



# North Iowa CASA *Volunteer* News

## Lucille the Mother Goose

by **Francine Barr**

We all have heard stories of cats nursing a motherless litter of kittens, a dog taking in a puppy from another litter, and we humans are pretty good at it too. Look at us CASAs watching over someone else's children, ensuring they have a voice in the courts, and our foster parents, loving, caring and protecting children in need of that and more.

I wasn't aware that this type of foster care was happening among separate species in the animal kingdom until it happened in my barnyard. I acquired my uncle's poultry last year when his health worsened; 1 rooster, 9 aging laying hens,

Mother Goose as my grand kids called her.

I recently added to the barnyard family 20 very young hens and was afraid the bigger chickens would peck them and not accept the young intruders.

I should have known better! Lucille adopted this brood immediately. She keeps them near her and watches over them like they are her little goslings! If you approach them she hisses and flaps her wings at you. She marches them out into the yard one small group at a time to peck bugs from the yard and drink from the watering trough. At night the larger ones have graduated to the roost, while the smaller ones still remain huddled next to her for warmth.

You see, Lucille is just like us, finding a purpose in her life by caring for some little ones who are unprotected in a scary world. She's making sure they learn the things they need to know and keeps the predators at bay the best she can. She doesn't even care, or may not even notice, that her little goslings look nothing like a big white goose!



3 ducks and one lonely goose. They all seemed to get along, although the ducks stayed on their own, the chickens had their own clique, and poor lonely Lucille was on her own - the



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- *Wendy's son Alex graduated from high school* 
- *Congrats to CASAs Dee Hunt and Angie Lien for receiving the Governor's Volunteer Award*
- *Congratulations to CASA Kim Lowry on her recent marriage!*

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# NATIONAL CASA CONFERENCE

by Alan Steckman

What an honor! How distinguished! One CASA Coordinator and five CASA volunteers represented the whole State of Iowa at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual National CASA Conference held in the month of June this year in our Nation’s capital, Washington, D.C. The location of the conference allowed for members of our State delegation to take an extra day to visit the Congressional offices of our elected officials on the extra last day of the conference. There were three of us from North Iowa who were in attendance, Jo Stumo, Jenni Lombard and myself. Three others came from the Ottumwa area.

This first-time experience left me overwhelmed by so many peo-

ple, CASA volunteers, coordinators, judges from juvenile courts, GALs, and any other persons and advocates who may have



been touched by the needs of children who find themselves wrapped in the system of state social workers and the justice system. I did not know what to expect before attending the confer-

ence. Oh sure, I had been to similar national meetings and could foresee the general sessions, keynote and after (or during) meal speakers, seminars and formal and informal networking sessions. But being a relatively new CASA, I was quickly impressed with the national organization I, and my co-volunteers, belong to.

It was the quality of the general session speakers and the workshop facilitators and the obvious dedication and heightened interest of the attendees that stood out to me. I remember thinking how little I knew about being a CASA

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**A Big Thanks to the Stratford Foundation for providing the funding which allowed 3 local CASA volunteers to attend the National CASA Conference!!**

## EVENTS

- June 29-July 5—Fourth of July Celebration, Downtown Clear Lake
- July 3—Mason City Exchange Club Fireworks, North Iowa Events Center
- July 3—Rockwell Fireworks
- July 4/6/7/8—Hometown 4th of July Celebration, Northwood
- July 11-15—North Iowa Fair, North Iowa Events Center
- July 13-15—Puckerbrush Days, Forest City
- July 19-23—Winnebago County Fair, Thompson
- July 27-28—Up In Smoke BBQ Bash—East Park
- July 28—Iowa Storytelling Festival, City Park, Downtown Clear Lake, 10:30 am-3:30 pm
- August 11-12—Fertile Days, Fertile
- August 13—Dockside Children’s Pirate Party—City Seawall, Downtown Clear Lake, 1:00 pm
- August 25—Railroad Ag Days, Manly
- September 1—Clear Lake Beach Party, City Beach, Downtown Clear Lake
- September 8—Founder’s Day, Northwood





# TAPPING.... by Cheryl Schurtz

While growing up in Clinton, Iowa, I started dancing and acrobatics, as it was referred to then. I don't recall how old I was when I started, but it was early grade school. Tap, ballet, jazz, and acrobatics would become my world, my home away from home, and my escape! Although dance remained important to me, as I was in middle and high school, gymnastics was my primary activity; tap was second. My teacher, Miss Maxine, had her studio in the basement of her home, only four houses from our home, so I was able to walk there by myself. Walking alone might not be allowed today. Having four other siblings, the cost of classes soon became a financial strain for my parents. With the possibility of stopping lessons, Miss Maxine opened the door of opportunity for me. I became her "dance helper," probably starting when I was in third or fourth grade. From then on, I worked to pay for all my own classes and costumes. I could never call this "work"; this was where I found my happiness.



wanted to tap! A friend and I started at Denny's School of Dance in 1989, but we only tapped for a couple of seasons.

About five years ago I started again at Denny's. I chose not to be in recitals until the last two years. My four tapper classmates kept encouraging me to be a part of the show with them. I just liked to dance and didn't need or want to dance in front of an audience, at least that's what I kept saying. In truth, I was nervous, anxious, and afraid. I had not danced in public for years. So this year, at age 60, I completed my second adult dance recital.

Four days before the recital this year, I dropped a sharp knife on the top of my right foot, resulting in a very tiny cut. "No big deal!" I made it through dress rehearsal and the recital, although my foot was hurting, and my foot would not tap well. It was difficult to make it through the dance. Knowing something was indeed wrong, the next day I went to the Orthopedist. Two hours later I had surgery to repair a severed tendon to my large toe. Currently, I am in a cast-splint, now in my fourth of six weeks of non-weight bearing. I can't even drive since it's my right foot!

Two things come to mind for me regarding this latest experience:

- "The show must go on!"
- "Beware of sharp objects!"

What a way to start the summer!

Years passed. I graduated from the University of Iowa College of Nursing in 1974, later moving to Mason City in 1981. Since high school I had a yearning to dance again. I

**THANK YOU TO:**

John K and Luise V Hanson Foundation  
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York Children's Foundation



Suzan McKiness accepting check from York Children's Foundation, with David Moore - Owner, Hogan-Bremer-Moore Colonial Chapels and Paul Matthes - Artco Casket Co.





## National CASA Conference..... continued

and how much I could learn from others at the conference. For those of you who have never been and who may not have the opportunity to go a national conference, here is a summary of the events.

The first evening there was a one-hour orientation for attendees, new or otherwise.

On Sunday, the first general session keynote speaker was Andrew Bridge, author of "hope's boy" his memoir of being in the foster care system in Los Angeles County for eleven years. He went on to a successful academic and professional life, graduating from Harvard Law School. I'm sure you can imagine his personal recounting of being "in the system" and his struggles, most of which we would find insurmountable. He gave a powerful and positive message of the power of those who cared for him. Following the general session was a collection of meaningful workshops (10 in all) followed by yet another general session during which during which the National President of the CASA Association reviewed the "State of CASA". Most of our challenges are lack of federal funding, including funding for the juvenile justice system, and volunteer recruitment. This was followed by two more workshop sessions with 19 choices of workshops. By this time we three had coordinated which workshops we attended so the we could have the widest (no, not wildest) experiences to share

with our co-volunteers and coordinator. There was a movie shown Sunday night entitled "From Place to Place". I wasn't able to see it but we were told it was a very powerful story of foster children and the challenges they face.

Monday followed the same schedule as Sunday with two general sessions, including the presentation of recognition awards during the lunch hour. Interspersed throughout the day were three workshop sessions giving choices of 31 workshop topics. Of course several of the workshops were specifically designed for CASA Program Coordinators, Judges, GALs but there were plenty of choices for us regular volunteers. All during the conference there was an exhibit hall opened that offered many products for the attendees, including the usual tee shirts and clothing and jewelry embossed with CASA symbols and sayings. There was also a bookstore set up at the registration area with books too numerous to cite here. Several of the books' authors, who had conducted workshops or were speakers to the general assembly, were available to sign their works.

Tuesday was a special day. It was a day of "CASA Meets Congress" when our delegation met with congressional staffers and elected officials from our State to discuss our needs and ask for their support. It was a hectic day. We had only limited time to arrange

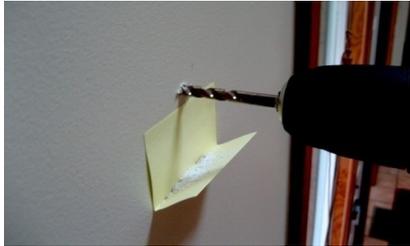
our meetings and had to walk, rapidly at times, and split up our delegation in order to make our appointments. Most special however, was our visit to Senator Charles Grassley's office, our last of the day. Senator Grassley was the only elected official available to meet with us. During the visit, we were honored to present to the Senator one of only two national CASA awards, presented every four years by the National CASA Association to "members of Congress who are strong and powerful voices for children served by CASA/GAL volunteers. Senator Grassley's important accomplishments included working to advance the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. In 2009, the Senator worked with others to form the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth. And, most recently, the Senator worked to reauthorize grants that support families who struggle with substance abuse and that improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children who are not in their homes, or are likely to be removed from their homes, because of substance abuse of their parents.

And so, with the conference ended, we left for home tired and full of valuable experiences.





# Who thought of that??



Use a Post It note to catch drilling debris

Use a staple puller to save your fingernails when trying to add things to your keychain!



Use a comb to keep a nail steady for hammering



Use a "clean" dustpan to fill a container that doesn't fit into the sink



Put wooden spoon over pot of boiling water to keep from boiling over

"When faced with two choices, simply toss a coin. Its works not because it settles the question for you, but because in that brief moment when the coin is in the air, you suddenly know what you are hoping for!"

## RECIPE from Suzan McKiness

- 1/2 c. vegetable oil
- 1/4 c. cider vinegar
- 1 egg
- 1 T. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

- 1 tsp. poultry seasoning
- 1/4 tsp. leaf oregano
- 1/8 tsp. leaf thyme
- Pinch garlic powder
- Pinch paprika
- Chicken parts

This is Suzan's husband's favorite recipe for chicken wings!!



Combine all but chicken in a small bowl with lid. Beat with fork. Refrigerate a few hours. Whip a few seconds, then brush over chicken when placed on grill. Grill slowly, approximately 1—1 1/2 hours, turning and basting every 15 minutes.



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## CASA Volunteers of the Year



Angie Lien and  
Judge Rosenblatt



Katy Thoreson and  
Judge Rosenblatt

28 CASA volunteers (Court Appointed Special Advocates) from North Iowa were recognized for their service to abused and neglected children in six counties at a dinner on April 25, 2012. CASA Volunteer of the Year awards were presented by District Associate Judge Gregg Rosenblatt to Angie Lien of Mason City and Katy Thoreson of Nora Springs. Five year service pins were presented to Jere Merrill of Mason City and David Hopper of Clear Lake. The program, "Cultivating a Child's Potential" was presented by Mike Tobin.



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