

---Broken Arrow Ledger---

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Wolves at Broken Arrow sanctuary poisoned

By: Bob Bethell 10/27/2006

Lori Ensign looks like she's lost a family member. She has.

Wednesday, the proprietor of Safari's Sanctuary, 26881 E. 58th St., sorrowfully witnessed the euthanasia of one of the zoo's star animals - "Raven," a black British Columbian wolf.

Raven wasn't afflicted by old age or disease - she ate poisoned meat tossed in her pen last week after hours.

She was in excruciating pain before two Tulsa veterinarians ended her suffering.

"Everything medically that that could be done for Raven was done," Ensign told the Daily Ledger.

"Doctors Dan Danner and Melinda Luper spend the whole weekend with her giving blood transfusions, pain meds, i.v.'s - everything she needed to make her as comfortable as possible. However, her kidneys and liver began to fail."

The attending veterinarian told Ensign Raven would not recover, and her time had come.

"Our staff held her, whispered in her ear, cried on her, rubbed her paws and ears where she always liked," Ensign said.

"I held her face as she began to go to sleep. I thought our touches on her were for her benefit. She was so strong and loving that right when she started to go, she kissed me on the hand as if she were consoling me.

"That was the most remarkable, saddest moment of my life."
Earlier this month, another Safari wolf, Lobo, was similarly killed.

"We were horrified by that poisoning," Ensign said.

"She was our sweetest wolf ever. Upon her death the realization that someone could be so evil, cruel and inhumane has plagued my mind.

"I thought things like that were left to the creative minds of people like Stephen King and that it couldn't happen in real life in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma."

Another stricken animal, Sasha, a male grey wolf, survived a poisoning and was returned to Safari's recently.

"He has not fully recovered and behaves as if he had consumed alcohol," Ensign said.

Safari's has increased its security with additional lighting, patrols and a loaned television system, she said.

"We can't afford to buy the monitoring instruments yet and we are grateful to Solutions Box Inc. for the loan and free setup."

Ensign said her wolves are generally donated pets and pose no threat to people or livestock.

"Wolves have received bad raps since Little Red Riding Hood. In the wild they are instinctively

shy and stay away from humans."

Cruelty to animals is a felony offense, and Wagoner County law officers are apparently making progress tracking the suspect, according to Ensign

Safari's veterinarians are offering a reward of \$900, "and that amount is still growing," a staff member indicated Friday.

Anyone with information about the poisonings should contact the sheriff's office at 485-3124.

Safari Sanctuary's number is 357-LOVE.

"Never underestimate an animal," Ensign said.

"I believe they are so superior to us. We are just too into ourselves to notice it."