

THE LUBBOCK “BAT” INCIDENT!
Articles and commentary complied by
JUST “H.I.T.-I.T.” OF THE SOUTH PLAINS

Catch, release of bat without tests leaves family in rabies limbo

(From the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal)

BETH AARON

A family is taking a series of rabies shots after finding a bat in their Lubbock County home, though they don't know if the bat had rabies or bit anyone.

Sam Stewart, 32, said he, his wife, Monica, and their three young children began a series of five shots on Tuesday as a precaution against the fatal virus.

"We're upset," he said. "Chances are the bat didn't bite any of us, but that's not a chance I'm going to take."

At about 4 a.m. Sunday, Stewart said his wife alerted him to a bat in their bedroom. He said his wife told him she felt something swoop across her head as she was lying in bed with their 5-month-old child.

Stewart said he hit the Mexican free-tailed bat with a broom and knocked it to the floor. He carried it to the garage and put it under a bucket. The next morning, Stewart said he called the South Plains Wildlife Center, which released the bat without testing it.

Wildlife center Manager Gail Barnes removed the bat and a few more Stewart had in his attic.

Stewart said Barnes told him and his family that the bat was injured and would never fly again. He said she never mentioned the bat should be tested for rabies or the family should speak to a doctor.

Barnes said later the family never told her they feared they had come into contact with the bat.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is rare for humans to contract rabies from infected bats, but there are certain situations in which one should seek medical advice even in the absence of an obvious bite wound.

For example, if one awakens to find a bat in his room, sees a bat in the room of an unattended child or sees a bat near a mentally impaired or intoxicated person, it is best to seek medical advice and have the bat tested, according to the CDC. Bats have small teeth that may leave marks that are not easily seen.

However, any bat that is active by day, is found in a place where bats are not usually seen - for example, in a room in a home or on the lawn - or is unable to fly, is far more likely than others to be rabid, according to the CDC.

Stewart said he was worried his 2-year-old, 4-year-old and 5-month-old children could have been bitten by the bat, as their bedroom doors were open when the animal was found inside the house.

Under the recommendation of the Texas Department of State Health Services, Stewart said he called Barnes to ask her where the bat was so that it could be tested for rabies.

When The Avalanche-Journal asked Barnes about the bat, she released this statement:

"I was called out to their home on Sunday afternoon to pick up a bat. The bat was in a five-gallon open bucket sitting in the garage with the garage door open. Per our organization's policy and procedures, I inquired if there was any human contact. I was told there was none and the bats were released. If there had been human contact I would have followed the state guidelines for rabies vectors."

She had no further comment.

According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, if a person capturing a bat is certain no contact between the bat and a person or domestic animal has occurred, they are to take the bat outside in a container and release it.

But Stewart said he wished the bat would have been tested so that maybe, if the bat was not infected, he and his family would not have to undergo treatment for rabies.

Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals, according to the CDC. Rabies can be confirmed in a laboratory by testing brain tissue after the animal is dead.

The only animal that tested positive for rabies last year in Lubbock County was a bat, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

To comment on this story:

beth.aaron@lubbockonline.com 766-8713

shelly.gonzales@lubbockonline.com 766-8747

This story first appeared on [LubbockOnline.com](http://www.lubbockonline.com) at 5:25 p.m. Tuesday.

Click here to return to story:

http://www.lubbockonline.com/stories/101707/loc_101707034.shtml

THE "BATS" ARE FLYING, BUT THIS TIME IT IS NOT THE WESTERN ALL STARS!!

Comments and views from
JUST "H.I.T.-I.T"* OF THE SOUTH PLAINS
(Having Important Truth In Time)
(A recent article in the Lubbock A-J and Television coverage
from KLBK-13 and KAMC-28 in Lubbock reported on this)

Controversy has arisen in Lubbock ,TX. since Monica Stewart awoke to a sound in her room which turned out to be a Bat- of the flying mammal variety. Her six month old son was asleep in the room and her 2 year old daughter and 4 year old son were in an adjacent room with their door open.

As any normal Mother would probably do, she had husband disable the Bat with a broom and put it in a container while she protected the children.

A closer examination at daylight found additional Bats in the Attic of their home. Not knowing what else to do, they contacted The South Plains Wildlife Rehab Center in Lubbock for assistance.

They were referred to Gail Barnes, Assistant Director of the center and a State and federally licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Gail was summoned to their home that day where she took the Bats into her custody. The Stewarts informed her that the injured Bat had been struck with a broom while in their bedroom. According to the Stewarts, she chided them for “taking to the Bat with a broom” and informed them the Bat was injured and “would probably never fly again!”

That was the end of her “Bat Education” given to them, according to the Stewarts.

The Lubbock County Health Department was notified by a third party of the Bat invasion in to the home. The Department contacted the Stewart and told them they needed to produce the Bat for rabies testing. According to the Stewart’s when they contacted Gail Barnes, requesting that she “give up the Bat for testing” she refused.

Gail Barnes’ own web site, sheds light on why she may have refused. http://www.batworld.org/batworld_centers/southplainsabout.html , (click on “Bat Problems”, then click “Rabies”) Her web site had this to say this about finding a Bat in your home:

“a bat bite can be superficial and not easily noticed. Bats have small teeth which may leave marks that are not easily seen, so there are situations in which you should seek medical advice even in the absence of an obvious bite wound. For example, if you awaken and find a bat in your room, see a bat in the room of an unattended child, or see a bat near a mentally impaired or intoxicated person, seek medical advice and have the bat tested.” (my highlighting)

Gail Barnes failure to “give up the Bat” caused this family an undue measure of anxiety and it possibly could have prevented the entire family from have to seek Rabies treatment. A real trauma, especially for the children. (the following was posted on Gail Barnes web site, we can only assume it expresses her view:

“Frightening stories about rabies are good for supporting a highly profitable rabies control business, and easy fodder for the media,...”

When Gail Barnes was contacted by the Lubbock County Sheriff’s Department and asked to turn over the Bat, it is reported that she said she released it into the wild. (A miracle on 148th ST? A bat who just hours before “would probably never fly again” has now been released back into the wild?)

It was the Health Department that instructed the Stewart’s to have the Bat tested, but even that had no sway on Gail Barnes. This is what her web site had to say about “Health Officials”:

“Over-the-top warnings made by a health officials who are ignorant of the facts also lead to increase risks of human/bat contact.”

Also posted on Gil Barnes, web site:

“If your local health department insists on using scare tactics about bats, please contact your state legislators and other officials who determine the funding of public health issues and voice your concerns. In these days of rapidly diminishing healthcare funds, taking money away from scare-mongering officials could free up the dollars needed for more crucial research.”

To us here at “H.I.T.-I.T.” , this seems like this could be construed a threat to the Lubbock County Health Department to stay out of any Bat encounters. What do you think?

It appears to “H.I.T.-I.T.” that Gail Barnes and perhaps The South Plains Wild Life Rehab, by their direct association with her as their Assistant Director, might be more concerned about the health and safety of a Bat than they are for the well being of a family.

We at H.I.T.-I.T. think Gail Barnes should “step up to the plate” and deliver the Bat or provide “proof” of the miracle of healing that we can submit to that the Pope and perhaps have her “Sainted” as a miracle worker. (Sister Bat, perhaps?)

What do you think?

WE AT “H.I.T.-I.T.” ALSO WONDER IF THE LOCAL NEW MEDIA, WHICH INITIALLY COVERED THIS STORY, RECOGNIZES THE POTENTIAL DANGER TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH THE ACTIONS OF GAIL BARNES AND SOUTH PLAIN WILDLIFE REHAB MAY POSE TO THE SOUTH PLAINS IF THEY CONTINUE THESE TYPES OF ALLEGED ACTIONS.

If you are concerned about the alleged actions of either Gail Barnes or the South Plains Wildlife Rehab Center may contact Carol Lee, Director of the South Plains Wild Life Rehab Center at:
* 806-745-8120 home, 806-799-2142 at the center.

You may voice your opinion to Gail Barnes at:
*806-799-2142 (24 hours), 806-535-4220 cell, or 806-863-3217 home.

*These phone numbers were as obtained by “H.I.T.-I.T” as Public Records from the Texas Parks and Wildlife website /license division.

You may submit your opinion to “JUST H.I.T.-I.T.” of the South Plains by e-mail: just_hit_it1@hotmail.com

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IS TRUTH A MULTIPLE CHOICE ISSUE?

All we are after here at “JUST “H.I.T.-I.T.” **IS THE TRUTH.**
The truth now seems to be almost like a multiple choice quiz. Here is our take on various statements taken from individuals involved in the “Bat Incident” (**Our take in red**)

From the official sheriff’s report: (Deputy Rodney Stephens)
“...upon contact with Gail, she advised that I needed to contact Karen, because Karen checked the Bat and then advised Gail to release it back to the wild” Did Gail tell this to the Deputy-**Yes, we believe the deputy.**
Is what Gail said true? **No, we dot not believe Gail.** Compare with the following and Make up your own mind.

Also from the same sheriff's report: Deputy Stephens—"...I made contact with Karen. She advised she had talked to Gail about the Bat, but that she NEVER (our caps) said the bat did not have Rabies or did not advise Gail to release the Bat." Did Karen tell this to the Deputy? **Yes, we believe the Deputy.**

Is what Karen said true? **Yes, we believe Karen.**

From Karen by e-mail: "Gail Barnes no longer has the Bat's in her custody" **Do we believe Karen believes this, YES, but she is basing this statement on on what Gail told her. (Can she trust Gail, we don't think so.) However, she is also basing this statement on what Carol Lee, director of the South Plains Wildlife Rehab Center said.**

"The director of the wildlife center, Carol Lee, is someone I do trust, and she has confirmed that they are indeed gone". Can Karen trust Carol Lee? **We think yes, at this point Carol has done nothing we know of to show her self untrustworthy. HOWEVER, Gail had the bats, not Carol. The real question on this point is can Carol trust Gail? We do not believe that Gail has proven herself trust worthy. We issue a word of warning to Carol: Be careful about staking your fine community reputation on the back of questionable credibility of Gail Barnes.**

Our question to Carol: Did you personally observe the Bats being returned to the wild prior to Gail having talked with the Sheriff Deputy? **If not, then your personal reputation and integrity in this matter is indeed on the shaky ground of Gail Barnes credibility. Are you willing to stand on that ground?**

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**Update and important info concerning
'The Lubbock Bat Incident'**

**'ASK THE STATE NOT TO RENEW GAIL BARNES WILD
LIFE REHAB PERMIT!'**

We at JUST 'H.I.T.-I.T.' have received some important information the that the Texas Dept. of Parks and Wildlife would like for citizens to have concerning Human-Bat encounters. This information would have been helpful to the Stewart family if they had just known it. If they had know it they never would have contacted The South Plains Wildlife Rehab Center and the now 'infamous' Gail Barnes would never have been in the picture, the Bat would have been tested and at least the family would have known for sure what the situation was concerning the Bat's rabies status. Because we believe it is imperative that

you Have Important Truth In Time we are attaching the PDF files that contain those articles.

Please Pass this info on to anyone you care about, it could spare them the trauma the Stewarts have had to endure.

Our research and conversations with staff at the TPWD have confirmed that this is information anyone holding a Wild Life Rehab Permit should have been very familiar with and according to the TPWD, they should have passed this info on to the Stewart family. **OUR BIG QUESTION HERE IS- 'DID GAIL BARNES NOT KNOW IT OR DID SHE JUST CHOOSE TO NOT SHARE IT?' EITHER WAY WE BELIEVE SHE SHOULD NOT BE ENTITLED TO HAVE THE WILDLIFE REHAB PERMIT. BECAUSE WE BELIEVE HER ACTING IN THE CAPACITY OF A PERMITTED WILD LIFE REHAB INDIVIDUAL WOULD PUT FAMILIES ACROSS THE SOUTH PLAIN AT RISK FOR THEIR HEALTH AND SAFETY.**

WE ARE ASKING YOU TO HELP US PROTECT THE RESIDENT OF THE SOUTH PLAINS BY ASKING THE STATE NOT TO RENEW THE PERMIT FOR GAIL BARNES WHEN IT COMES UP FOR RENEWAL IN DECEMBER!!

Here is how you can help:

You may write the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept (TPWD) and voice your concern about Gail Barnes Wildlife Rehab Permit to be renewed in Dec. 2007. Express your concerns about her actions involving the Stewart Family and the questionable statements she made to law enforcement officials working on this situation.

Be specific in asking the State NOT To RENEW her permit.

Be sure to include your name, address, and phone number. You may mail the letter to:

TPWD
Wildlife Permits Section
4200 Smith School Rd
Austin, Texas 78744

Or you may e-mail it to us at: thetimefortruth@hotmail.com and we will print it out and mail them to the TPWD.

We at JUST 'H.I.T.-I.T.' OF THE SOUTH PLAINS
Thank You and we welcome your comments on this issue.
e-mail you comments to: just_hit_it1@hotmail.com