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FLASH  
PRESS RELEASE  
WILD ANIMAL ORPHANAGE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2009

The Board of Directors of the Wild Animal Orphanage has announced the termination of Ron and Carol Asvestas as employees effective immediately. Carol Asvestas has also been terminated as a member of the Board of Directors. Mrs. Nicole A. Garcia, who has worked with the Wild Animal Orphanage over many years, has been appointed by the board as CEO.

As with all changes, this action is requiring a short transition period. Board members and all dedicated employees are working together to assure that the best possible responsible care is being provided to the animals at the WAO.

The support of all who have participated in assisting the WAO, over the years, is most appreciated. We trust that this support will continue for the animals that we all care deeply about.

More to follow.

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### **LIGHTNING FLASH**



## Changes At Critter Town

Carol Asvestas, President Of San Antonio's Embattled  
WAO  
(Wild Animal Orphanage) Has Resigned Following A  
Lightning Exposé  
Husband Ron Has Been Suspended; Board To  
Reorganize Management  
RG Griffing, SAL Commentary - Copyright 9/30/2009

A secret board meeting at the Wild Animal Orphanage (WAO) has resulted in the resignation of long-time president Carol Asvestas.

Her husband Ron was suspended.

Insiders say the staff has applauded the move, and a turn-around is expected in the care and feeding of the many exotic animals housed at the nonprofit organization.

It also precipitated a nasty incident when Asvestas husband Ron allegedly tried to raid the sanctuary's offices, seeking computers, files and other WAO property.

Police were called. ([Click for SAPD Report.](#))

Asvestas and her husband Ron have vowed legal action to regain their approximate \$100,000 salaries each.

Indeed, Asvestas is no stranger to the Courts. She has sued, and been sued multiple times. Currently she has a libel suit pending against this publication.

Why?

Read on below, from SAL Archives.



HAVE YOU SEEN THE LITTLE PIGGIES...?

## The Tale Of The Lyin' Queen

Wildlife Orphanage Animals Vanishing At An Alarming Rate; Charitable Donations, Too.

SAL Political Snitch - Copyright 12-12-2007

"The Angel of The Animals" is a liar, and we can prove it.

According to public records obtained by the Lightning, and secret recordings of telephone conversations, this writer has come to the unmistakable conclusion that The Wild Animal Orphanage (WAO), run by Carol Asvestas, is scamming donors under the guise of a non-profit sanctuary.

You can judge for yourself.

Asvestas and her husband Ron have been under investigation for financial discrepancies, missing records, and unaccounted for animals -- supposedly under their protection.

Lions, tigers, dogs, cats, pigs and a menagerie of other creatures have vanished.

For background information, see our archives below, listed in reverse order.

\* \* \*

Beginning Monday, the Lightning starts its second series of stories about the WAO and its shady dealings.

It's not the kind of narrative that makes for happy Christmas reading, but it is a tale that needs to be told, and we're gonna tell it!

Stay tuned.

More to follow.

\* \* \*

HE VANISHING ANIMALS

# Jambo Died Under Odd Circumstances

## Tour Guide Says Hepatitis Claimed Movie Star Lion

Animal Orphanage Denies; New  
Mysteries Surface; Suit Vowed

SAL Political Snitch - COPYRIGHTH 2007

(Editor's Note: Many of the sources for this story have asked for anonymity, some citing fear of retaliation and current employment fears as a reason.)

An employee at an area animal sanctuary has said publicly that hepatitis claimed at least one lion; operators of the facility deny that.

But first...

\* \* \*

Following a series of reports in the Lightning, new information has been forthcoming on "irregularities" at Wild Animal Orphanage (WAO) in Bexar County..

Besides State and Federal Investigations now underway, complaints from numerous donors about accountability of animals and donations, new worries have been created by an employees' claim that a male lion, died from hepatitis.

The big cat named Jambo starred in Animal Planet "Growing Up Lion" as the father of the two cubs born at the WAO.

\* \* \*

The following are from eye-witness accounts and a taped video, obtained by the Lightning, of comments made during a tour of the Leslie road facility -- one of two habitats operated by WAO President Carol Asvestas. The other is on Talley road and is unlicensed.

Terry Minchew is listed on the WAO's web page as an "animal care technician..."

On November 4, 2007, a ... team of private citizens took a tour of the Leslie Road facility due to serious concerns of a large number of animals gone missing from the WAO within the last two years.

Sunday, November 4, 2007, after 3:30pm, on a warm day...

According to Ms Minchew, Jambo recently died from hepatitis. Ms Minchew described in detail Jambo's condition before death ...video was taken on the tour..."

While living at the Talley Road property, he (Jambo) looked great... in 2005. Shortly after moving to Leslie Road, it became apparent ...his health was declining.

Jinx (a second lion) and Jambo always lived together at the WAO. Now Jinx is living alone. I am concerned for her well-being because the WAO is bent on "integrating" animals, else they will be euthanized.

\* \* \*

Asvestas and her husband Ron deny that the statement was ever made. They also refused to account for Jambo's fate, or the whereabouts of hundreds of other animals.

Asvestas and her operation are currently under official scrutiny by State and Federal agencies. (See stories below.)

Both Asvestas and her husband have vowed to sue the Lightning. Ron Asvestas did comment that the Lightning "is a rag!"

More to follow.

- Developing -

\* \* \*

ORPHANED ANIMALS VANISHING

## The 90 Pig Mystery

# Secrets Of An Animal Welfare 'Angel' Or Maybe Just Playing Another 'Angle?'

## Investigations Swirl Around Wild Animal Orphanage

SAL Political Snitch - Copyright 2007 By SAL(Editor's Note: Many of the sources for this story have asked for anonymity, some citing fear of retaliation and current employment fears as a reason.)

Where did the little pigs go? More on that later.

But first...

\* \* \*

You've seen her on TV, ministering to the 'orphaned' animals who are abused or abandoned, and it gives you a warm feeling in your heart; but here's some cold water for your brain.

Her name is Carol Asvestas, and for years she has been head of the [Wild Animal Orphanage](#) (WAO) sanctuary. Her husband Ron and other family members are also employed there.

According to numerous sources Asvestas and kin are now under investigation by the Texas Attorney's General office -- initially for funds discrepancies at the charity, and now the USDA is questioning licensing violations.

Other agencies may join in.

\* \* \*

Carol Asvestas has a checkered past.

Locally, in the 90's, she was arrested once for drunk driving and a different case of theft of services was settled with restitution.

The Lightning has learned that Asvestas stunned court clerks when she tried to pay her fine with a check written on a WAO account.

She has been involved in at least three bankruptcy proceedings, according to public records. At least two liens have been levied.

Questions of what happened to pitbulls rescued from a gambling ring remain unanswered. (See story below.)

\* \* \*

Many allegations have been aimed at Asvestas.

According to one donor, approximately 90 potbellied pigs were sent to the compound on the promise that they would receive a new "pig barn" and a life of leisure.

The donor paid \$5,000 to Asvestas and the WAO.

Asvestas tells the Lightning that the barn was built, and then destroyed when the pigs were "relocated." She wouldn't say where they were sent.

Former employees and associates tell stories that indicate "pork" was fed to some of the exotic cats, during the same time frame the pigs vanished. Where the meat came from is part of the mystery.

They also scoff at the notion of a no-kill facility.

"It happens all the time," said one.

\* \* \*

A Motion Of Understanding, prepared by the AG has gone unresolved.

The Better Business Bureau "Wisegiving Seal" has been removed from WAO promotional publications.

The USDA has been ignored on civil fines. The AG will probably catch that squeal, too.

A former attorney for WAO emailed Asvestas and basically told her to stop talking about such matters with the news media.

There is much more hidden in the WAO facilities. And we will tell you!

More to follow.

- Developing -

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FIGHTING DOGS EUTHANIZED

## Were Bexar County Pit Bulls Buried Alive?

90-100 Dogs Killed At Local Animal Sanctuary

SAL Political Snitch -10-29-2007

Almost daily, headlines scream of dog attacks, sport fighting rings, cat maimings and cruelty to animals in general.

Case in point.

The debate over the fate of the many times vicious, sometimes killer dogs -- pit bulls -- is far from over, and likely won't be settled soon; but the animals continue to generate strong feelings on all sides of the issue.

Now, there are new facets to the story that are not known.

Disturbing news.

\* \* \*

On Monday, popular WAOI AM talk show host Joe "Pags" Pagliarulo suggested the extermination of pit bulls, following yet another attack last Friday that injured two little girls.

Those dogs will be euthanized, and their owner has been arrested. ([Click for NEWS 12 report.](#))

The San Antonio animal sanctuary [Wild Animal Orphanage](#) (WAO) here in Bexar County, agrees that many pit bulls should be "put down" for public safety purposes, "especially when children are injured," says Carol Asvestats, president of the organization.

In January 2005, the facility located at Leslie and Talley Road, with the help of the SPCA, quietly killed as many as 90-100 pit bulls housed on the charity's property.

Kathryn Bice, executive director of the Humane Society/SPCA in Bexar County was quoted in the Express-News as saying "older, vicious dogs likely will be euthanized."

But there is a problem.

Accountability.

\* \* \*

The following is based on insider information obtained by the Lightning.

The killings were done in secret, with the aid and finances of the SPCA. It was common knowledge to the WAO's friends and employees that the pit bulls were housed at the Talley Road property, and buried there.

At one point, according to eyewitnesses, husband Ron Asvestas (in charge of back-up animal care) became highly concerned of helicopter traffic flying over the

property -- fearing either the media or the previous owners had received word of the dogs' location.

The choppers were actually photographing an unrelated story.

Carol and Ron had reason to worry, sources tell the Lightning, because while some WAO workers say they were "bullied" into secrecy, it didn't stop the couple from telling friends and others the location of the pit bull remains.

On "Killing Day," one witness reported, the workers responsible for injecting the animals with lethal poison were very upset and depressed by the end of the day.

Barely before the animals' bodies were cold, they were thrown into a pit located on the Talley Road property, the sources say.

In fact, so quickly were they disposed of that several employees whispered that at least some of the animals may have been buried alive.

Asvestas denied that ugly thought in an interview with the Lightning, but then said she wasn't present.

\* \* \*

What were the animals' lives worth?

According to the WAO's 2005 board meeting minutes, the charity put in a request for \$1400 from the SPCA, for the care of these animals while they were temporarily housed at the WAO's property. Carol Asvestas now admits it "may have been" \$5,000.

There are other discrepancies in the financials of the institution.

This is the same property the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality is currently investigating for other animal burial pits.

Oddly, the WAO refuses to provide a list of euthenized animals over the last seven years.

Other problems with the operation have been disclosed to the Lightning.

\* \* \*

It comes down to accountability.

Whether an irresponsible pet owner, or trusted animal protectorate, accountability is required. We will pursue that goal in this series.



All persons and organizations mentioned in this story are offered free space to respond.

\* \* \*

More to follow.

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