



**August, 2011**

## 'Thundershirt' Helps To Calm Dog During Storms

July 30, 2011. DURHAM, N.C. -- When you hear the name Phil Blizzard, big blustery snowstorms might come to mind.

But Blizzard -- a 44-year-old entrepreneur with experience in the auto industry, the dot-com market and local real-estate ventures -- is more interested these days in a different weather phenomenon. Thunderstorms, and the frenzied anxiety they often induce in dogs and some cats, occupy much of Blizzard's thoughts and business plans.

While trying to help his dog, Dosi, better weather her thunderstorm phobia, Blizzard hit upon a simple solution that seemingly calmed the pooch and got him brainstorming. Thundershirt, the company born from that inspiration in 2009, markets its snug-fitting, wraparound doggie shirt as a drug-free solution for canine storm phobia.

The business highlights a widely recognized problem among pet owners: storm and separation anxieties that can inspire dogs, and occasionally cats, to pace, howl, cry, scratch and damage furniture, property and caregivers. As people bring their pets in from the outdoors more and give them an integral role in family life, veterinarians notice an uptick in reports of anxieties.

The loud clap of thunder and the flash of lightning can create distress among pets. Dogs, and some cats, also can have separation anxiety when their owners are away. The symptoms are often the same and can include hiding, urinating, defecating, chewing, panting, drooling, pacing, trying to jump through windows or run away, not eating, shaking, and barking or meowing.

Researchers at N.C. State have been studying separation anxieties and storm phobias among dogs for years. Sherman said cats usually don't show the same levels of anxiety, but that could be because felines express distress differently and people don't pick up on it.

A study commissioned by Blizzard showed that in 1,201 households with nearly 1,960 dogs, nearly 40 percent of people had at least one dog that had exhibited an anxiety issue.

The "Thundershirt" is available at some pet stores and online.

*Source: Anne Blythe, McClatchy Newspapers , <http://tinyurl.com/3cmc659>*

# Surry County Rescue Investigation

*An anonymous complaint of possible neglect led Surry County Animal Control to a non-profit rescue. The owner, Melanie Morrison, told authorities the sick puppies had just been rescued from a shelter, but agreed to surrender 16 of the 23 dogs. Morrison thought the situation was “bad timing” and the dogs, already under veterinary care, could be treated.*

The investigation which led to animal control seizing 23 dogs from the home of Melanie Morrison Wednesday was an unfortunate matter of timing, the dog owner said, and now some of the dogs may be put down. On Wednesday, Surry County Animal Control officials visited Morrison’s home in Mount Airy to follow up on a complaint and ended up calling in extra support to take 23 dogs. They did not take all of Morrison’s dogs. Morrison runs a non-profit organization called Animal Welfare of Surry and frequently takes in what she called sickly, abandoned pets to treat them and find homes for them. She also works to promote spaying and neutering of pets and runs a spay and neuter transport service.

Few details were given Wednesday regarding the specifics of the incident, but a spokesperson for the Surry County Health and Nutrition Center, which oversees animal control, revealed more details Thursday. Spokesperson Thomas Williams reported that animal control visited Morrison’s house Wednesday to follow up on an anonymous complaint of possible neglect, sick animals, and suspected abuse. Williams remarked, “Animal control is about the welfare of pets. When they went in and saw conditions, they felt it necessary to remove the animals.” He said he was told by an officer that the animals seized were “visibly sick,” though he would not specify their living conditions or physical conditions. Williams said, “We’re not out to hurt anyone.” He said the department’s assessment was to take the animals for care.

Morrison said timing played a role in what the animal control officers saw. She said she has paid help in the mornings, and that morning the aid had an early doctor’s appointment before coming in. Because of the helper’s appointment, the dog cages were not cleaned as early as they usually are, but they were cleaned after animal control left. There were also lots of crates and cages on her deck that had just been donated to her, Morrison said.

“I’d guarantee you that there was no neglect,” Morrison said. “These dogs are like family ... I’m disturbed that I’m being penalized for trying to take in a sick animal.”

Williams said he could not say at this point what would happen to the puppies, since that will be based on assessments of the dogs. He did say if some of the dogs have parvo, a highly contagious viral illness, there is not much the department can do. As for animal control euthanizing dogs if they are pit bull or pit bull mix, Williams said it is Surry County Animal Control’s policy not to adopt out pit bulls, though it will try to work with rescue missions if possible to see if they are interested in taking pit bulls. It is also policy that any dog that has a history of biting someone or is suspected of having bitten someone is unadoptable.

The investigation is ongoing, and animal control and the N.C. Department of Agriculture have not yet released reports about the investigation. The department of agriculture was present at Morrison’s house Wednesday, though Williams could not speak to the specifics of the department’s involvement. Morrison does claim to have a kennel license, and those licenses are overseen by the agriculture department. Williams said the district attorney’s office will be contacted to review the case.

Source: Mt. Airy News <http://www.mtairynews.com>

# U of M researchers look to dogs to better understand intricacies of bone cancer

**MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL (July 28, 2011)**—A new University of Minnesota discovery may help bone cancer patients fight their disease more effectively, according to new research published in the September issue of *Bone*. Bone cancer typically affects children; the course and aggressiveness of the disease can vary from patient to patient and is very difficult to predict. Some patients respond remarkably well to conventional therapies.

Their disease shows less aggressive behavior and they can survive for decades without recurrence. Others respond poorly to treatment or their disease comes back rapidly. Often, these patients survive less than five years.

Recently, a team led by Dr. Jaime Modiano, a College of Veterinary Medicine and Masonic Cancer Center expert in comparative medicine, discovered a gene pattern that distinguishes the more severe form of bone cancer from a less aggressive form in dogs. Dogs are the only other species besides humans that develops this disease spontaneously with any frequency.

In fact, dogs are much more likely to develop bone cancer than humans, but according to Modiano – who specializes in the relationship between animal and human disease – human and canine forms of bone cancer are very similar and the gene pattern is an exact match. The discovery of this key differentiating signature may be beneficial in the treatment planning of human bone cancer patients. “Our findings pave the way to develop laboratory tests that can predict the behavior of this tumor in dogs and children at the time of diagnosis,” said Modiano. “This allows us to tailor individualized therapy to meet the patient’s needs.”

## The downstream impact of the findings

University of Minnesota researchers hope to use their findings to develop practical and useful lab tests for humans and for companion animals that will help clinical care providers determine the type of cancer a patient faces, and how aggressive that cancer may be.

Then, depending on which type of cancer a patient has, clinicians could adjust interventions and treatment plans accordingly.

“Patients with less aggressive disease could be treated conservatively, reducing the side effects and the risks associated with treatment, while patients with more aggressive disease could be treated with more intense therapy,” said Modiano.

The study was funded by the National Cancer Institute, the AKC Canine Health Foundation and the Kate Koogler Canine Cancer Fund. *Source: <http://www.ahc.umn.edu/media/releases/bone-cancer/>*



# Activists Rally to Shut Down Davidson County Chamber

Once again, activists have organized to end the use of NC animal shelter gas chambers. The current target is Davidson County Animal Control. In a letter to the Dispatch editor, activist Becky Klass announces anti-chamber advocates will appear before the Davidson County Commissioners on Tuesday, August 9 asking that use of the chamber be ended. Her letter rolls on with the standard anti-chamber campaign misinformation: Convicted murderers and rapists are not even put to death in a gas chamber in North Carolina - Dogs and cats that are gassed suffer an agonizing death as it takes 20 to 25 minutes for the gas to take effect

Despite the fact prisoners were gassed with Hydrogen Cyanide, which was ruled as cruel and unusual punishment, and animal shelter chambers use Carbon Monoxide (CO) which is colorless, odorless, tasteless and causes rapid unconsciousness, activists never tire of making these comparisons.

County Commissioner Cathy Dunn, who is pushing to have the gas chamber removed, [stated in response](#) to a resident's inquiry, "I too agree that this is a horrible way for animals to be put down. I will discuss this matter with the other Commissioners and get their opinion. If there is a way to change this, it should be done, period!"

[The Winston-Salem Journal reports](#) Cathy Dunn said there are more humane forms of euthanasia than carbon monoxide. "All animals deserve a more humane way to be put down if no other options are available. Anyone that has compassion for animals should come forward and push for this to be done in the most humane way possible," Dunn said.

In the same article, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) VP of veterinary outreach, Dr. Lila Miller, stated the use of carbon monoxide or other gases for euthanasia of companion animals such as dogs and cats should no longer be considered acceptable or humane. "The method can be prolonged and unreliable, causes distress and anxiety in animals and cannot be used on all animals," Miller said. "The process requires high equipment maintenance and can be dangerous for staff."

When asked to comment, Sheriff David Grice, whose department oversees the county shelter in Lexington, said the use of gas is the most humane way to euthanize animals. "We are required by law to lethally inject wild animals, kittens or puppies, and sometimes that's problematic because you have to tranquilize the animal before you do it, and to do that, you have to find a vein, and that can be problematic, also," Grice told Journal reporters.

The Davidson County shelter has workers certified in euthanasia by carbon monoxide and injection, and it employs both processes, Grice said. "We certainly do not enjoy euthanizing any animal, and we don't enjoy euthanizing puppies and kittens," Grice said. "We wish they could all be adopted, but we won't argue back and forth. We have based our procedures on what we have observed and the information we've been given from various vets."

In a letter to Commissioners, NCRAOA wrote, "Sheriff Grice and his staff are trained professionals. We urge Davidson County Commissioners to leave performance of animal control duties, including methods of euthanasia, to the discretion of Animal Control."

***Protecting your right to responsibly own and breed animals.***

[Join NCRAOA. See our home page for membership information and application](#)

North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance, Inc. (NCRAOA) is a statewide organization of animal owners and professionals dedicated to animal welfare, responsible animal ownership, and maintaining the rights of responsible citizens to breed and own animals. NCRAOA, a 501(c)3 organization, provides education and information to the public and supports reasonable and humane animal welfare laws. Permission granted to copy and distribute NCRAOA News and Views in its entirety as is.

*“To ensure the most humane euthanasia for a broad variety of animals as well as safe environment for animal shelter personnel, we should insist that all acceptable types of euthanasia be performed in accordance with the AVMA guidelines on euthanasia.”*

*“One must recognize that there is a great difference between euthanizing a beloved pet in a quiet room with people the pet knows and trusts and euthanizing animals that are feral or poorly socialized or that have lived with limited handling. There is also a big difference between highly trained doctors euthanizing individual pets and euthanizing large numbers of animals at one time, often with limited personnel who may also have limited training. These differences create many challenges that must be overcome if humane euthanasia is to be accomplished.”*

*“Today, the method of euthanasia in animal shelters across the United States has become quite controversial, and much of the rhetoric has an agenda to severely limit the method of euthanasia to lethal injection. Sadly, most proponents of this agenda perceive each animal sitting quietly while it receives an intravenous injection. This kind of thinking is quite naïve and will ultimately result in many animals dying with greater stress.”*

*Robert J. Neunzig, DVM, DABVP (Canine/Feline)  
Compendium Editorial Board Member  
The Pet Hospital Bessemer City, NC*

## North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance



an animal welfare organization

*North Carolina's leading  
voice for responsible  
animal ownership*

### Our Mission:

- Educate the public and provide resources and information about animal care and training
- Identify areas of need and assist communities and individuals in reaching sensible solutions to animal issues
- Support reasonable and humane animal welfare laws
- Oppose groups and those individuals that would restrict the rights of responsible animal owners.

NCRAOA  
PO Box 455, Stem NC 27581  
www.ncraoa.com ■ ncraoa@yahoo.com

# Understanding Shelter Euthanasia

A public service message from  
North Carolina Responsible Animal  
Owners Alliance (NCRAOA)



# Separating . .

# Fact from . .

# Fiction

## **Gas is pumped in and the animals die slowly and painfully of suffocation.**

FACT. They do not suffocate, they do not cry out "in pain". What they do is quickly lapse into unconsciousness as they do with sodium pentobarbital. Carbon monoxide is odorless and tasteless; in a properly designed chamber it results in unconsciousness in less than 12 seconds. There is no sensation of "gasping" for their last breath. Carbon monoxide binds with the hemoglobin on the red blood cells preventing transportation of oxygen to the brain and carbon dioxide away from the brain cells.

From the AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia: "Advantages-

- (1) Carbon monoxide induces loss of consciousness without pain and with minimal discernible discomfort.
- (2) Hypoxemia induced by CO is insidious, so that the animal appears to be unaware.
- (3) Death occurs rapidly if concentrations of 4 to 6% are used.

## **NC is one of only a small number of states in the US that still gasses dogs.**

FACT. Only 17 states have passed legislation eliminating use of the gas chamber for euthanasia and requiring injection only. Carbon monoxide chambers are routinely used in shelters throughout the country.

## **Animals panic and try to claw their way out. They cry and howl.**

FACT. Vocalization is not necessarily synonymous with pain. According to the AVMA guidelines on euthanasia as well as texts on anesthesia, once an animal is unconscious, it feels no pain. This is an important point because with carbon monoxide as well as lethal injection euthanasia, animals often vocalize even though they are unconscious. For the untrained person, this can be very disturbing.

## **Gas chambers are considered cruel and unusual punishment for people and should not be used for animals either.**

FACT. The gas is not the same. Potassium cyanide (KCN) pellets with a quantity of concentrated sulfuric acid ( $H_2SO_4$ ) generates the lethal gas, hydrogen cyanide (HCN), which is used in gas chambers for capital punishment.

## **Shelter workers are at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning.**

FACT. Units can and should be inspected and air quality can be monitored to prevent unnecessary exposure. According to the EPA, no standards for CO have been agreed upon for indoor air. Even in our homes, average levels without gas stoves vary from 0.5 to 5 parts per million (ppm). Levels near poorly adjusted stoves may be 30 ppm or higher.

## **Euthanasia by injection is painless and far more humane.**

FACT. A false assumption is that injection is painless. Needles hurt. Most activists think of cats and dogs in comparison to their beloved pets. These are NOT what make up the majority of animals euthanized. Most of the animals have little to no training or socialization, or are aggressive by nature, or are feral with no desire to be even close to, let alone handled by, any human. This often requires other control devices such as squeeze cages, gloves, catch poles, nets, dart guns, injectable sedatives to be administered just so the animal can be restrained for the lethal material to be administered. The level of anxiety and emotional stress for an animal fearful of being handled is actually much greater during the injection process than if the animal were calmly walked into a chamber.

## **All methods of euthanasia must be performed properly.**

True. Euthanasia is in itself an unfortunate necessity. The methods of euthanasia, carbon monoxide, sodium pentobarbital, and gunshot in the field, are all accepted by the scientific community as humane, and are humane when properly applied. No method is more humane than another, especially in all situations. The goal must be to require proper training and inspection. Science, not human emotion, should determine how to bring a humane end to these unwanted animals.