

## Q&A with “Thanking the Monkey” Author, Karen Dawn

As Karen Dawn celebrates her new book, “Thanking the Monkey: Rethinking the Way We Treat Animals” and gears up to receive the *Outstanding Activist for Farm Animals Award* at our May 2008 *Gala for Farm Animals*, we caught up with her to chat briefly about the book, her connection with Farm Sanctuary and, of course, vegan fashion!

**Q: What was the inspiration for your new book, “Thanking the Monkey”?**

**A:** Before I became involved in animal rights, I was a party girl, playing the New York downtown music scene as a singer-songwriter. But even once I committed myself to working in the often painful world of animal rights, I refused to part with my sense of joy and good time gusto. One day it hit me that our movement didn't have a book that was kind of like me—serious and passionate about animals, but with a strong sense of fun and fashion and some focus on pop culture. And so now we have “Thanking the Monkey: Rethinking the Way We Treat Animals.”

**Q: What do you hope people will learn after reading the book?**

**A:** Some people who work in animal rights have read advance copies and told me they learned plenty they didn't already know, but the book is aimed more at the general animal loving public—those who might not know what to make of animal rights. I hope when people read the book, they will lose any idea that animal rights is an extreme or unreasonable idea and will be moved as they learn about what is truly extreme and unreasonable: the way human society currently treats animals. The tone of the book is warm and playful and sane, while it sheds light on some of the insanity that our society, and even our tax money, supports—like ongoing nicotine tests on dogs and terminal experiments aimed at curing homosexuality in sheep. I hope people will learn how easy it is to make lifestyle changes that help animals, and that an “all or nothing” view can only be harmful as nobody can do it all.

**Q: How did you first come to know Farm Sanctuary?**

**A:** My first exposure to Farm Sanctuary was through the founders, excellent drinkers, who helped me close down the bar at a D.C. animal rights conference in the early morning hours sometime in the year 2000. But my first visit to Farm Sanctuary is a more serious story. On the morning of September 11, 2001, I had just spent the weekend in New York City and the night in Woodstock. As my partner and I got into the car to head to the Newark Airport and back to Los Angeles, we turned on the radio and learned that we weren't going to be flying anywhere. Gene had invited us to the farm many times, and stuck in upstate New York, we decided to accept his invitation. We drove out to Watkins Glen against traffic that was nothing but police cars heading toward Manhattan. Over the next few days, as the world went into shock, we hung out with the cows, pigs, turkeys, and all the



**In Bookstores May 2008**

by Genesis Awards  
print media consultant  
**KAREN DAWN**

**“I am sick of being ignorant! This book is education with a smile, information with a kiss from a dog who just drank out of a toilet, and should be required reading for all college students.”**  
—Anthony Kiedis, Red Hot Chili Peppers

**“Sensitive and informative...[with] humor throughout. Highly recommended.”**  
—Library Journal

**“Compelling and well-argued, intellectually sound and passionate.”**  
—Paul Haggis,  
Oscar winner and writer-producer-director of *Crash*

**“Succeeds admirably...potential to become a big hit.”**  
—Publishers Weekly (Starred)

**BOOK LAUNCH EVENTS**  
April 28, New York: Peter Max's midtown art studio  
May 4, Los Angeles: Stay tuned to the website for more details

Visit [www.ThankingtheMonkey.com](http://www.ThankingtheMonkey.com) to see the fun, celeb-studded promotional video, to read reviews, for book party information including a list of celebrity guests, and to RSVP.

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beautiful folks at Farm Sanctuary. While America learned that the world isn't always a nice, safe place, it was comforting to be with people in the animal protection movement who already knew that, and had been working for years to try and spread compassion. That trip cemented my close relationship with Farm Sanctuary for life.

**Q: You're always so fashionable...what are you planning to wear to our Gala?**

**A:** Ha ha! I love that you ask that! I make it my personal mission to fight the jeans and Birkenstock activist stereotype—a mission I love because I love fashion! But I don't love waste, so I shop at thrift or consignment stores, taking advantage of socialites in my neighborhood who would never wear anything more than once! While I wouldn't wear the same outfit to every event, I do think I am going to wear my favorite skirt to this one, which I also wore to the *Genesis Awards* in 2000. It's a beautiful, long, red and gothic-looking skirt, which my dearest friend, who has since died, bought for me at the Paddington Markets in Sydney more than 20 years ago. Getting an activism award from Farm Sanctuary is without a doubt the greatest honor I have had so far in my life, so it seems fitting that I wear my favorite skirt, which has loads of sentimental value. Plus, I just slipped it on to check that it still fits, and I am in luck! So it seems perfect for a Farm Sanctuary *Gala*, as it is now a great testament to a good vegan diet!