure the country's reputation abroad. When the Consul General of Great Britain visited ARK recently, he asked why there were no signs pointing the way. He was outraged to hear the reason, and promised to bring the matter up formally with the Osaka prefectural police. We at ARK are also investigating the matter ourselves.

If ARK should become unable to operate as a result of some poisonous scheme, what would happen to the animals here? We are not caring for them for fun or profit, or out of self-interest. What we would like more than anything else is to see the day that no animal needs our protection; the sooner organizations like ARK become unnecessary, the better. Looking at Japan today, however, unfortunately this is just a dream. And as long as this is true, **WE CANNOT LET ARK BE DESTROYED!**

As human beings we are not perfect, and we realize that we may be testing the patience and goodwill of our neighbors with the noise and odours of our animals, and in other ways in which we unwittingly cause them annoyance. For this we are profoundly sorry. It is also a fact that we receive complaints regarding the dogs and cats that are brought to the area by heartless people and dumped, because of ARK's presence. We admit there may be faults in how we do things, but nevertheless we take pride in knowing that what we are doing is right. If anyone disagrees, they should voice their grievances through legitimate means. A frank



discussion of the problems is the best way to find solutions, and we would certainly be willing to cooperate in that regard. We can only hope that whoever it is that is harassing ARK will, if they have pride as a Japanese and a conscience as a human being, realize the self-destructiveness of their dastardly and foolish actions, and put a stop to them at once.