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Due to the cost of publishing CFAAR News we will send future issues of MEMBERS ONLY! Ensure that you continue to receive yours by filling out and returning the membership form on the last page!

CFAAR: Who We Are

CFAAR is a nonprofit educational organization which formed originally in 1988 on the University of California-Berkeley campus. The organization was formed in response to activities which were attempting to discredit animal research and animal researchers. Several local CFAAR chapters have since sprung up across the country. These groups share the following objectives:

- 1) To organize students, faculty and staff at institutions in Arizona in which animal research is performed so effective letter writing campaigns can be initiated quickly.
- 2) To educate the public in general and the campus in particular about the true nature of animal research and animal researchers.
- 3) To support responsible and humane use of animals in biomedical research.

The first of these objectives will be the primary function of the group. As legislation is introduced that affects animal research, we need to respond so our representatives know exactly how we, the people, want them to vote. Accordingly, through our newsletter, we will help inform you about legislation and other "happenings" concerning attacks on animal research. Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for you to contact your representatives in Washington D.C. The key to the effectiveness of this organization is you! We need your willingness to write an occasional letter, perhaps talk with a school

group and, of course, give a few dollars to cover the cost of printing the newsletter.

If you wish to join the Arizona Chapter of CFAAR and want to continue to receive the Newsletter, fill out the application for membership on the back page. Please include a voluntary contribution.

Pre-Employment Screening Offers An Ounce of Prevention

By Edward L. Lee II

Colleagues, let's get serious for a moment. Our jobs involve the management of resources. Laboratory animals and people are our most important resources, and their care must have our paramount attention.

A fundamental step toward managing resources properly involves hiring the right people. The following article, which is Part I of a two-part series, addresses the importance of a well-thought-out, pre-employment screening process. Such a process will help your institution hire the right people and, thus, alleviate problems down the road.

Animal Right Threats and Pre-Employment Screening

In his testimony before public hearings of the House committee on Agriculture in Washington on February 28, 1990, Assistant Chief of Police Harry Hueston II of the University of Arizona at Tucson stressed, "There is strong indication that these groups (animal rights groups) have infiltrated the

research area. There is a need to have in-depth background investigations of all applicants and personnel working in animal research areas. The purpose of these background investigations is to screen animal rights activists from being employed and to alert the employer of the presence of animal rights activists in their research facility . . . By screening potential employees, this may curtail the infiltration these groups have used in past attacks."

Informal studies have revealed that the majority of research laboratory break-ins involve inside help, such as sympathetic employees leaving a door open or informing the group how to circumvent an existing security device or barrier. In addition, as violent animal rights groups gain steam and expand their targets to virtually any company or organization who, in their view, may not be handling or using animals properly -- fur shops, specialty stores selling leather goods, universities, and breeders, to name a few -- it is logical that infiltration of companies and government agencies will increase.

Unfortunately, many organizations who are targeted by animal rights groups may have no available expertise in risk or cost-benefit analysis. That is, they may be more inclined to spend \$100,000 on an intrusion system rather than \$5,000 to \$10,000 on in-depth inquiries on new and current employees, good exterior doors and locks, and hidden, closed-circuit television cameras that will film the crime if a break-in does occur. Without these kinds of preventative steps, it does not matter how sophisticated a security system a building has. If an infiltrator exists, no level of sophisticated gadgetry will prevent a break-in.

Unfortunately, up until 1988, among other pre-employment screening options, the polygraph, or lie detector, could be used to screen new employees. While the polygraph industry had many competent, professional examiners, lack of self-policing resulted in far

too many documented cases of abuse. As a result, the U.S. Congress enacted the Employee Polygraph Protection Act of 1988, which bars all companies, except for pharmaceutical and security firms, from requiring or asking prospective employees to take a polygraph test.

While some facilities actually used the polygraph as a pre-employment screening tool prior to the new law, its loss may not seem so devastating when considered against the fact that most U.S. companies do virtually nothing to check on the backgrounds of new employees. A cursory poll of a number of possible animal rights targets revealed that few employers conduct proper inquiries, and many that do so do not know how to ask the right questions.

Although many human resource managers think that a call to the previous employer is sufficient, they do not realize that few former employers will provide derogatory information over the phone to a person they do not know, much less provide any clue as to whether the person is involved with animal rights groups.

In view of this, what options do employers have in screening potential employees? Actually, there are several options, all of which have varying levels of effectiveness. But before considering them, it is vital for all facilities to have a written policy concerning its pre-employment screening philosophy which is applied to all applicants equally and fairly.

Having seen the vital necessity for an effective pre-employment screening program in organizations involved in medical research, let's review the most commonly used screening methods and the advantages of each.

Reviewing the Employment Application:

The cost of reviewing applications is negligible, but because of the possibility of deception on resumes and applications,

simply reviewing an application reveals very little unless the information is verified.

Polygraph: As discussed earlier, this option is unavailable to most organizations targeted by animal rights groups. Only pharmaceutical and security organizations may use the polygraph for pre-employment screening.

Pencil and Paper Tests: Since the publicity over the elimination of the polygraph as a screening tool, so-called "honesty" tests have become popular and faddish. The biggest disadvantage of such tests is that they cannot verify facts (e.g., the existence of a criminal record, particularly if the person was arrested during an animal rights demonstration.)

Records Verification: Many businesses choose to examine records as an initial step in checking a prospective employee's background. A series of record checks often is used to serve as a determining step as to whether further investigation is warranted. For example, with the Animal Liberation Front operating nationwide, an applicant who has moved around a great deal, is new to the area, or offers scant details about his background should be valid reasons to conduct a thorough inquiry. Note: Some companies believe that they can keep costs down by having the applicants obtain their own police checks from local jurisdictions, but there are potential hazards in doing this. This practice can invite fraud by individuals who actually have criminal records. Also, in some states, including Maryland, state law prohibits companies from compelling an applicant to obtain data that may have an adverse effect on him.

Field Investigation: Ideally, all employees of an organization that might be targeted by animal rights groups should be investigated. This involves an experienced investigator actually speaking face-to-face with former

supervisors, references, neighbors, and developed sources whose names the applicant has not provided.

Personal Interview: In the author's experience, the personal interview is the most important, most revealing, and least expensive part of a pre-employment screening program, if conducted by a professional investigator. Such an interview, when conducted in a professional setting -- a small conference room, for example -- accomplishes many objectives:

- It permits the investigator to explain the organization's policy regarding pre-employment screening.
- It permits the candidate to be asked whether he or she has ever been convicted of a crime, and, if so, the circumstances.
- By using various investigative techniques, a trained investigator can determine the applicant's attitudes toward animal rights issues.
- The information on the employment application can be verified, helping to improve the accuracy of record traces and any required field investigation.
- The interview can help determine reasons for periods of unexplained unemployment.
- This meeting can be used to obtain legal releases giving the organization the applicant's written authorization to conduct an investigation.
- The interview offers the opportunity to identify any behavioral issues observed during the interview which may be of value to the human resources department which may warrant further inquiry.

Can an Organization Investigate its Own Employees?

Quite often, organizations raise the question of whether they can conduct their own investigations of new employees. And while it

may be less expensive for a facility to conduct its own investigations, there are some possible pitfalls. First, most states regulate investigators due to concerns about privacy violations. While most states have no objections to organizations conducting their own internal investigations, a facility conducting state or nationwide investigations without the benefit of a professional, licensed investigator might very well find itself in conflict with state law.

Although some organizations do attempt to establish their own system of communicating with former supervisors, employers, and other references by letter, the response rate of such programs is generally not good, and responses often arrive well after the decision to hire needs to be made. Consequently, unless there is a systematic procedure for expediting the necessary screening, it is suggested that the services of a competent investigative firm be retained.

Better Safe Than Sorry

In essence, any organization that may be targeted by animal rights groups needs to think very carefully about pre-employment screening. And the only way to do this is to heed the adage, "Chaos in the future can be avoided by studying the past."

(AALAS Bulletin, Vol 30, No 3, 5/91)

CAN YOU CHANGE A PROTESTER'S MIND? . . . SHOULD YOU EVEN TRY?

By Anita Young

One American Association for Laboratory Animal Science member had an experience during the 1991 Joint Meeting in Buffalo that was probably repeated over and over that week.

Dr. Ronald M. McLaughlin found himself face-to-face with a protester, who, along with about 50 others that day, was picketing the AALAS meeting and denouncing the use of animals in research. Hoping to use the opportunity to talk to the man about the benefits of research using animals, Dr. McLaughlin spoke briefly with the protester and asked if the dog being walked by his group had been vaccinated. The protester abruptly walked away.

The experience of Dr. McLaughlin points out the quandary faced by people who understand the importance of biomedical research and want to convey that understanding to others. Should you reach out and try to communicate with the guy carrying a placard reading "Vivisectionist Murderers"? Or should you ignore him and go about your business? The answer you get depends on whom you talk to.

Dr. McLaughlin believes in using every opportunity available to talk to others about the benefits of research using animals, and he doesn't regret trying to open a cordial discussion with the protester. But he also didn't speak to any other protesters that week.

As the director of the University of Missouri Office of Laboratory Animal Medicine, Dr. McLaughlin has encountered protesters before. Experience has taught him that the risks-versus-benefits of talking to a protester must be weighed carefully before pursuing any kind of discussion.

The Risks of Confrontation

Some AALAS members would argue that the potential benefits of talking with a protester will almost never outweigh the risks, and Dr. B. Taylor Bennett counts himself among them. The director of the Biologic Resources Lab at the University of Illinois at Chicago makes it a policy never to get into a discussion with a protester, and he followed his own policy in Buffalo.

"It doesn't do any good to go out there (among the protesters). The people who are out there protesting aren't going to pay any attention anyway," said Dr. Bennett. "They wouldn't be out there if you could reason with them in the first place."

What's more, Dr. Bennett explained, you risk damaging your own cause if you get caught up in a situation you cannot control.

The possibility exists that a conversation with a protester could escalate into angry words, a shouting match, or worse yet, a brawl. Add to that the likelihood that a member of the media is nearby, covering the protest, and you spell real trouble for the pro-research cause. The media's love for confrontation will give the activists what they want --coverage for their viewpoint.

The Group Mentality

Even if you are calm, careful, and convincing in your arguments, you are still going to have great difficulty winning over a single protester who is in a group of protesters, according to Dr. Bennett.

Another AALAS member, Dr. Marilyn Brown, has had experience with what she terms "the group mentality" of protesters. The tendency of people to tailor their behavior to that of their peer group is one reason the director of the Dartmouth Medical School Animal Care and Use Program seldom speaks to protesters.

Dr. Brown recalls a few years ago stopping her car to talk to a protester at a primate center in Madison, Wisconsin. The woman was walking her dog while participating in the protest. Sensing a way to make a point about animal research, Dr. Brown asked the woman whether she had had her dog vaccinated. When the protester replied "yes," Dr. Brown proceeded to explain how canine vaccines and other kinds of preventive medicine had been made possible by research using animals.

As she talked, Dr. Brown sensed from the protester's response that she was seriously considering Dr. Brown's remarks about the use of animals in veterinary research. "I think she had never thought about it before," Dr. Brown said.

But even though "a light blinked" in that protester's eyes, Dr. Brown could only watch in dismay as the woman continued to demonstrate with the rest of her group.

Talking to Those Who Will Listen

It is the possibility of making some headway with a protester, even if they don't witness the change of heart, that leads some AALAS members to take on the challenge. Marian Pancoast, who describes herself as a passionate defender of animal research, is one such member.

Ms. Pancoast, as well as several other AALAS members, made it a point to speak with protesters in Buffalo. She said she listened to them as "they went on and on" talking about their viewpoints, but whenever she could, she talked about her own knowledge about the benefits of biomedical research and her own experiences in the field. "I don't feel we made much headway with anyone right on the spot. We gave them something to think about," Ms. Pancoast said.

Ms. Pancoast, who is a technician training coordinator at Washington University's Department of Comparative Medicine, admits she has a more activist philosophy than some of her colleagues. She believes in practicing "polite confrontation" when protesters are around. Present a good image, watch your body language, and don't lose your temper or use foul language, she advises.

Dr. McLaughlin recommends that AALAS members err on the side of caution when deciding whether to talk to a protester. "The potential for violence is likely to be present," he said.

AALAS members should not go out as a group to talk to protesters because it could lead to a dangerous confrontation, Dr. McLaughlin said. Also, anyone who is easily angered or who has little patience with people who think differently should avoid contact with protesters.

A friendly and nonzealous individual who is just passing by and who is willing to do a lot more listening than talking will probably have the most success, Dr. McLaughlin said. "It's a negotiating-type thing. Find something you agree on and let them talk until they contradict themselves."

Still, even if you possess superior listening and negotiating skills, along with the patience of Job, you must be prepared for the likelihood that you will not achieve anything by talking to a protester. Console yourself with the fact that this is in no way the best forum for educating people about the benefits and importance of biomedical research.

Your best bet is to make it your mission to educate members of the general public -- the people you see all around you in every-day situations. The strategy Dr. McLaughlin recommends is simple: "Talk to anyone who will listen".

(Contemporary Topics, Vol 31, No 3, 1992)

Animal Groups Active on Computer Bulletin Boards

The New England Anti-Vivisection Society (NEAVS) actively participates in a public forum in INTERNET called the Animal Rights Alerts mailing list. The list was set up to facilitate communication among Animal Rights groups, activists and other interested parties. Its primary purpose is to enable rapid dissemination of important information about animal rights issues and to function as an adjunct to periodicals such as "Animals Voice" and "Animals Agenda". This list is

maintained by NEAVS to assist the Animal Rights movement to be as effective as can be. For example, within a few hours after the "60 Minutes" program on Dr. Carey, Dr. Barnard put out a plea on INTERNET for friends to send letters denouncing the program.

A recent announcement by CompuServe tells us that the Humane Society of the U.S. has opened the HSUS Forum on the bulletin board network. The forum is open to all interested in wildlife and animal welfare and in "creating a sound environment through education and awareness".

Forum topics include animal experimentation, earth and habitat, animal shelters and pet care, legislation and law, and others. Monitoring these public bulletin boards is a good way to keep informed of activities and issues being discussed within the animal rights movement.

(DVB AALAS Newsletter, March 1993)

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New Advance Shows Promise in Treating Sickle Cell and Related Conditions

Sickle cell anemia affects one in 500 blacks with half of those dying by the age of 40. A recent study by Dr. Susan Perrine of Children's Hospital of Oakland Research Institute offers hope of treatment for the inherited blood disorder.

Fetal Hemoglobin is a protein that protects infants from sickle cell. The gene controlling its production turns off before birth. The new study shows that butyrate, a fatty acid, can be used to stimulate the production of fetal hemoglobin in sickle cell patients. This human study was based on earlier research using

baboons, rhesus monkeys and fetal sheep. According to Dr. Perrine, twenty sickle cell anemia centers in six countries around the world are hoping to

use this treatment after further human trials, and that the sheep are now living happily on a Northern California farm.

(CBRA, Vol.8, No.1, Dec/Jan 1993)

Have you seen a cartoon or article on animal research that would be good to have in the CFAAR NEWS? Why not submit it today?

In The Next Issue:

Laws & Regulations Governing Animal Research

Are There Alternatives to Animal Research?

Who Is At Risk? A 1992 Analysis of Animal Rights' Activities

Coalition For Animals & Animal Research
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