

PET PALACE

people & their pets

Look out for the Arab Times series, the Pet Palace, and read about how people and their animals enrich each other's lives.

The Palace welcomes submissions by our readers. If you'd like to tell the world about your pet, send us a photograph and accompanying article for publication.

— Editor



In this May 23, 2014 file photo, Camry, a golden retriever-Labrador mix, lies in the jury box at the Marion County Family Court in Marion, Ohio. (AP)

HARTFORD, Conn, April 9, (AP): As dogs and other animals are increasingly used in courts to comfort and calm prosecution witnesses, a few voices are calling for keeping the practice on a short leash, saying they could bias juries.

The use of dogs in courts has spread quickly across the US amid a growing number of laws and rulings in its favor — and, outside of the legal world, a significant increase in the use of emotional support animals by the public.

There are now more than 155 “court-house facility dogs” working in 35 states, compared with 41 dogs in 19 states five years ago, according to the Courthouse Dogs Foundation in Bellevue, Washington. And that’s not counting an untold number of “emotional support dogs” that have been allowed case by case in many states. Many witnesses have been child sexual assault victims.

There has been a divide among judges, however, with some not allowing dogs because of potential bias against defendants. And many defense lawyers don’t like the practice.

Having dogs and other emotional support animals in the witness box can illegitimately boost witness credibility

and prejudice juries against defendants, Denver defense lawyer Christopher Decker argues. He has unsuccessfully fought the use of dogs in criminal trials several times.

“I think it distracts the jurors from what their job is, which is to determine the truthfulness of the testimony,” Decker said. “It tends to imply or infer that there has been some victimization. It tends to engender sympathy. It’s highly prejudicial.”

Facility dogs are trained to provide companionship without disruption in courthouses, prosecutors’ offices and other legal settings. They work at courthouses all day, then go home with their handlers. Emotional support and “therapy” dogs are pets that can be registered with organizations and may or may not have been specially trained.

Proponents say dogs help reduce the anxiety of traumatized victims, especially children, so they can overcome the stress of telling their stories in a deposition room or courtroom.

“We need to address how traumatizing it is for children to go through this process,” said Ellen O’Neill-Stephens, a former prosecutor who founded the Courthouse Dogs Foundation. “The whole point for

me is I want to make it easier for people to engage in this process without suffering additional emotional trauma.”

At least eight states have laws allowing the use of dogs to comfort children and other vulnerable witnesses. Similar proposed laws are pending in at least another four states, while court rulings in a handful of states have set precedents allowing the use of emotional support dogs.

Ivy Jacobsen, of Lake Stevens, Washington, said three facility dogs helped her get through the three trials it took before her father was convicted of sexually assaulting her when she was a teenager. After two hung juries, he was convicted at the third trial and sentenced to 16 years in prison in 2013.

The judge in Jacobsen’s case did not allow a dog to accompany her on the witness stand during the trials because of objections by the defense. The animals helped her outside the courtroom, she said, during private questioning by defense lawyers, counseling sessions and in courtroom hallways after proceedings.

“It made it easier to talk knowing he was there,” said Jacobsen, now 23 and a police officer, referring to one of the dogs that helped her during a tense deposition.

Kuwait



Aerial view of Kuwait City (Amani Bamiifath — KUNA)

New Look

Exemplary mother very active in community service

Sheikha Intisar launches Alnowair to spread positive thinking in Kuwait

This is the third and last in a series of articles on HH Sheikha Intisar Salem Al Ali Al Sabah, a young dynamic lady of the royal family.

— Editor

By Lidia Qattan

Special to the Arab Times

We human are made of feelings; the more sensitive among us are forever in search of their counterpart, that inner consciousness that transports the individual into a dimension in which the manifestation of essential life is presented. That mystery, that nameless feeling that trends through our breast stemming from the abyssal depth of our inner self, is then brought vividly to consciousness as a mysterious entity that seems more truly permanent and real.

It is this substance, this psychic energy that keeps us alive in harmony with our inner self and nature. We all can use it in keeping ourselves healthy and fit; for, the mind is not confined to a body, it is a universal entity whose power is unlimited. A glimpse of such an entity can change our life forever.

The enlightened ones, individuals who had been searching for the ultimate truth, have been touched by such an entity, it came to them in sudden flashes of visions shining through in the form of an ecstasy. Though such visions only last a fraction of a second, they set ablaze a new consciousness that transformed their belief and behavior. Such individuals became the bearers of a truth, which the rest of humanity could only accept on belief, as nowadays we accept the New Age lexicon of pseudo-science and pseudo-mysticism.

Incidentally, the interacting matrix of our individual genetic constitution holds instructions for our organism to be many different things; such a possibility has been causing a sensation in scientific circles all around the world flaring the imagination of researchers, giving rise to myriad speculations and theories, some resulting in the birth of new-age pseudo-sciences dealing with the energy field.

All living things have an aura, an energy field surrounding them; such energy can be detected through special instruments, but people in close contact with nature

or more sensitive than others to their surrounding can readily detect it and make use of it through practice and discipline.

Healers are among such individuals; they can pinpoint the cause of disease in a patient and affect a cure through reestablishing the healthy equilibrium of the body’s energy field.

Transform

Sheikha Intisar became interested in those pseudo-sciences that have the power to transform people’s life through alleviating emotional stress, which is often the main cause of illnesses. Eager to improve her own life and the life of those around her, for more than twenty five years to the day she has been gaining experience through training



Lidia Qattan

and courses in how to release the psychic energy for useful ends in creating a better world for herself and her surroundings. Indeed her positive energy is affecting eve-

ryone working with her or meeting her; for everyone needs some boost in life.

Indeed healthy mindedness and positive spirituality is needed in this man-made world in which growing stress caused by economical and political upheavals is threatening the very survival of the human species. Healthy mindedness and positive spirituality is needed in Kuwait to help the people who are going through the lingering trauma caused by the sudden Iraqi invasion during which many were abroad and more than a half a million were inside bearing all sort of abuses at the hand of the invaders.

Many suffered the loss of their loved ones during the invasion; others worrying about their POWs detained in Iraq, having no knowledge of their whereabouts or if they were dead or alive suffered unmitigated anguish and tension that lasted more than a decade, till finally their remains were identified through their DNA in 2003 in mass graves near Baghdad.

On the 20th of March 2013 Sheikha Intisar launched Alnowair campaign scheduled to last for a minimum of five years. Her aim of



Sheikha Intisar

this campaign, which incidentally is her greatest contribution to her beloved country, is to promote and spread positive thinking in Kuwait through a variety of activities, using scientific research from such prestigious institutions as the Harvard and Berkeley Universities and from other prominent positive psychology luminaries, besides being member of the Kuwaiti Chapter of Human Rights Watch (HRW).

One thing leads on to another; Sheikha Intisar’s interest on the benefit derived through the imple-

mentation of new pseudo-sciences led her to the idea of founding a special Spa for the benefit of body and mind. Needing special natural beauty products which she could not find in the market, in 2013 she decided to establish her own company in partnership with her daughter, Sheikha Fatima for producing those products. Their search led to a British chemist who could make them according to specification; after scrutiny and testing the first natural beauty product were launched in September 2014.

Besides being an exemplary young mother, whose daughters have become her best friends, Sheikha Intisar is a very busy career lady, but she is also very active in community service concentrated on volunteers and in children’s cultural organizations.

Currently she is part of the executive committee of both the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) and of Bayt Abdullah Children’s Care Hospice (BACCH), besides being member of the Kuwaiti Chapter of Human Rights Watch (HRW).

Concluded