

APPENDIX



Testimony
Lee C. Seglem
Executive Director
State Commission of Investigation
N.J. Senate Economic Growth Committee
November 13, 2017

Good morning, Chairman and members of the Committee. I'm Lee Seglem, Executive Director of the State Commission of Investigation. Joining me are SCI Counsel Lisa Cialino, whose investigative team conducted the SCI's latest inquiry into the NJSPCA, and Communications Director Kathy Riley who served in an instrumental role on that team. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

By way of background, let me just say that one of the things government agencies don't do very often or very well is to follow up on the results of their actions. Reports get issued and decisions are taken but what does it all add up to over time? What happened as a result of those actions – good and bad? What else needs to be done? The public deserves answers to questions like that.

I raise this because at the SCI we have undertaken the regular and responsible practice of following up on prior investigations. That's the context for the matter on today's agenda.

Nearly two decades ago, we examined the activities and finances of the State and County SPCAs in New Jersey and found a landscape of waste and abuse. Criminal wrongdoing referred

by the SCI resulted in the prosecution of a former Burlington County SPCA treasurer who was indicted on charges of diverting more than \$45,000 in SPCA funds for personal use, and of the former president of the Cape May County SPCA, also indicted for theft. Both pled guilty and agreed to pay restitution. Taken together, the findings of that investigation raised very serious questions about the ability of these organizations to fulfill their core statutory mission to enforce the State's animal cruelty laws. As a result, we recommended turning over that enforcement role to qualified professionals in government law enforcement.

Early this year, we decided it would be prudent to re-visit this arena. What we found, with particular focus on the NJSPCA, was that significant problems and deficiencies first identified by the SCI 17 ago had festered over time and, in some instances, had gotten worse.

Now virtually bankrupt, this is an organization that has spent more money combined on legal bills and lobbying – more than three-quarters of a million dollars over the past five years alone – than on any other expense, including funds that directly impact animal care.

Our findings show that the NJSPCA seems to care more about the appearance of aggressive enforcement rather than the reality of it. It has lavished its personnel with fully-equipped police-type vehicles that they can keep at home, complete with flashing lights, sirens, advanced policing technology, body cameras and the like. Not to mention credentials that purport to identify even its attorney as a “special prosecutor.” And then there are all the guns and ammo. Did you know that during the course of one year, 2014, the NJSPCA spent more than \$25,000 on firearms ammunition – more money than it devoted to animal care expenses such as vaccinations? This, against a disturbing backdrop presented by the fact that the NJSPCA has been negligent in ensuring that its armed officers adhere to statutory provisions allowing them to carry

firearms. We also took sworn testimony from multiple individuals who described several circumstances in which NJSPCA officers exceeded their lawful authority by conducting traffic stops that had nothing to do with animals or animal cruelty.

These are the kinds of things we have in mind when we use the term “wannabe cops.”

During this follow-up inquiry, we also found that several current and former members of the NJSPCA governing board have personally benefited by profiting from ownership interests in businesses that provided goods or services to the organization. One of these companies, owned by the organization’s Chief Humane Law Enforcement Officer, received more than \$93,500 between 2013 and 2017 from sales of promotional items to the NJSPCA. In addition, businesses owned by former trustees, or that employed a family member of a former trustee, received more than \$108,000 for NJSPCA vehicle repairs and for supplying various merchandise to the organization.

Meanwhile, the NJSPCA’s own records contain evidence showing that it still does not do a very good job fulfilling its core mission of responding in a timely manner to complaints of animal abuse and cruelty. We reviewed a sample of 120 cases and found many instances in which the response time far exceeded the organization’s own policies and procedures, which require a written record of action taken within 24 hours of receipt of a complaint. On average, it took 12 days for an officer or agent to perform an initial response. Furthermore, dozens of case records reviewed by our investigators were missing key data, such as details about the nature of the complaint and the time it was received. In a number of instances, it was obvious that NJSPCA personnel had altered or updated a portion of the records after receiving an SCI subpoena. I would point out that lack of timely response to such complaints was the main reason that New

York City turned over responsibility for enforcement of animal cruelty laws to the NYPD in 2014. Since the police there began taking the lead in responding to and investigating animal cruelty complaints, response times have significantly improved with most now answered within eight hours.

Chairman, in 2006, as you well know – because you were the main sponsor of it – legislation was enacted in an effort to reform this system. The measure mandated significant changes, including provisions designed to require greater transparency, accountability and oversight of the NJSPCA. In our report, we do not state or mean to imply that this law, on its face, is weak or misplaced. The problem is that, in practice – and the facts bear this out – these positive objectives have not been realized because elements of the NJSPCA itself have spent the better part of the last 10 years ignoring and undermining them.

For example, the 2006 law authorized the Governor to appoint three members to the organization's board of trustees. We interviewed individuals who served in these gubernatorial positions, and they pointedly complained that they were routinely kept in the dark about substantive NJSPCA matters and were stonewalled internally when asking questions about the organization's finances. One former appointee described the position as nothing more than "window dressing," and another told our investigators that the NJSPCA is a dysfunctional organization that lacks proper public oversight of its law enforcement activities and its spending. You should also know that just last December, the NJSPCA's bylaws were revised to preclude the organization's president and its board of trustees from having any oversight in most policing matters.

Another provision of the 2006 law requires the NJSPCA to submit an annual financial audit and to provide quarterly reports on its enforcement activities to the Office of the Attorney General. Our inquiry revealed that these reports have chronically been filed late and, occasionally – such as for two quarters in 2015 – not filed at all. The NJSPCA was also negligent in filing annual audits, and, as a result, is not in good standing with the Charities Registration section of the state Division of Consumer Affairs.

In closing, and behalf of our investigative Commission, let me say that we stand by the core recommendation that we made 17 years ago and that we repeated last month: Responsibility for enforcing New Jersey's animal cruelty laws – like other legitimate elements of law enforcement – should be placed within the qualified framework of government and performed by trained professionals. The NJSPCA – as constituted and governed, then and now – is and has been a dysfunctional organization. It has engaged in and tolerated waste and abuse, conflicts of interest and self-aggrandizement, and has routinely taken a cavalier approach to financial and operational accountability – all at the expense of unwitting donors and volunteers whose only motivation it to help abused animals.

Thank you, and we would be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.



**NJ STATE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH
NOVEMBER 13, 2017**

TESTIMONY BY:

**Steve Shatkin
President
NJSPCA**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Senate Committee on Economic Growth, my name is Steve Shatkin and I sit before you proudly representing the dedicated men and woman of the NJSPCA. I have been with the NJSPCA for 19 years; I currently serve as President of the NJSPCA and Deputy Chief of Law Enforcement. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and look forward to a productive dialogue.

Before I begin, I want to bring to the committee's attention the fact that the NJSPCA recently entered into a voluntarily agreement with the Attorney General's Division of Consumer Affairs to have outside monitor installed - at our own expense - to look over our shoulder as the Department of Consumer Affairs had requested. We are in the process of lining up an accounting firm and expect to submit that selection to the AGs Office for approval shortly.

I would be derelict in my duty if I did not address this next point upfront, and I want to be **very** clear to you Mr. Chairman, the members of this committee and the general public – the NJSPCA is **NOT** a broken agency...it is **NOT** a haven for “wannabe cops”...it is **NOT** an organization that lost sight of its core function...nor is it an agency that should be disbanded or stripped of the authority granted and reaffirmed by this Legislature. Stated simply, do not always believe what you read in the newspapers, see on second-rate local cable TV channels and yes, even what you read in the SCI’s most recent report.

Whether one agrees with the intent of this Legislature or not, the NJSPCA was created by this Legislature in 1868 as a public law enforcement agency to enforce Title IV - New Jersey’s animal cruelty statutes. Since 1868 the NJSPCA has performed this function **at no cost to New Jersey’s taxpayers.** Our enabling legislation is crystal clear about what our core mission is – the enforcement of Title IV – and also what it is not. We were **not** created to open and operate animal shelters or serve an animal control function.

NJSPCA personnel are not “wannabe cops” as the SCI has attempted to paint this agency. In fact, the exact opposite is true. Our agents and officers undergo training developed by the Department of Law & Public Safety and approved by the Police Training Commission (PTC) at Police Academies throughout the state.

Our firearms instruction is given by the State Police at the State Police Academy in Seagirt. Our twenty (20) armed officers are commissioned by the State Police and then re-commissioned every two years, again, by the State Police and signed off by the Superintendent of the State Police. I would put my officers up against any law enforcement officer in this state in regards to who is 'squared away'. You don't get commissioned unless you are squeaky clean.

The reality is the NJSPCA receives and responds to approximately 5,000 animal cruelty complaints each year. Since January 2015, we have issued approximately 1,250 summonses for animal cruelty; we have rescued **thousands** of animals and have successfully resolved thousands of complaints by educating humans about animal cruelty.

The SCI's conclusion that the NJSPCA is not responding to complaints in a timely manner is **pure hogwash**. For the record, the committee needs to understand that as part of its investigation the SCI **illegally** obtained access to the NJSPCA's CCRS Dispatch Database and during the investigation SCI Commissioners claim to have reviewed "thousands of cases." Yet in its report, the SCI claims to have reviewed 120 cases - a small sample out of the 54,000 cases in our database. The SCI's methodology was flawed and it's finding is without merit.

It should be crystal clear to you as it is us – the SCI has an agenda – get rid of the NJSPCA. When the SCI couldn't find a scintilla of corruption or anything illegal they started to cherry-pick in order to justify their actions. They were going to get from Point A to Point B no matter what it took. And that included lying.

While the SCI concluded that the NJSPCA is dominated by a “wannabe cop” culture, at **no time** did the SCI spend any time with NJSPCA personnel in the field conducting investigations. How the SCI can conclude the NJSPCA is populated by “wannabe cops” is **laughable and unprofessional**.

The reality is while the dedicated men and woman of the NJSPCA are in the field handling thousands of complaints each year with zero assistance from the State, the SCI commissioners and staff are busy burning through millions of tax payer dollars each year, yet it issues only about two reports each year. Very interesting how a well-funded and flush state agency can be so unproductive, yet arrogantly pass judgment on the NJSPCA without spending any time with us in the field.

Critics question the NJSPCA's authority to carry firearms - an authority granted in 1868 and reaffirmed by the Legislature and the Governor in 2006. The NJSPCA is comprised of approximately 60 people - 20 officers and 40 agents.

Officers carry firearms, receive the same firearms training as municipal police officers, have the authority to make arrests related to Title IV and hold several certifications in humane law enforcement. Agents do not carry firearms and are empowered to conduct investigations and issue summonses related to Title IV.

Throughout the 150-year history of the NJSPCA there have been no firearm incidents, accidental or otherwise. The fact is, NJSPCA personnel work in dangerous areas throughout the state in crime-ridden neighborhoods at any hour, day or night. NJSPCA personnel work on routine cases involving improper shelter to complex cases involving cockfighting or dog fighting, blood sports where violent gangs, illegal guns, gambling and drugs are typically associated. There have been homicides at these events as well. Do you question why municipal police officers carry firearms? Are my officers lives worth any less?

Approximately 30 days ago, NJSPCA personnel removed **an AK47 assault rifle** off the street working a routine case in Newark. The media conveniently ignored that fact. Instead, they disrespected NJSPCA personnel by calling them “**armed pet detectives.**” We have invited the media to come work the cases we work in dangerous areas and invite the members of this committee to do the same. It should be an eye-opener.

The SCI alleged that the NJSPCA engages in “aggressive ticketing” and conducts “unauthorized traffic stops,” yet the report provided zero evidence to back those claims. The NJSPCA does not engage in aggressive ticketing and does not have the authority to conduct traffic stops. The NJSPCA has never issued a summons for a traffic violation. Ever.

In response to the claim that the NJSPCA spends more money on ‘wannabe cop’ toys than on animals, each and every time an NJSPCA Officer or Agent works a case the NJSPCA is spending scarce resources on animal welfare and to prevent cruelty to animals – investigating cruelty complaints, preventing cruelty or working with local prosecutors to secure a conviction. For 150 years NJSPCA personnel have been out in the field responding to citizen complaints, issuing warnings, educating humans, removing animals from hoarding or unhealthy shelter situations or securing necessary veterinary care for animals in distress...all at no cost to the State of New Jersey.

With respect to so-called “exorbitant legal fees,” while the NJSPCA is **in fact** a public law enforcement agency and the Attorney General’s Office has denied multiple requests to assign a Deputy Attorney General (DAG), that has **not** stopped us from making the requests. With no state funding and no in-house legal counsel assigned by the State, the NJSPCA had no choice but to retain outside counsel.

More importantly, and I hope this will resonate with this Committee and the entire Legislature, over 90% of the litigation the NJSPCA is currently involved in is the direct result of the NJSPCA adhering to the requirements of the SPCA Act of 2006 as they relate to County SPCA compliance and charters. Stated simply, we have been enforcing the provisions of the SPCA Act of 2006.

Finally, the call to disband the NJSPCA or strip the NJSPCA of its authority. This call was made in 2000 by the SCI, debated ad nauseam in 2002 when Governor McGreevey's Animal Welfare Task Force was released and once again during committee hearings and passage of the SPCA Act of 2006. To be blunt, the short answer to the question of whether the NJSPCA should be disbanded is - asked and answered.

Throughout these debates, it was made clear that county and local law enforcement are unwilling to assume the functions currently held by the NJSPCA. We look forward to future debates and working together with all stakeholders to strengthen New Jersey's advocacy efforts for the safety and well being of animals.

Hopefully, additional reforms will be made to the NJSPCA's enabling legislation and Mr. Chairman, we appreciate your efforts as they relate to improving the enforcement of animal cruelty laws. In response to specific recommendations advanced by you Mr. Chairman:

- **Provide that all members of the NJSPCA board of trustees be appointed by the Governor with advice and consent of the Senate. Three members would be based on recommendations from North, Central and South Jersey SPCA;**

The SPCA Act of 2006 required that three (3) board of trustees be direct appointments of the Governor. Since 2006, we have had a **very** difficult time getting the Governor's Appointments Office to adhere to the requirements of the SPCA Act of 2006. In fact, two of the three seats have remained unfilled for years. Given our past history, we are very concerned about the Governors ability to fully populate the full Board of the NJSPCA.

Under the current structure of the NJSPCA Board, we believe the geographic North, Central & South representation is appropriate with County SPCA's having seats on the NJSPCA Board.

- **Require the annual law enforcement report of the NJSPCA to the Attorney General be published on the NJSPCA's website;**

These reports have been provided to the Attorney General's Office on a consistent basis since 2006, as have the monthly reports. We have no problem whatsoever posting these reports on the NJSPCA website.

- **Submit NJSPCA to OPRA;**

Should a public law enforcement agency created by the Legislature in 1868 that receives no state funding whatsoever be subject to OPRA? That is the issue we have been grappling with since the NJSPCA has been barraged by OPRA requests by Internet activists.

Yes, it is true we have challenged whether OPRA applies to the NJSPCA in court and that court battle continues. We would be happy to comply with any and all OPRA requests if we had the resources to do it, but without the resources the deluge of OPRA requests has been extremely challenging and costly. While the public's right to know may trump our legal challenge, at some point a line in the sand must be drawn. We have no full time personnel and no secretary. Our headquarters is not manned. How do you recommend we fulfill OPRA request? Why should our department be treated any differently than any other state agency?

- **Require all humane law enforcement officers semi-annually qualify for gun use as other law enforcement personnel in NJ;**

NJSPCA Officers, commissioned by the State Police, are currently required to qualify with their firearms twice a year. While the SCI and the media are critical on the amount of money spent on ammunition, these funds have been spent to meet the firearm qualification requirements of the SPCA Act of 2006 for the twenty (20) commissioned Officers of the NJSPCA.

Require, in addition to other external audits, that the State Auditor annually perform a financial audit of the NJSPCA to be published on the NJSPCA's website

We have no objections whatsoever.

In conclusion, I want to thank you again on behalf of all the dedicated men and women of this department for the opportunity to be heard. Our goals are noble – stop the needless suffering of animals. Our commitment to that goal is unshakeable. My request to this committee is quite simple. Stop trying to tear us down when you should be lifting us up. Instead of constantly calling for our demise, look for ways to help us fulfill title 4's mandate. Instead of throwing roadblocks up at every twist and turn, extend a helping hand to ease our burden, which will allow us to alleviate the needless suffering of even more animals in the state.

We have asked the NJ Treasury Department for small 'breadcrumbs' in the past – allow us to fill up our SPCA vehicles at State Police barracks. Help us by providing cell phones to our officers. Give us a vacant state office so we can alleviate the overhead of maintaining a building. I'm going to be bold with the next one – provide a guaranteed financial stream to this department so we can actually create a budget. Provide a DAG or other legal assistance so we don't have to constantly answer questions regarding our legal bills. Provide a point

person at the AG's office. One who is actually responsive. One who might actually call us back.

None of these requests have ever been granted. Yet we are here today defending ourselves against numerous baseless claims. Oversight is something we have been requesting and we would welcome it with open arms. All we ask in return is that we are treated with respect and be put on equal footing with other state agencies.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

###

Atlantic County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Inc.
P.O. Box 205
Somers Point, New Jersey 08244
Phone: (609) 927 - 9059

My name is Nancy Beall and I represent the Atlantic County SPCA as the President, our charter has been in existence for the past 27 years, responding to Abuse/Neglect at no cost to the County. We have done this willingly; however the past 10 years have been difficult as we have not had the cooperation of the New Jersey SPCA. When we began noticing the animals seems to come second to all the "new regulations". One major demand was that we must have at least one person authorized to carry a gun, our board has never felt it necessary, however we did as we were told and now have one person available to carry.

As you must know we as every charter pay a fee of 1000.00\$ each year to the New Jersey SPCA, in addition we were told we needed to pay 50.00\$ each month for the CCRS [reporting service], we did this however we have never been given access and assume any calls to the 800# are going unanswered, this is a shame since we are very conscientious with our responses. Requests to Colonel Rizzo have gone unanswered.

Three years ago I was contacted by an attorney in Burlington County to testify as an expert witness for his client Kate Decker, she had been served with 66 summons's for animal neglect. After hearing the circumstances I decided if I was subpoenaed I would testify that the charges were unfounded, when the New Jersey SPCA was notified [by Burlington County] that I would testify. Frank Rizzo called me, and threatened me to not to testify, of course I notified the prosecutor and he was told to have no further contact. The case was never tried and the judge dismissed all the charges, all 66. Ms. Decker spent thousands of dollars defending these false charges.

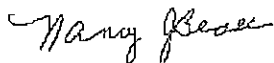
This incident seemed to initiate the constant threats and intimidation we have received over the past 2 years, from letters sent to our local prosecutor; to interfering with the execution of a search warrant by Tom Williams [Mr. Williams seems to be in charge of the New Jersey SPCA "warrant squad"]. The Atlantic County Prosecutor has never contacted us about these accusations.

In addition to handling abuse/neglect in Atlantic County, we also operate a mobile spay/neuter clinic as well as a low cost surgery center for low income animal owners.

We have worked diligently for all these years and feel it is time the New Jersey SPCA focuses on the animals, which must be their main focus and eliminate the stealth cars, guns, bullet proof vests and most of all hundreds of thousands in legal fees.

These bills pending now would help. Senate Bill :1427 :1428 :1429

For any further information please feel free to contact me at (609) 927-6265.



Nancy Beall, President

These bills, if approved, will finally put an end to the current State SPCA over zealous power driven members and will enable all the County organizations throughout the State to return to the mission they were intended to perform by helping the animal population and will allow the Counties to spend its money on that purpose, instead of defending frivolous law suits brought on by the State SPCA for the reasons only to obtain control, power and financial gain from others that have shown fiduciary responsibility in the past.

These Bills are all in the best interest of the animals and the people of the State of New Jersey

RE: *S-1429; Requires accountability of NJSPCA and county societies for prevention of cruelty to animals to Attorney General and county prosecutors, respectively.*

S-1427; Changes membership of, and election process for, NJSPCA board of trustees.

S-1428; Revises law concerning disposition of assets of a county society for the prevention of cruelty to animals that has dissolved or has had its charter revoked, canceled, or suspended.

*Dee Carlson
Hartford County*

V

County S.P.C.A. concerns

1. Asset protection
2. Membership on the State S.P.C.A. Board of Trustees
3. Accountability and oversight

NJ SPCA CHARGED WITH VIOLATION OF COURT ORDER – ACTIVISTS SAY ONEROUS PREREQUISITES WOULD IMPEDE PROGRESS

According to *NJ TIMES*, the NJ SPCA missed a key deadline regarding the lawsuit involving a backlog of unprocessed requests to open county chapters.

As reported in the last issue of the *HUMANE NEWS*, Middlesex County Superior Court Judge Ann G. McCormick gave the NJ SPCA 60 days to adopt procedures for the process of county chapters. The applications are alleged to go back for four years. The applications seeking chapters for Camden, Ocean & Middlesex Counties were submitted in December 2008 & February 2009 but were never considered by the state board. The deadline has passed and now the animal rights advocates must go back to court.

As we go to press, the animal rights advocates from Mercer, Camden & Ocean Counties charge that the requirements for a county charter are too difficult, demanding & infeasible, & do not facilitate the forming of new chapters. To create a new chapter would require that they raise \$10,000 before applying & another \$3,000 for an application fee. The new chapter would have to have 10 board members that would provide Social Security information; the names of the people they live with along with a list of animals & breeds that they own. They would also have to provide 2 years of veterinary records for each animal. The last time a county charter was approved, the NJ SPCA did not require any of these "impediments"

only law changes
will stop this



New Jersey Certified Animal Control Officer's Association.

P.O.BOX 174 PENNINGTON, NEW JERSEY 08534

www.njcacoa.org

November 12, 2017

Michael Melchionne
mmelchionne@comcast.net
(609) 713-3554
NJ Certified Animal Control Officer Association
Administrator/Advisor Bd. of Directors

Retired Stafford Township 2012

NJ STATE CERTIFIED ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER state cert number 0014
NJ STATE CERTIFIED ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATOR state cert number 001
GRADUATE PASSAIC COUNTY POLICE ACADEMY SPECIAL POLICE OFFICER CLASS II
NJ STATE CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR "METHODS OF INSTRUCTION" DIV. OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
NJ STATE CERTIFIED POLICE TRAINING COMMISSION (PTC) CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR
CURRENT STATE CERTIFICATION INSTRUCTOR
ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER
ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATOR
HUMANE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER
JOHN HOPKINS CERTIFICATE "NON-PROFIT AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
GOVERNOR MCGREEVY APPOINTMENT "ANIMAL WELFARE TASK FORCE"
GOVERNOR CORZINE APPOINTMENT "DOMESTIC COMPANION ANIMAL COUNCIL"
CURRENT MUNICIPAL CONSULTANT
DEEMED EXPERT WITNESS MERCER COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
FOUNDER NEW JERSEY CERTIFIED ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
DESIGNED AND IMPLEMENTED THE GLOUCESTER COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL PROGRAM/ANIMAL SHELTER (1990)
CAREER ENCOMPASSED JURISDICTION IN 5 COUNTIES AND 48 MUNICIPALITIES IN A SUPERVISORY OR ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY
(July 1975-March 1, 2012)

-FOR 42 YEARS I HAVE BEEN IN THE ARENA AS A PARTICIPANT OR IN THE FRONT ROW CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROFESSIONS DIRECTION

-I'M HERE TODAY TO ATTEMPT TO GIVE YOU A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHERE THESE ANIMAL RELATED SERVICES STAND TODAY

-THE BEST WAY I CAN DESCRIBE WHAT IS TAKEN PLACE IS TO START BACK IN 1868

-A GROUP OF "PRIVATE CITIZENS" STARTED A CORPORATION

-THEY VOLUNTEERED TO "PROTECT ANIMALS"

-IN FACT THAT WAS AND STILL IS THE ONLY AUTHORITY GRANTED BY THE LEGISLATURE TO "PROTECT ANIMALS"

-BECAUSE THEY WERE/ARE VOLUNTEERS THEY'VE DONE THE BEST COULD WITH WHAT THEY'VE HAD TO WORK WITH!

-50 YEARS INTO THE FUTURE FROM THEN, NJ FOUND ITSELF THE MIDSTS OF A "RABIES EPOZOOTIC" IN CANINES AND "GOVERNMENT" NEEDED TO GET INVOLVED.

THEY CREATED A PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM THAT INCLUDED RABIES VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DOMESTIC CANINES!

-IN 1941 THE STATE LEGISLATURE CREATED AUTHORITY SO LARGER MUNICIPALITIES COULD APPOINT "DOG COLLECTORS" TO SEIZE CANINES SUSPECTED OF HAVING RABIES

MANY OF THESE SAME LAWS STILL EXIST TODAY

-IN 1956 THE LAST CASE OF "RABIES IN CANINE" WAS REPORTED IN NJ FOR 32 YEARS UNTIL 1988

-IN 1968 THROUGH THE "ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES ACT" THE TITLE "ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER" FIRST APPEARED! A RELATIVELY NEW PROFESSION!

-IN 1983 THE NJ LEGISLATURE DECIDED THAT "EVERY MUNICIPALITY" MUST EMPLOY AN "ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER" AND THAT ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS MUST BE STATE CERTIFIED AND BE TRAINED WITH AN "APPROVED CURRICULUM"

-IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE

SINCE 1941, AND EVEN TODAY, WHEN CALLED UPON ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS ARE "MANDATED BY STATUTE TO RESPOND"

-IN 1983 THE SPCA HAD BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR 115 YEARS.

-IN 1983 AND EVEN TODAY, THERE WERE/ARE NO EXISTING STATUTES THAT REQUIRE ANY COUNTY OR STATE SPCA TO RESPOND WHEN CALLED UPON!! (take a minute to think about that)!

-IN 1985 THE NEWLY CERTIFIED ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS ORGANIZED AND FORMED THE NJ CERTIFIED ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

-AS NJ'S "**FIRST RESPONDERS**" TO ALL ANIMAL ISSUES, ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS WE REALIZED WAS WE HAD "**NO STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO ENFORCE ANIMAL CRUELTY**"!

-LET'S KEEP EVERYTHING IN PERSPECTIVE, AS A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE

-WHO IS STATE TRAINED AND CERTIFIED,

-WHO BY LAW, IS MANDATED TO RESPOND WHEN CALLED UPON

-WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO ENFORCE ANIMAL CRUELTY STATUTES OF NEW JERSEY!!

BUT, A GROUP OF VOLUNTEER PRIVATE CITIZENS, WITH NO STATE REQUIRED OR APPROVED TRAINING, (AT THIS POINT IN TIME) WERE NOT REQUIRED TO RESPOND WHEN CALLED UPON, HAVE MORE STATUTORY AUTHORITY THAN GOVERNMENTS OWN FIRST RESPONDERS TO ANIMAL ISSUES!

I ASK YOU, DOES THAT MAKE ANY SENSE TO ANYONE?

-AT THAT POINT IN TIME WE ASKED THE NJSPCA TO ACCEPT US AS MEMBERS. **"WE WERE DENIED"** AND TOLD IT WAS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST!

-YET TODAY SEVERAL COUNTY CHAPTERS HAVE ACCEPTED ACO'S INTO THEIR CHAPTER!

-SO, IN THE EARLY 1990'S THE NJ CERTIFIED ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS WENT BACK TO THE NJ LEGISLATURE AND REQUESTED THE AUTHORITY AS **"GOVERNMENTS FIRST RESPONDERS TO ANIMAL ISSUES"** TO BE GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO ENFORCE ANIMAL CRUELTY

-AT THE HEARINGS THE NJSPCA APPEARED IN OPOSITION TO GOVERNMENTS "FIRST RESPONDERS FOR ANIMAL ISSUES" HAVING AUTHORITY TO ENFORCE ANIMAL CRUELTY STATUTES!

-AND THEIR OPPOSITION CONTINUED UNTIL THE NJSPCA WAS REQUIRED

- 1) TO BE NOTIFIED WITHIN 5 DAYS OF A SUMMONS BEING ISSUED
- 2) TO BE NOTIFIED WITHIN 30 DAYS OF FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE CASE
- 3) WERE GRANTED 50% OF ALL FINES AND PENALTIES

-THAT'S WHEN THE NJSPCA WAS WILLING TO **"DROP THEIR OPOSITION"**

-IN 1997 GOVERNOR WHITMAN SIGNED INTO LAW THE "THE ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATORS" TRAINING AND STATE CERTIFICATION CURRICULUM

-FOR A MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE TO HAVE AUTHORITY TO ACT AS AN ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATOR

- 1) THEY MUST BE CERTIFIED AS AN Animal Control Officer
- 2) THEY MUST BE CRTIFIED AS AN Animal Cruelty Investigator
- 3) THEY MUST BE AUTHORIZED IN THAT CAPACITY BY THE APPOINTING MUNICIPALITY!

MUNICIPALITIES ARE REQUIRED TO APPOINT AN ACO, BUT MAY CHOOSE TO APPOINT THEIR Animal Control Officer as an Animal Cruelty Investigator!

-KEEP IN MIND AT THIS POINT IN TIME (1997) ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATORS WERE REQUIRED TO HAVE 110 HOURS OF STATE APPROVED TRAINING.

-THEY WERE AND STILL ARE REQUIRED TO BE TAUGHT IN A NJ COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY AS AN ACO

-AND A POLICE ACADEMY OR A SCHOOL APPROVED BY THE POLICE TRAINING COMMISSION AS AN ACI.

-BUT YET GOVERNMENTS HAD TO REPORT TO AN ORGANIZATION OF VOLUNTEERS AND PRIVATE CITIZENS!

ALSO ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATORS HAD TO GIVE 50% OF THEIR FINES TO A GROUP OF PRIVATE CITIZENS!

-IN 2000 THE FIRST STATE COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATIONS REPORT CAME OUT ABOUT THE NJSPCA.

Their recommendations then;

Page 159 – Eliminate the SPCA’s as Enforcers of the Animal Cruelty Laws and assign the function to Government

-procedures must be instituted to ensure proper coordination with the police department

-The enforcement function properly rests with certified animal control officers who already are empowered under N.J.S.A.4:19-15.16b albeit with authorization by their municipalities

-IN 2002 GOVERNOR MCGREEVEY'S "ANIMAL WELFARE TASK FORCE" CALLED FOR CHANGES IN THE SPCA INCLUDING TRAINING

-IN 2006 THE LEGISLATURE GOT INVOLVED AND REQUIRED SPCA TO UNDERGO STATE APPROVED TRAINING "FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 138 YEARS"

- GOVERNMENT MANDATED THAT THIS TRAINING SHALL BE SIMILAR TO THE "ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATOR' TRAINING

-THEY ALSO MANDATED STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO THE ORGANIZATION

-IN OCTOBER OF 2017 THE STATE COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION ISSUED THEIR FINDINGS OF SECOND INVESTIGATION INTO THE NJSPCA IN 17 YEARS!

-WHAT DID THE SCI HAVE TO SAY THIS TIME AROUND

1) BROAD POWERS MAY HAVE BEEN NECESSARY IN 1868, BUT IS NOT WORKABLE IN THE HIGHLY STRATIFIED AND PROFESSIONALIZED LAW ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM OF THE 21ST CENTURY

2) THE NJSPCA CONTINUES TO HAVE NEXT TO NO STATE OVERSIGHT

3) THAT THE ALLEGATIONS WHICH PROMPTED THIS INVESTIGATION WAS A MERE SNAPSHOT OF A MUCH BROADER ARRAY OF DYSFUNCTION WITHIN THE SPCA SYSTEM

THE SCI GOES ON TO SAY "THEIR FINDINGS MAKE IT PLAIN THAT PERMITTING A PART-TIME POLICING UNIT STAFFED BY PRIVATE CITIZENS TO SERVE AS THE PRIMARY ENFORCERS OF THE NJ ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS IS ILLOGICAL, INEFFECTIVE AND MAKES THE ENTIRE SYSTEM VULNERABLE TO ABUSE"

-THEIR REPORT GOES ON TO SAY THAT "MOREOVER, THE GOVERNMENT APPERATUS TO PERFORM THIS FUNCTION IS ALREADY IN PLACE – IN THE FORM OF MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS WORKING IN COORDINATION WITH LOCAL POLICE".

-AND IT CONTINUES "PERMITTING PART-TIME VOLUNTEERS TO SERVE AS THE PRIMARY ENFORCERS OF NJ'S ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS MEANS, COMPLAINTS WILL GO UNANSWERED UNTIL PERSONEL CAN ADDRESS THE CALLS IN THEIR

OFF-HOURS" "THE NJSPCA AND COUNTY SPCA'S LACK SUFFICIENT PERSONEL TO ANSWER COMPLAINTS"!

-"THE NJSPCA AND ITS COUNTY-BASED AFFILIATES ARE INCAPABLE OF DOING THE JOB PROPERLY AND EFFECTIVELY"

-"IT IS PLAIN THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD NEVER BEEN MADE THE DOMAIN OF AMATURES"

-"THE NJSPCA IS AND HAS BEEN A DYSFUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION"

THESE ARE NOT MY WORD'S. THESE ARE THE WORDS OF THE STATE COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION!

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- 1) STATE STATUTES BOTH ANIMAL CONTROL AND ANIMAL CRUELTY ARE ANTIQUATED, POORLY WRITTEN, OFTEN MIS-INTURPETED AND NEED TO BE REWRITTEN.
- 2) ANIMAL CRUELTY ENFORCEMENT MUST BE OVER SEEN AND ADMINISTRATED DAILY BY A GOVERNMENTAL POLICE AGENCY.
- 3) ALL ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES MUST BE UNDER THE DIRECT GUIDANCE OF EITHER THE
 - 1) County Prosecutor
 - 2) County Sheriff
 - 3) Local Police Chief
- 4) CREATE THE TITLE "ANIMAL PROTECTION OFFICER"
- 5) ALL ANIMAL CONTROL, ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATOR, or "ANIMAL PROTECTION OFFICERS" MUST BE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.
- 6) ALL ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS, ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATORS AND "ANIMAL PROTECTION OFFICERS" MUST BE TRAINED WITH SIMILAR CURRICULUM.
- 7) ALL TRAINING AND CURRICULUM MUST OPEN FOR ALL OFFICERS
- 8) REQUIRE MUNICIPALITIES TO APPOINT An "ANIMAL PROTECTION OFFICER".
 - 1) This "Animal Protection officer" will be the lead animal cruelty enforcer in the municipality.
 - 2) Who can be this person?
 - a. Any animal control officer/animal cruelty investigator with additional training in "Animal Protection Officer" curriculum and certification
 - b. Any police officer with additional training in "Animal Protection Officer" curriculum and certification
 - c. Any SPCA Officer with additional training in "Animal Protection Officer" curriculum and certification, who is selected by the local police chief, county sheriff or county prosecutor and appointed to that position
 - d. Any of the above officers maybe selected through shared services so neighboring municipalities may comply with state mandate!

- e. A municipality may have as many or as few “Animal Protection Officers” as they see fit. But must have at least one appointed to comply with state statutes.
- 9) Administrate the “Animal Protection Officer” similar to the Special Police Officer

ELIMINATE ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY FROM AND NJSPCA AND COUNTY SPCA CHAPTERS. REDIRECT THEIR AUTHORITY TO PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE, PET OVER POPULATION, REPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP.

Via EMAIL: mstanton@njspca.org
TO: NJSPCA, Records Custodian
FROM: Collene Wronko
DATE: November 4, 2014

*****THIS IS AN OPRA REQUEST*****

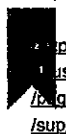
I request the following records pursuant to OPRA and the common law right of access. Please respond and email all responsive documents to me at collene035@hotmail.com

1. All email correspondence between Rick Yocum and Michal Cielez from August 1, 2014 to present date regarding the subject matter Helmetta Regional Animal Shelter.
2. All email correspondence between Rick Yocum and Richard Cielez from August 1, 2014 to present date regarding the subject matter Helmetta Regional Animal Shelter.
3. All email correspondence between Rick Yocum and Nancy Martin from August 1, 2014 to present date regarding the subject matter Helmetta Regional Animal Shelter.
4. All email correspondence between Rick Yocum and Buddy Amato from August 1, 2014 to present date regarding the subject matter Helmetta Regional Animal Shelter.
5. The 2013 year end payroll record for all NJSPCA employees.
6. Any report or summary statistics of the number of complaints received on a quarterly basis for the year 2014 (to present date).
7. A list of all current NJSPCA employees.
8. A copy of all complaints/citations/summonses written for animal cruelty, NJSA 4:22-17, from August 1, 2014 to present date.

I look forward to your response within seven business days.
Collene Wronko,
148 Main St #1
Spotswood New Jersey 08884
Collene035@hotmail.com

PET-ABUSE.COM

TOTAL CASES: (/PAGES/CRUELTY_DATABASE.PHP)



(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/)

(/database)
19 46 4 and counting

ANIMAL ABUSE DATABASE (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/CRUELTY_DATABASE.PHP)

ABUSE CONNECTION (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ABUSE_CONNECTION.PHP)

ANIMAL CRUELTY (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ANIMAL_CRUELTY.PHP) LAWS (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/CRUELTY_LAWS.PHP)

ADOPTING A PET (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ANIMAL_ADOPTION.PHP) PREVENTION (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/PREVENT_ABUSE.PHP)

REPORT ABUSE (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ANIMAL_CRUELTY/REPORTING_ABUSE.PHP)

DONATE (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/SUPPORT_US.PHP)

36 DOGS IMPROPERLY TETHERED, INADEQUATE FOOD/WATER /SHELTER - BERLIN, NJ

(/pages.php)Cruelty Database (/pages/cruelty_database.php) » Case Details

Friday, Jul 8, 2011

County: Camden

Disposition: Alleged

Alleged: [Ivan V. Murray \(/profiles/18482/\)](#)

Case Updates: **1 update(s) available**

The New Jersey SPCA will file animal cruelty charges related to a case in which dozens of dogs and puppies were reportedly kept on a Norcross Road property with no house, police said on Friday.

Ivan Murray, 41, appeared in municipal court July 6 to face less serious citations in the case. He was accused of providing substandard housing to 36 dogs and nine puppies on his property, among other violations.

It wasn't clear whether Murray is the one, or the only one, who will face the cruelty charges.

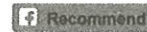
A house that once stood on the property burned down, Winslow police Sgt. D. Fanelle said. Fanelle added that Murray had kept the dogs and puppies in animal "houses" kept on the property.

Police previously said investigators had examined the animals, but that "there were not any findings of animal cruelty" at the time.

Police did not specify what constitutes cruelty in the upcoming charges and declined to give any further details, saying the matter is still under investigation.

Murray is scheduled to appear again in municipal court July 13.

The earlier citations related to substandard housing for the dogs also included having unlicensed and unaltered tethered dogs, as well as a violation of a local ordinance requiring owners to keep dogs behind their homes.



Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

Case Snapshot

Case ID: 18201

Classification: Neglect / Abandonment

Animal: dog (pit-bull)

[More cases in Camden County, NJ \(/pages/cruelty_database/local_search.php?state=NJ&county=Camden\)](#)

[More cases in NJ \(/pages/cruelty_database/results.php?us_state=NJ\)](#)

[Login to Watch this Case \(/account/login.php\)](#)

New features are coming soon. Login with Facebook to get an early start and help us test them out!

Log In

Chris Raab and 2 other friends use Pet-Abuse.Com Social Activist.



Google

[https://maps.google.com/maps?ll=39.729865,-77.992579&oi=map&hl=en&US&itp=US&ip=US](https://maps.google.com/maps?ll=39.729865,-77.992579&oi=map&hl=en&US&itp=US&ip=US&ip=US)

For more information about the Interactive Animal Cruelty Maps, see the [map notes \(/pages/cruelty_database/local_maps/map_notes.php\)](#).

Case Updates

Three South Jersey men allegedly involved in keeping dozens of pit bulls on a vacant property here have agreed to surrender them to the township, among other concessions, police announced on Wednesday.

CONTACT US

FOLLOW US

PARTNER SITES

ABOUT PET-ABUSE.COM

Ivan Murray, 41, of Winslow, Darrell Murray, 33, of Sicklerville and Dannon Williams, 31, of Camden appeared in municipal court Wednesday on the matter.

Pet-Abuse.Com
PO Box 1722
Southfield, NY 10975

Twitter (<http://twitter.com/animalcruelty>)

Facebook (<http://Facebook.com/animalcruelty>)

ACOFunStop
(<http://www.acofunstop.com>)

Dog-Fighters.Org
(<http://www.dogfighters.org>)

Everyday Activist
(<http://www.everydayactivist.com>)

Pet-Abuse.Com was founded in 2001, and is the first searchable database of animal cruelty on the internet.

learn more (<http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/about.php>)

learn more (<http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/about.php>)

Police said a house that had stood on the property for nearly a century, kept the dogs behind a home as required by local ordinance.

Police later announced the New Jersey SPCA intended to file animal cruelty charges in the matter, although they didn't specify whether Ivan Murray would be the person or the only person charged.

Ivan Murray was also cited for having unlicensed and unaltered tethered dogs and not

learn more (<http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/about.php>)

learn more (<http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/about.php>)

It also was not clear by presstime whether those charges were actually filed, or whether the concessions the three men made Wednesday were meant to avoid charges.

© Copyright 2001 - 2017 Pet-Abuse.Com. All rights reserved.

Home (/) About (<http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/about.php>)

The pit bulls will remain on the Norcross Road property for now, but removing them from there - without supervision by township animal control officers, the New Jersey SPCA or a veterinarian - is prohibited.

Contact (http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/about/contact_us.php)

Police also said the three men agreed to provide food, water, shelter and veterinary care for the dogs, and to help animal control officers find new homes for them.

Disclaimer (http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/cruelty_database/disclaimer.php)

Privacy Policy (http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/privacy_policy.php)

Anyone interested in adopted any of the pit bulls should contact David Shagles or Lee Kawafes, both township animal control officers, at 609-561-3300 extension 1063.

Site Map (http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/site_map.php)

Potential new owners will undergo screening, including veterinary references.

The Murrays and Williams are scheduled to appear again in municipal court Aug. 10 at 8:30 a.m. for a follow-up on the dogs' placement.

Source: [nj.com](http://www.nj.com) - Jul 14, 2011 (http://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/index.ssf/2011/07/winslow_township_police_46_pit_1.html)

Update posted on Jul 14, 2011 - 9:34PM

[Back to Top](#)

References

[nj.com](http://www.nj.com) (http://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/index.ssf/2011/07/winslow_township_police_spc_a_t.html) - Jul 8, 2011 [philly.com](http://articles.philly.com) (http://articles.philly.com/2011-07-07/news/29747265_1_dog-fight-dogs-three-times-area-dog) - Jul 7, 2011 [examiner.com](http://www.examiner.com) (<http://www.examiner.com/american-pit-bull-in-national/a-town-cries-out-for-justice-against-animal-cruelty>) - Jul 6, 2011

- « [NJ State Animal Cruelty Map \(/pages/cruelty_database/local_maps.php?state=NJ\)](#)
- « [More cases in Camden County, NJ \(/pages/cruelty_database/local_search.php?state=NJ&county=Camden\)](#)

Note: Classifications and other fields should not be used to determine what specific charges the suspect is facing or was convicted of - they are for research and statistical purposes only. The case report and subsequent updates outline the specific charges. Charges referenced in the original case report may be modified throughout the course of the investigation or trial, so case updates, when available, should always be considered the most accurate reflection of charges.

For more information regarding classifications and usage of this database, please visit the [database notes \(/pages/cruelty_database/database_notes.php\)](#) and [disclaimer \(/pages/cruelty_database/disclaimer.php\)](#).

COMPOSE

-  Reply
-  Reply All
-  Forward
-  Delete
-  Spam
- More** ▾

▼ winslow 🔍

Re: # of Dogs

 Today on AOL

 New Mail 2276

 Old Mail

 Drafts 204

 Sent

 Spam 28

 Recently Deleted

 Contacts

 Calendar

▼ Folders

 **anml** (anmluvr55@aol.com)

To: you (Bcc) + 1 more [Details](#) ▾

WTF THAT IS FUCKING RIDICULOUS

-----Original Message-----

From: Kim Lombardo <klombardo@winslowtownship.com>

To: 'anml' <anmluvr55@aol.com>

Sent: Wed, May 11, 2011 11:05 am

Subject: # of Dogs

There are 19 dogs at that location. Kim Lombardo Confidential Assistant to Mayor Metzner Phone: 609-567-0700 x2027 Email:

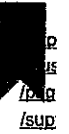
klombardo@winslowtownship.com

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information transmitted is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of, or taking of any action in reliance upon, this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you receive this in error, please contact the sender and delete the material from any computer.

- 
- 
- 
- 

~~PET-ABUSE.COM~~

TOTAL CASES: (/PAGES/CRUELTY_DATABASE.PHP)



(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/)

((database/)
19 46 4 and outgoing

ANIMAL ABUSE DATABASE (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/CRUELTY_DATABASE.PHP)

ABUSE CONNECTION (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ABUSE_CONNECTION.PHP)

ANIMAL CRUELTY (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ANIMAL_CRUELTY.PHP) LAWS (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/CRUELTY_LAWS.PHP)

ADOPTING A PET (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ANIMAL_ADOPTION.PHP) PREVENTION (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/PREVENT_ABUSE.PHP)

REPORT ABUSE (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ANIMAL_CRUELTY/REPORTING_ABUSE.PHP)

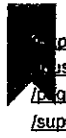
DONATE (HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/SUPPORT_US.PHP)

STARVED DOGS CHAINED, CAGED IN FREEZING WEATHER - WEST ATCO, NJ

(/pages.php)Cruelty Database (/pages/cruelty_database.php) » Case Details

PET-ABUSE.COM

TOTAL CASES: (/PAGES/CRUELTY_DATABASE.PHP)



(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/)

(/database) 19 46 4 and cruelty

[ANIMAL ABUSE DATABASE \(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/CRUELTY_DATABASE.PHP\)](http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/cruelty_database.php)

[ABUSE CONNECTION \(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ABUSE_CONNECTION.PHP\)](http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/abuse_connection.php)

[ANIMAL CRUELTY \(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ANIMAL_CRUELTY.PHP\)](http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/animal_cruelty.php) [LAWS \(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/CRUELTY_LAWS.PHP\)](http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/cruelty_laws.php)

[ADOPTING A PET \(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ANIMAL_ADOPTION.PHP\)](http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/animal_adoption.php) [PREVENTION \(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/PREVENT_ABUSE.PHP\)](http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/prevent_abuse.php)

[REPORT ABUSE \(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/ANIMAL_CRUELTY/REPORTING_ABUSE.PHP\)](http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/animal_cruelty/reporting_abuse.php)

[DONATE \(HTTP://WWW.PET-ABUSE.COM/PAGES/SUPPORT_US.PHP\)](http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/support_us.php)

PREGNANT DOG LEFT IN FREEZING WEATHER, PUPS DIE - CHESILHURST, NJ

[\(/pages.php\)Cruelty Database \(/pages/cruelty_database.php\) » Case Details](#)

Thursday, Feb 1, 2007

County: Camden

Charges: Misdemeanor
Disposition: Convicted

Defendants/Suspects:

- » Robert E. McCann (/profiles/11398/)
- » Rita Dickerson (/profiles/11399/) - Dismissed

Case Updates: 6 update(s) available

A borough councilman in Chesilhurst, Camden County, and his mother have been charged with animal cruelty after nine of their newborn puppies died in last winter's cold.

Councilman Robert McCann, 50, and his mother, Rita Dickerson, 67, were accused in an SPCA summons that was served on May 1, 2007 with nine counts of failure to provide proper shelter for the family dog, a chocolate Labrador retriever named Coco, and her newborn puppies.

The charges are disorderly persons offenses, with a maximum penalty of 30 days' imprisonment and a \$1,000 fine for each count. A court date has been set for May 16 in Berlin Municipal Court.

McCann and his mother said the charges were part of a political plot that began with his recent campaign for Chesilhurst borough mayor.

"Since I've decided to run for mayor, my opponent has been attacking me through my mother, which is shameful," McCann said. "We're not guilty of anything. It's an attempt at political assassination by my opponents. . . . We'll have our day in court."

His mother also denied the cruelty allegations. Dickerson said the family has been cited several times recently by various agencies, in one case for a picnic table infraction, another for a portable toilet breach. Yesterday, she said, a forest ranger showed up and cited her for a smoky barbecue pit.

New Jersey SPCA Sgt. Jane Donoghue said McCann's dog had been left outside in February's "incredibly cold" weather to give birth to 15 puppies in a doghouse. Nine of the 15 puppies died, she said, of complications from hypothermia. One other, she said, was born dead.

The five surviving puppies have since been adopted by other families.

Animal activist Kathy McGuire said her organization, New Jersey Aid for Animals, had reported Coco's plight to the SPCA after a receiving a tip. McGuire said her organization had purchased the surviving puppies from McCann for \$250 and borrowed the 9-year-old mother dog until the puppies were weaned.

An additional charge of neglect accuses McCann of failing to provide Coco with necessary veterinary care.

Dickerson said Coco was kept in a doghouse and was well cared for. None of the puppies died, she said, until they were taken by the SPCA.

"How do we know they died?" she said. "If they died, it was after they took them and separated the pups from their mother."

Donoghue said the puppies died after the SPCA took them because of an infection caused by the cold.

Case Updates



Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

Case Snapshot

Case ID: 11385

Classification: Neglect / Abandonment

Animal: dog (non pit-bull)

[More cases in Camden County, NJ \(/pages/cruelty_database/local_search.php?state=NJ&county=Camden\)](#)

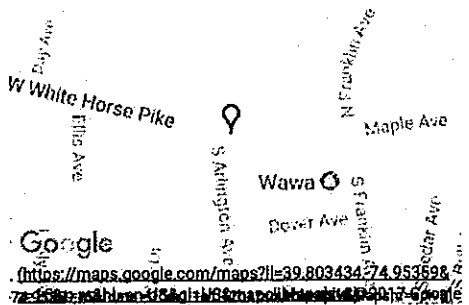
[More cases in NJ \(/pages/cruelty_database/results.php?us_state=NJ\)](#)

[Login to Watch this Case \(/account/login.php\)](#)

New features are coming soon. Login with Facebook to get an early start and help us test them out!

Log in

Chris Raab and 2 other friends use Pet-Abuse.Com Social Activist.



For more information about the Interactive Animal Cruelty Maps, see the [map notes \(/pages/cruelty_database/local_maps/map_notes.php\)](#).

Robert McCann, a former Chesilhurst councilman, was convicted Thursday of four counts of animal cruelty after a municipal court judge found he had failed to provide sufficient shelter for a dog after she delivered a litter of puppies in a cold snap last winter.

CONTACT US

FOLLOW US

PARTNER SITES

ABOUT PET-ABUSE.COM

Specialty appointed Municipal Judge William Golden dismissed five additional animal cruelty counts. He imposed a \$1,200 fine on McCann, ordered him to pay \$894.93 restitution to the animal hospital that cared for the dog and puppies, and also ordered 100 hours of community service.

Pet-Abuse.Com
PO Box 5
Southfields, NJ 10975

Golden suspended imposition of the sentence while McCann, 51, appeals the conviction.

McCann, who was a member of the borough council in 2004, was charged with the offenses in February 2007, said the charges were filed in retaliation after he filed notice he planned to seek election as mayor in the Camden County municipality.

A paralegal, McCann said prosecution witnesses, including representatives of animal welfare groups, had lied about him and portrayed him as "some kind of monster."

Golden said he "knows nothing about political machinations" that led to the disorderly persons charges.

He described McCann as "a good enough gentleman who used bad judgment."

© Copyright 2001 - 2017 Pet-Abuse.Com. All rights reserved.

Home (/) About (<http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/about.php>)

Golden found that some testimony presented by witnesses called by David Mapp, a specially-appointed municipal prosecutor for the case, was unchallenged. That included testimony that a Labrador-retriever mix female dog, Coco, that McCann had cared for for about six years delivered a litter of puppies before dawn in February 2001.

Disclaimer (http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/cruelty_database/disclaimer.php)

The day of the birth of the puppies, and the size of the litter, were not certain, Golden found. The adult dog and the puppies were housed in a dog-style doghouse while the temperature was about 22 degrees.

Site Map (http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/site_map.php)

McCann said he did not attempt to bring the dogs inside his house, but advised a member of the family to put some hay inside the doghouse and to make no attempt to touch the puppies.

The day after the birth of the puppies, Kathy McGuire, founder of New Jersey Aid for Animals, a nonprofit animal rescue group, paid McCann \$250, according to her testimony, and took the adult dog and between 12 and 15 puppies to the Marlon Animal Hospital in Evesham. Only five of the puppies survived. Veterinarian Dr. Honey Rothberg determined the rest of the litter died of complications from hypothermia.

Rothberg had testified newborn puppies should be kept in an area where temperatures are about 85 degrees. She said the body temperatures of the puppies brought to her were so low they did not register on a thermometer.

The five puppies that survived were adopted, McGuire said, and Coco was spayed before being returned to McCann in April 2007.

Source: *Courier Post* - March 14, 2008 (<http://www.courierpostonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080314/NEWS01/803140368/0/newsfront2>)

Update posted on Mar 14, 2008 - 12:40PM

[Back to Top](#)

A former New Jersey councilman is set to finally appear in court to face charges of animal cruelty after leaving his dog outside in the freezing cold as it gave birth last year.

After nearly a year of delays, former Chesilhurst Councilman Robert McCann is due in court on charges he left his pregnant Labrador Retriever Coco chained outside in 15-degree weather as she gave birth to 15 puppies last February.

Of the 15 newborn pups, only five survived. Officials said many of the puppies literally froze to death as they entered the world.

"The five puppies that did survive are healthy and happy today with very, very loving homes," said Kathy McGuire of N.J. Aid for Animals.

Coco has since been placed with another family.

McCann maintains he did nothing wrong in connection with the incident.

Source: *CBS 3* - March 7, 2008 (<http://cbs3.com/local/robert.mccann.animal.2.671722.html>)

Update posted on Mar 7, 2008 - 4:53PM

[Back to Top](#)

Due to conflicts of interest, the jurisdiction for the animal cruelty case against Chesilhurst councilman Robert McCann has been moved again. McCann will appear in court next on September 11, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. in Gloucester Municipal Court, located at 313 Monmouth St. in Gloucester City.

Source: Chesilhurst Municipal Court

Update posted on Aug 20, 2007 - 1:11PM

[Back to Top](#)

A New Jersey councilman accused of animal neglect shared his frustration outside a Berlin court house on Wednesday.

Chesilhurst Councilman Robert McCann is charged with four counts of animal cruelty for not providing proper shelter for his then pregnant pet lab named Coco. Officials said all but five of Coco's puppies died.

"If you're talking about doing your job, ride through Chesilhurst, there's hundreds of dogs out there, the only house you came to was mine, you ain't been anywhere else," McCann yelled outside out of court.

McCann was barking at CBS 3's camera and SPCA Sgt. Jane Donoghue, even though his attorney advised he not comment on what would have been the start of his animal cruelty trial Wednesday.

McCann, whose trial will now begin next month, is charged with leaving his lab mix female dog chained to a tree outside in frigid February weather as she gave birth to 15 puppies.

"Directly causing the death of nine puppies, leaving them outside in freezing cold weather to be born, and they died of complications due to hypothermia," Donoghue said.

Kathy McGuire, with NJ Aid For Animals, received an anonymous tip phone call and she went to McCann's home to rescue Coco and her pups. McCann initially refused to surrender the dogs until he was offered money.

"We also had to give them \$250 dollars to purchase the puppies, they weren't just going to give them to us," McGuire explained.

McCann also allowed McGuire to rent Coco, so she could nurse the puppies for a fee.

When confronted by CBS 3 Reporter Cydney Long and told he was a leader in the community and that people were outraged, McCann replied: "I'm not a leader in the community; my time is up December 31st."

McCann faces fines up to \$1,000 and up to six months in jail if he is convicted.

The case has been continued until August 15.

Source: KYW - July 25, 2007 (http://cbs3.com/topstories/local_story_206171229.html)

Update posted on Jul 27, 2007 - 5:07AM

[Back to Top](#)

Councilman Robert McCann and his mother, Rita Dickerson, will return to court on July 25 at 9:30 a.m. in Berlin Municipal Court.

The two are charged with nine counts of failure to provide proper shelter for their dog, a Labrador named Coco, and her newborn puppies.

According to the New Jersey SPCA, the puppies were born in frigid, 12 degree weather outside in the Councilman's yard in February.

They were born to a mother dog chained to her dog house.

"They're basically freezing as they're being born, which is just horrible," N.J. SPCA Sgt. Jane Donoghue said at the time.

Nine of the puppies died within days of their birth. Their bodies were kept as evidence.

The veterinarian report blames the puppies' deaths on complications from hypothermia.

When asked why the dog was outside having puppies, Rita Dickerson reportedly responded, "Because that ain't no house dog. She had puppies out there before,"

Kathy McGuire, from New Jersey Aid for Animals, rescued the puppies and the mother dog, Coco, a day after their birth by buying the entire litter.

"I'm angry that a city councilman who represents a borough wouldn't have more common sense than to bring in a pregnant dog," McGuire said.

Source: Berlin Municipal Court

Update posted on Jun 22, 2007 - 3:19PM

[Back to Top](#)

Councilman Robert McCann, and his mother, Rita Dickerson, will appear in court next in June. The two are charged with nine counts of failure to provide proper shelter for their dog, a Labrador named Coco, and her newborn puppies.

McCann, who is reportedly running for mayor, denied the charges, calling them "an attempt at political assassination by my opponents".

According to New Jersey SPCA Sgt. Jane Donoghue, McCann's dog had been left outside in February's "incredibly cold" weather to give birth to 15 puppies in a doghouse. Nine of the 15 puppies died, she said, of complications from hypothermia.

According to local reports, Dickerson said of Coco: "She has never been in the house and has been chained for nine years and has always had her pups outside".

The surviving puppies were adopted by other families, but Coco was reportedly returned to the councilman and his mother.

They will appear in court next on June 20 at 9:00 a.m. in Berlin Municipal Court.

Source: Berlin Municipal Court
Update posted on May 22, 2007 - 6:08PM

[Back to Top](#)

References

[Philly.Com \(http://www.philly.com/inquirer/local/nj/20070503_2_charged_in_puppy_deaths.html\)](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/local/nj/20070503_2_charged_in_puppy_deaths.html) - May 3, 2007

« [NJ State Animal Cruelty Map \(/pages/cruelty_database/local_maps.php?state=NJ\)](/pages/cruelty_database/local_maps.php?state=NJ)
« [More cases in Camden County, NJ \(/pages/cruelty_database/local_search.php?state=NJ&county=Camden\)](/pages/cruelty_database/local_search.php?state=NJ&county=Camden)

Note: Classifications and other fields should not be used to determine what specific charges the suspect is facing or was convicted of - they are for research and statistical purposes only. The case report and subsequent updates outline the specific charges. Charges referenced in the original case report may be modified throughout the course of the investigation or trial, so case updates, when available, should always be considered the most accurate reflection of charges.

For more information regarding classifications and usage of this database, please visit the [database notes \(/pages/cruelty_database/database_notes.php\)](/pages/cruelty_database/database_notes.php) and [disclaimer \(/pages/cruelty_database/disclaimer.php\)](/pages/cruelty_database/disclaimer.php).

01/27/16 at 1:55 PM

Dante DiPirro, Esq. <dante@dantelawyer.com>

To Linda Wilferth

Linda, I just finished my trial prep and assembled all the docs we'll need for trial tomorrow evening. By the way I reviewed your list of supporters: you can tell them to come, and we'll use that support to try to get this resolved in court. I will meet you there. Do you have any questions before we meet at the courthouse tomorrow at 630? Dante

Dante DiPirro, Esq.
Law Office of Dante DiPirro
77 Snydertown Road, Hopewell, NJ 08525
(Phone) 609.429.0779
(E-mail) dante@dantelawyer.com

On 2016-01-26 5:45 pm, Linda Wilferth wrote:

- > Spam detection software, running on the system "just105.justhost.com",
- > has identified this incoming email as possible spam. The original
- > message has been attached to this so you can view it or label
- > similar future email. If you have any questions, see
- > root@localhost for details.
- >
- > Content preview: Hi Dante, Mary Melfi is working and will write a
- > letter. Lauren
- > who is a police officer in Flemington is out on family leave with
- > her new
- > baby. Most of my fosters have kids and if they can get sisters they
- > Á are
- > showing up. These are some others. Buff who founded the rescue
- > with
- > me gave
- > me a list of the ones she contacted and got phone numbers for. she
- > will be
- > there. Stacy Whitelaw from work will come. 908-310-7662 foster [...]

The Senate Economic Growth Committee

State Commission of Investigation Report regarding the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and next steps.

My name is Tracy Rolph and I am here today in support of the findings and recommendations contained within the most recent SCI investigation report. Specifically, to turn the enforcement of animal cruelty over to the police, prosecutors and animal control investigators.

I am an attorney in NJ who has always had a passion for animal advocacy. As someone who has had a very personal experience with, and has been, the victim of animal cruelty, I can truly appreciate how challenging it can be to enforce these cases but I would like to briefly share with you my experience because I think that it is illustrative that if the enforcement of animal cruelty is left to the police, prosecutors and animal control investigators, timely and meaningful enforcement and prosecution of animal cruelty can occur.

In 2012, my dog Shyanne was killed by a man who portrayed himself as a "dog trainer." He convinced me to leave her in his care for training and he killed her. A necropsy showed 4 broken ribs and severe internal bleeding. This was the most devastating thing that had ever happened to me. When this happened, I did call the NJSPCA, I also called the local police and ACO. The ACO immediately returned my call, we promptly met and he diligently investigated the matter. He coordinated his efforts with the local police and the county prosecutor, which resulted in a grand jury finding of 4 separate felony charges against this individual. The strategic alignment between the ACO and the prosecutors in this case resulted in the defendant accepting a plea bargain of 5 years because ultimately, he was facing over 20. Not only was an arrest in this matter made but it is my understanding that this was the first instance in NJ where a person convicted of animal cruelty was sentenced to a term of 5 years. The NJSPCA took days to return my phone call and did not offer any assistance.

At this point, I think that it is fair to say that everyone in this room is now aware of the long history of waste, abuse and malfeasance that is rampant within the NJSPCA. I would like to quickly highlight a few of the issues that have once again come to light regarding the gross misconduct of the NJSPCA, which in my opinion cannot be rectified under the current framework.

1. Exorbitant Legal bills that are being paid with NJ residents donation dollars- and refusal to show invoices for those fees.
2. Complete lack of transparency and a blatant disregard for their fiduciary responsibilities.
3. Being stripped of its 501(c)(3) status for failing to file its 990 form for 2013, 2014 & 2015.
4. Most importantly, failure to respond to allegations of animal cruelty, failure to enforce .
5. Improper spending not related to animal cruelty enforcement.

6. Complete lack of accountability.

While we can spend hours discussing the ongoing misconduct by the NJSPCA, let us not forget that there are innocent victims (both human and animals) whose protection and welfare is in the hands of this organization and whose rights have been negatively affected or even completely disregarded a result of the inaction and overall misconduct if the NJSPCA.

Permitting part time volunteers to serve as the primary enforcers of NJ's animal cruelty laws means that a large majority of complaints go unanswered. This is exactly why NY City turned over responsibility for enforcement of animal cruelty to the police. To quote my esteemed colleague, David Gaier, the very concept of a non-profit law enforcement agency is unworkable, even absurd, and the result is an organization mired in controversies and lawsuits

I have to agree with the Commission's conclusion that all of the items noted in the most recent report could have been addressed had the recommendations within its initial 2000 report been followed over 17 years ago. Specifically, to eliminate the SPCA's as enforcers of animal cruelty laws and assign the function to the government and allow the police, prosecutors and the courts handle enforcement of animal cruelty laws.

As I believe the commission correctly stated, against the backdrop of a highly stratified and professional law enforcement system, it is an anomaly that the state continues to empower organizations of private citizens to carry weapons, investigate criminal and civil conduct, enforce laws, issue summonses, effect arrests and obtain and execute search warrants. The issue is no longer whether or how to fix this errant group of self-appointed, self-directed and uncontrolled entities, but whether to eliminate the archaic system entirely. The time has come to repeal the government authority vested in the NJSPCA and place the function of enforcing the cruelty laws within the government's stratified hierarchy of law enforcement.

The infrastructure exists to be able to hand over enforcement of animal cruelty to those who are actually trained to enforce the law and work within the judicial system. The proper framework already exists. NJ would be taking another step back if, at this point, any efforts are made fix the NJSCPA. We already know this won't work. Appointing an independent monitor won't work, requiring additional oversight won't work, requiring more accountability won't work. The only way to fix this problem is to completely disband the NJSPCA.

Thank you.

Shake A Paw Center for Rescue and Adoption
2195 US Hwy 22
Union, NJ 07083
908-688-2600

November 13, 2017

Dear Senator Lesniak and Committee Members:

My name is Jeffrey Morton, and I am President of the Shake A Paw Center for Rescue and Adoption, as well as Shake A Paw pet stores here in New Jersey. I am also a NJ State Certified Animal Control Officer and Animal Cruelty Investigator.

I read the SCI report recently published, and all I could think of is that there are 2 sides to every issue. I cannot speak to the allegations made against the NJSPCA. What I can certainly testify to here today, is that investigating animal cruelty in today's environment is not easy.

Current laws require that a Animal Control Officer be employed by every municipality in the state, which is good legislation. The problem as I see it is that a local ACO is not trained to handle complex hoarding cases or dog fighting cases. Being able to successfully process an animal cruelty crime scene, preserve evidence properly and successfully bring the case to trial, is NOT the job of your local ACO.

The NJSPCA is a necessary law enforcement agency. Local police officers and municipal ACO are not trained to handle complex cruelty cases. For me, EXPERIENCE is the key. A rookie ACO cannot successfully investigate and handle a hoarding case with 30 animals, Just as a rookie Police Officer cannot singularly investigate and prosecute a large criminal case.

The NJSPCA is a vital law enforcement agency here in NJ. Maybe they need a state monitor to oversee operations, but New Jersey needs the SPCA. Thank you.

Jeffrey Morton, President

On 4/23 Sgt Amato came into pet valu in Flemingotn NJ to ask me if I got the summons he sent me. I replied yes.

He told me to step outside. I said not If you have something to say do it here. I wanted witnesses because I know he bullies people. My fosters were in shock at his behavior and there was another women in the store who said boy is he mean!

He told me he would be in small claims court to let the judge know what I bad person I am. He told me he would be mean to me this time he was nice to me the last time.

He asked the store manager Brian to step outside and he told Brian if he ever let me in the store again. He would go after the store. He kicked me off of adopt a pet where I list my animals. The Gottliebs got me thrown off rescue- me where I had Gidge the chiweenie posted. They told the site wee emotionally and financially devestaed by Gidget.

I had a fund raiser for a dog with a prolapsed rectum who needed surgery and they had my fundraiser for Gunner shut down.

They put false stories in every newspaper what would carry them and their friend Libby wiliam who runs pet watch and rescue watch had it up there too. For 2 years Libby Williams has had on her FBpages that she will file claims to the NJSCPA for you if you have a dog with fleas or worms from me.

My foster Eve had Gidget in her home and told me everything was good she was ready for a home. We had her spayed and vetted including all vaccines and heartworm tested. I never had the dog in my possession.

When we got to court the first time over Gidget the chiweenie. He wanted me to go to jail for 6 months or pay a fine of \$1000 and I would never be allowed to go near an animal for 10 years.

We request a trial but did not get then. Instead showed up and more plea deals we offered.

The day of trial the gottliebs, and 2 spca officers, the vet who saw gadget all attended. ..

After 6 hours wating 6 hours the judge failed to see any animal cruelty. The jist of the case came down to Gidget did not have a 30 flea preventive on her from 2/9 until 2/24. Was that animal cruelty. Case dismissed. Not guilty

I am an animal rescuer in Flemington NJ and I have been helping out door cats in Hunterdon County for over 16 years by providing TNR. Trap Neuter and Release. My friends and I have been Feeding and Maintaining these colonies for over 16 yers. We also have been helping shelter puppies and dog for about 7 years now.

I have had 4 bad encounters with the NJSCPA.

1. The first was I was doing TNR in an apartment complex in Flemington. I went there one day and I was greeted by an 80 years old women named Alice and she told me she had good news A state trooper was coming in an trapping the cats and was going to find homes for them. He was taking them to the Edison NJ animal shelter.

I spoke the property manager and he said they hired "A-Z technical Pets Removal" to take the cats away. I called the Edison shelter and my friend called the pest removal company. Al Peterson from njspca was there. He said he would check it out.

Buff called The owner of A-Z Techincal Pets removal services and he told her the cats were with a rescuer named Osgood in PA. We searched for the rescue and found no one.

Al Peterson called me up to tell me I was real and the town knew me and that I was helping the cats. On day 6 he called me and said I have good news for you. Your cats are in a Warehouse in Middlesex county. A business owner needed cats for his mouse problem so you should be really happy. We are closing your case.

2. A barn in East Amwell was crawling with cats, they had eye infections, one black kitten had a broken leg and because the barn was near a major road the cars hit the cats . I asked for help. They came out and said it was too far to drive and turned it over to the local ACO Officer Tom Dodds.

I called back to check on the case and Officer Al Peterson it and was told the case was closed. Tom Dodds said the cast were gone.

3. The third time is was at an all new level of crazy and hard to understand.

I was charged with Title 4 Animal Cruelty for failure to provide vet care for a puppy that was adopted out by me.

A puppy named Lily was adopted by a young women named Tasha Hawash from Flemington on 9/18. She signed our adoption contract which has my home phone number on it in case of need to call me and ask questions. It states she was the new legal guardian of the dog and it was her responsibly to provide the dog with everything it needed.

On 9/22 she called me and said the puppy was sick so I said I will be in Flemington today can you meet me around lunch time and I will bring the pup to our vet. She obviously did to care to bring the puppy to her vet.

Her mother met me in the parking lot of Simply Cats Hotel where I board some of my rescue cats.

I took the collar off and handed it back to the mother and put Lilly on the my backset of my car on a comforter. I finished up a cat adoption and drove to immediately to Dr Milfords office my vet of records for 8 years.

Dr Milford is always there on Tuesdays. I left Lily in the car and walked into the vets office. Amy the office manager let me know she stepped out of the office. I said can I leave a sick puppy here that was returned to me and she said no you can bring her in tomorrow.

I said ok let me tell you what I was told by the adopter. I gave her the symptoms and Amy picked up the phone and called Dr Milford while I stood in her office.

Dr Milford prescribed an antibiotic and even though Lily was walking and drinking water on her own fluids just in case and medicine for vomiting. I was to give them to her and deworm her as well.

I was told to bring her back the next day. Everything that was prescribed this was supportive care for the night.

I sat with Lilly on my kitchen floor and gave her all the meds. I got a comfy blanket for her to sleep on and let her walk around my kitchen for a while and meet my cat Labby boy. She looked ok snuggled into my arms for a while and was really quiet. Nothing alarming. I went to bed.

Much to my shock she passed away the next day. I was horrified. I did not understand it.

I called Dr Milford office to let her know and that I wanted her to do the cremation.

Tasha reached out to me and I was not sure how to handle it so I did the best thing I knew how

Blaming her for not calling me or a vet at the first sign of a problem was not going to help. Her mom should have told her to do that. Then I saw on line she had a mental disorder which I did not know at the time of adoption. Her mental disorder is called "Conversion disorder" and she had a go fund me account. It causes all sorts of physical problems based on emotional things.

Based on all the facts I told her the puppy was euthanized to spare her feeling and my anger. She said ok, "I understand it is a rescue". I promptly refunded her donation of \$275. I said I was sorry and in rescue sadly we see this more often than we would like.

Then pure inanity it hit all over FB , the news papers and I was so confused. St Phil Amato and Nate Barson were the investigators.

They called to tell me after their investigation that they would not be shutting me down. Sgt Phil Amato sent me paper work and told me I

Autopsy I wanted. Not refused

was Prada Puppies. Then he sent me Lemon laws articles and told me to read them. He called me up to tell me I would be facing \$55k In fines.

He made sure it went in every paper and I even made 101.5. I am an animal control office. Sold a pup for \$500 and then let it die.

St Amato's friend runs "pet watch" and "rescue watch" and for 2 years now She has had a post on her FB page : " If anyone adopts a dog from me with fleas or worms. She will file animal cruelty complaints for them with the NJSCPA.

TO this day I have no idea what the DISCOVERY was for that case. I am trying to get it now.

When he walked out of the room to shake my hand told me he was checking

Next the Gottliebs..see Joh's report.

Asked me if I got the summons + to step outside. on 4/22 he walked into Flemington Pet Vale

+ THREATENED the store if we are

allowed back in here he will "Go After the Store"

resumes?
he

Small claims

Told me he would go to court with the Gottliebs to let the judge know there bad as am,

 **Catnip Friends Rescue**
New Jersey Cats and Dogs Rescue

Completed
took

www.catnipfriendsrescue.com

Dog Adoption Contract

908-256-3907

R 208 (NJ low cost spay/neuter program-see our webpage for link)

Adoption Donation _____

Date: 9/18/2015

Dog's Name Lilly

Breed / Mix: German Shepherd mix

Age: 10 weeks

Sex: F

Altered: no

The parties hereto agree that the owners shall abide by the following conditions:

1. Hereinafter referred to as the dog, is being transferred to the adopting owner with the understanding that the adopter is taking possession of the dog to treat and to be responsible for it as their own dog.
2. The dog will be treated as a family member with loving care and affection. I will do my best to ensure the dog's safety and well-being.
3. I agree not to tie or chain the dog outside.
4. I am adopting the dog for myself and I agree to not sell, trade, or give away the dog.
5. If at any time I can no longer provide proper care for or can no longer keep the dog, I agree to seek a suitable home for the dog. If the dog develops behavior issues such as aggression the adopter agrees to seek professional assistance in training or remediating the issue.
6. I agree to not keep the dog confined to a room or small area for long periods of time.
7. I agree to accept responsibility and ownership of the dog at my own risk and I release CFR and its agents from any and all liability arising out of possession and ownership of the dog. I agree that I am assuming total financial responsibility for my pet as of the date of this contract. CFR and its agents will not be held responsible for any damages or expenses (veterinary or other) incurred during my ownership of the dog.
8. Catnip Friends Rescue makes every effort to ensure the health of adopted dogs; however, we cannot guarantee their health. I agree to accept responsibility for all future veterinary care and cost for the dog.
9. If not already done, I agree to have this dog sterilized and to provide certification of the sterilization to CFR. The dog must be spayed / neutered by (date).

10. I/we affirm that no member of my household has been convicted of an animal welfare law violation such as neglect, cruelty, abandonment etc.

11. CFCR makes no guarantees or statements regarding the dog's age, breed, health, or temperament. While CFCR has made every effort to provide accurate history and assessment of the dog, CFCR is not able to guarantee the dog's age, breed, medical status, behavior or disposition. Adopter agrees to release CFCR and its members or representatives of any and all possible claims arising from injury or damage caused by the dog to any person or property. Adopter accepts this dog as is with all defects, either observable or unobservable, and assumes all risk for the dog upon signing of this contract.

12. In the event this contract, including all its covenants and conditions, is breached by Adopter, CFCR has the right to rescind this contract and demand return of the dog.

13. Adopter agrees by voluntarily signing this agreement, I am entering into a legal and binding contract with CFCR. Breach of any term(s) of this agreement is deemed actionable by CFCR.

Please indicate that you agree with the following statement:

This is an animal that is rescued from an animal shelter and may have come in contact with worms, parasites, parvo, kennel cough and other possible disease. Even though Catnip Friends Rescue has attempted to treat any known illness, it is your responsibility as the adopter to get this animal to your veterinarian as soon as possible for a complete check up. WK (Initial)

After the contract is signed there will be no refunds. We are willing to take our animals back if space allows and if the dog has no aggression issues with other animals and has never bitten anyone. If you choose to surrender an animal adopted from us, your adoption fee will be considered a donation. The age and breed of this dog is our best estimate. Please remember we are a rescue, not a breeder. WK (Initial)

I certify that all the information in this application is true and I understand that false information may void the application. All adoptions are finalized at the discretion of Catnip Friends Rescue. Catnip Friends Rescue who reserves the right to refuse any adoption. Completion of this application in no way guarantees acquisition of a pet. Catnip Friends Rescue has completed an initial veterinary check and updated the vaccinations of the animal; however we do not guarantee the future health or temperament of any animal.

Date 9/18/2015

Adopter Signature [Signature]

Adopters Name Printed Natasha Hawash

Address 73 Canterbury Circle

City Flemington State NJ Zip 08822

Phone (908) 809-2888

Email natshahawash@gmail.com

Catnip Friends Representative Signature [Signature]

Printed Name Hinde Wilfer

Procedure for using the low cost spay neuter program:

You must be a NJ resident. Go to our website www.catnipfriendsrescue.com and click on the link for NJ low cost spay neuter program. You can search veterinarians by county.

This contract is all you need to use the program, you must provide a copy of this contract to the veterinarian. The money is funded quarterly and runs out quickly, so you need to call the veterinarian before the quarter hits to see if money will be available.

INVOICE

Paw Prints Veterinary Hospital

121 Highway 202
Ringoës, NJ 08551
908-824-7606

FOR: Linda Cat Nip Friends Rescue

() 454-8444

Printed: 12-04-15 at 10:34a
Date: 09-22-15
Account: 52
Invoice: 19357

Date	For	Qty	Description	Price	Discount	Price
Services by Maryann Milford						
09-22-15	Shep Mix Puppy	6	Doxycycline Liquid 200mg/ml*			10.00
09-22-15		0.72	Cerenia Injection/ml			14.40
09-22-15	Stock	1	Lactated Ringers 1L			16.58
09-22-15		1	IV Line			6.00
09-22-15		1	Hypodermic Needle 18 ga x 1"			0.50

Total charges, this invoice...	47.48
Tax...	*0.70
Total, this invoice...	48.18
Your old balance...	0.00
Total payment(s) received...	48.18
09-22-15 Visa payment	48.18

Merchant ID: 16594953, Approval code: 050115, Transaction ID: 1225194210
Ref #: 4729709, Act #: *****5839, Exp: XX/XX, Entry: SWIPED, Card: VISA
Your card balance is not available

I AGREE TO PAY ABOVE TOTAL AMOUNT ACCORDING TO CARD ISSUER AGREEMENT

Linda Weiford
X _____

Your new balance... 0.00

Simple interest of 15% APR will be added to all open balances not paid within 30 days.

5/16

Where is Lily?

Where are copies of medical records showing she was treated by a licensed veterinarian?

What was her cause of cause of death? How did she die? Was she really euthanized?


Where is her body?

Linda Wilferth and Buff Barr, Catnip Friends' co-founders, have treated Tasha despicably over Lily's death. They have shown no compassion or empathy toward her and instead are accusing Tasha of "harassment", threatening to get a lawyer and acting like this is an affront to their rescue.

Hopefully they will be compelled to answer to the NJ SPCA or maybe, before a court of law.

If you have a complaint on Catnip Friends about a sick puppy, including any diagnosed with distemper, Parvo, kennel cough, ringworm, fleas, mange, intestinal parasites, please call the NJ SPCA at 1-800-582-5979 and the Hunterdon County Health Department at 908-788-1351.

Or let us know and we will help you file a complaint.

 '8 week old Lily, the day she was adopted'

2 years



Rescue with

Get wife

Dante DiPirro, Esq. <dante@dantelawyer.com>

To Linda Wilferth

01/27/16 at 1:55 PM

Linda, I just finished my trial prep and assembled all the docs we'll need for trial tomorrow evening. By the way I reviewed your list of supporters: you can tell them to come, and we'll use that support to try to get this resolved in court. I will meet you there. Do you have any questions before we meet at the courthouse tomorrow at 630? Dante

Dante DiPirro, Esq.
Law Office of Dante DiPirro
77 Snydertown Road, Hopewell, NJ 08525
(Phone) 609.429.0779
(E-mail) dante@dantelawyer.com

On 2016-01-26 5:45 pm, Linda Wilferth wrote:

- > Spam detection software, running on the system "just105.justhost.com",
- > has identified this incoming email as possible spam. The original
- > message has been attached to this so you can view it or label
- > similar future email. If you have any questions, see
- > root@localhost for details.
- >
- > Content preview: Hi Dante, Mary Melfi is working and will write a
- > letter. Lauren
- > who is a police officer in Flemington is out on family leave with
- > her new
- > baby. Most of my fosters have kids and if they can get sisters they
- > À are
- > showing up. These are some others. Buff who founded the rescue
- > with
- > me gave
- > me a list of the ones she contacted and got phone numbers for. she
- > will be
- > there. Stacy Whitelaw from work will come. 908-310-7662 foster [...]

BIERMANNJB@aol.com

To lindacps@yahoo.com

CC pamato@njspca.org biermannjb@aol.com sshatkin@njspca.org

Oct 31 at 10:26 AM

Dear Ms. Wilferth:

As the OPRA custodian I complete requests for the public for documents available to the public.

Please note through OPRA- police reports are not covered under those protocols.

If you request is for Discovery for a pending hearing or trial- per the court protocols that request needs to be made to the Municipal Prosecutor's office hearing the case.

I am available if you have any other questions. E mail is best for me.

Thank you.

In a message dated 10/31/2017 9:46:23 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, lindacps@yahoo.com writes:

Dear Mr. Biermann,

I would like to know how to get the information for what I was charged with(Discovery) in November of 2015 since I never received a copy of it and have no idea what it was for? Is there a form to be filled out? Colleen Freda gave me your e-mail and suggested I reach out to you!

Thanks,

Linda Wilferth
(908)399-7558

01/12/16 at 4:20 PM

DanteLawyer <dante@dantelawyer.com>

To Linda Wilferth

Linda, I just left you a voice message on your phone. I wanted to touch base with you about the case. I also wanted to let you know that I will be traveling abroad between the 13th and the 22nd. If you need to reach me the best way will be if you send me an email; I will be able to get to Internet from time to time to check my voicemail. I have left messages for Marianne to make sure she's available to testify in court for you on January 28 at 6 PM Flemington in a support. She has not called me back yet. Feel free to telephone her to make sure she knows about the court date and time and will be coming. also, if eyes to that I've not received discovery from the prosecutor or the SPCA yet. I have sent a reminder to them that that discovery is due to me. If the prosecution provides the discovery I will be able to call the prosecutor and Phil Amato on Monday of the trial week. If they do not send me the discovery I will move for a continuance to move the trial date back to that we get that information for trial. Give me a call later tonight if you have any questions. Thanks,
Dante

Sent from my iPhone
Dante DiPirro, Esq.
Law Office of Dante DiPirro
77 Snyderstown Road
Hopewell, NJ 08525
Tel. 609-429-0779

pamato@njspca.org

10/06/15 at 9:16 PM

To Linda Wilferth

Hi Linda,

Please contact me tomorrow at 908 275 8544. Need to discuss this case with you.

Thank you.

Quoting Linda Wilferth <lindacps@yahoo.com>:

> Thank you! I am reading it now!
> From: "pamato@njspca.org" <pamato@njspca.org>
> To: lindacps@yahoo.com
> Sent: Monday, September 28, 2015 9:47 PM
> Subject: NJ SPCA COMPLAINT
>
>
> Hello Linda,
>
> Please see the attached link for your review regarding pet dealers and
> the requirements.
>
> <https://www.animallaw.info/statute/nj-pet-sales-pet-purchase-protection-act#s96>
>
> Thank you
> Sgt. Phil Amato
> NJ State Humane Police
> 1119 Livingston Avenue
> New Brunswick, NJ 08901
> Office - 800-582-5979
> Cell - 908-275-8544
> Fax - 973-265-0502
> www.njspca.org

Sgt. Phil Amato
NJ State Humane Police
1119 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Office - 800-582-5979
Cell - 908-275-8544
Fax - 973-265-0502
www.njspca.org

From: "pamato@njspca.org" <pamato@njspca.org>
To: lindacps@yahoo.com
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2015 10:07 PM
Subject: Re: NJ SPCA COMPLAINT

Another two links for your review

<http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases15/pr20150720a.html>

<http://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/News/Consumer%20Briefs/purchasing-a-pet-new-jerseys-pet-purchase-protection-law.pdf>

Quoting pamato@njspca.org:

> Hello Linda,
>
> Please see the attached link for your review regarding pet dealers
> and the requirements.
>
> <https://www.animallaw.info/statute/nj-pet-sales-pet-purchase-protection-act#s96>
>
> Thank you
> Sgt. Phil Amato
> NJ State Humane Police
> 1119 Livingston Avenue
> New Brunswick, NJ 08901
> Office - [800-582-5979](tel:800-582-5979)
> Cell - [908-275-8544](tel:908-275-8544)
> Fax - [973-265-0502](tel:973-265-0502)
> www.njspca.org

Sgt. Phil Amato
NJ State Humane Police
1119 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Office - [800-582-5979](tel:800-582-5979)
Cell - [908-275-8544](tel:908-275-8544)
Fax - [973-265-0502](tel:973-265-0502)
www.njspca.org

NJ SPCA

December 11 at 9:36pm ·

Alleged 'Animal Rescue' Operator

Charged with Animal Cruelty

Animal cruelty charges filed in Flemington Municipal Court
against Linda Wilferth**STATEMENT BY:**

Colonel Frank Rizzo

Superintendent

NJSPCA Law Enforcement Division

On November 20, 2015, the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NJSPCA) filed charges against Linda Wilferth, 57, Phillipsburg, with two (2) counts of animal cruelty for failing to provide necessary care, in this particular case veterinary care. Wilferth owns and operates an alleged 'animal rescue' organization doing business as Catnip Friends.

In response to a complaint from a consumer to the NJSPCA's hotline, NJSPCA's investigation revealed that Wilferth sold a dog for \$500 to a consumer. A few days later the dog became very ill and the consumer returned the dog to Wilferth. Wilferth knowingly took the sick dog back into her possession and failed to provide any veterinary care. The dog died the following day.

Animal cruelty charges were filed by the NJSPCA in Flemington Boro Municipal Court and are scheduled to be heard on January 28, 2016.


Please visit njspca.org today and support our efforts to fight animal cruelty and abuse here in New Jersey.
Capt

**Like Comment Share**

69 people like this.

Chronological

19 shares


 **Terry Ward** Her Facebook page is still tickin' and still begging money 'for the poor furbabies.'..

These people have no shame.

Like · Reply · 2 · December 11 at 9:39pm

 **NJ SPCA** Hard to believe Terry Ward I know !! Capt


Like · Reply · 3 · December 11 at 10:04pm

 **Joe Fitzpatrick** Too bad the person who purchased the dog didn't take it to a veterinarian first instead.

Like · Reply · 6 · December 11 at 9:41pm

 **NJ SPCA** TY Joe Fitzpatrick Capt

Like · Reply · 1 · December 11 at 10:04pm

 **Terry Ward** That's someplace I'm not prepared to go, Joe. I mean, I just can't go there.

Like · Reply · 1 · December 11 at 10:46pm

Tasha Hawash News 12 New Jersey

September 24, 2015 · Flemington ·

PLEASE READ THE WHOLE POST!!

We had adopted a BEAUTIFUL puppy on Saturday at petvalu from catnip friends. Well the day Monday she woke up sick so I was talking to a friend and wanted to see what she might be going thru and let it ride one more night as maybe it was the cold or she over ate blah blah blah! Soooooo Tuesday she wakes up and still sick, symptoms of parvo I didn't know so I was gonna take her to my vet and let catnip know that I'm taking her and to see if any others of her brother and sisters got sick too! They were like oh no we will take her no problem! I was like ok cool I guess cause she's adopted they cover it! So we dropped her off Tuesday 2pm! I didn't hear back from them so I called 6pm and the lady said oh she might have distemper so if she does she's going to be put down, I was like please test for everything but I thought she was given shots and everything! She's like oh shots are tricky you can still get sick! I was like ok please test her for everything and let me know and I would like to know my options! She's like ok! Well yesterday morning I heard nothing! Oh wait she said the vet was out tuesday so all vet checks would be this Wednesday morning. So I kept calling leaving voicemails and I did my part to get to in touch to check on my puppy! Well around 12 ish maybe 1 pm Yesterday I got a call and was informed my puppy was put down!!! I wasn't told what tests she was given, how the results came back, what time! I wasn't even asked!!!! I was only called after the fact and was told I will get a refund check. That was already being talked about tuesday I was like dude she's dead this isn't about the money I want her! I truly care about her even if it was just 2 days!! Well here we are now with a puppy that wasn't given a chance, and we weren't given options and they aren't answering my calls to hear about what tests were run! She was literally killed cause of having green boogers that's all I was told!! I was like do you know anything officially? She's like no this was the best option, I'm like I need to know what it was as I have a dog, a cat and pet sit in my home! She didn't answer!! The lady that was handling this was named Linda!

I will NEVER go back to catnip fiends and want to see her get in trouble, she didn't ask me if she could kill my dog! I could have taken her to my vet for opinions! We didn't get to say goodbye! There has to be rules about killing without consent and no proof of tests! I haven't heard back about any details! I just want the word to be out about this.

I have filed a complaint with animal control and NJSPCA, and I'm in touch with Libby Williams of pet watch about this issue! I haven't heard anything back about my questions! I was basically told oh too bad, and was blocked from their fan page so I can't et in touch with them! They haven't answered any correspondence

Hello :)

I wanted to send updates on our beautiful lily who we adopted on Saturday at petvalu she is fitting in perfectly :) I sent pictures and a video to your fb page as well :)

I also wanted to inquire what the process would be to foster a pup? We aren't look right this second but in the very near future and wanted to know how that works since we have never done it before :)

Thank you!
Natasha Hawash

Stephanie Brill Heil with Brittany May Ward and 18 others.

19 mins ·

PLEASE SHARE FAR AND WIDE!!! THIS POST WAS TAKEN DOWN BY FB. NOTHING THAT IS POSTED BY THIS PAGE IS FAKE IT IS ALL FACTUAL! WOULD YOU WANT TO DEAL WITH A PERSON OR RESCUE LIKE THIS??? SHARE

Linda Wilferth / Catnip Friends Dog and Cat Rescue is charged with animal cruelty; accused of failing to provide necessary care to an animal

According to public records obtained from the Flemington Borough Municipal Court, Wilferth was issued two summonses on November 20, 2015 for an incident related to a puppy she adopted to a young woman on September 19, 2015 at the Flemington Pet Valu.

The puppy, named Lily, showed signs of illness within a few days and, at the request of Wilferth, was handed over to her by the adopter, allegedly to provide vet medical treatment. The next day, Linda Wilferth notified the adopter that the puppy "had been euthanized for distemper and that all her organs had shut down".

Wilferth is charged under the following statute: 4:22-17 Cruelty; certain acts, crime; degrees. a. It shall be unlawful to: (4) Fail, as the owner or as a person otherwise charged with the care of a living animal or creature, to provide the living animal or creature with necessary care. 4:22-26 Penalties for various acts constituting cruelty. a. A person who shall: (4) Fail, as the owner or a person otherwise charged with the care of a living animal or creature, to provide the living animal or creature with necessary care, or otherwise cause or procure such an act to be done.

"Necessary care" means care sufficient to preserve the health and well-being of an animal, and includes, but is not limited to: food of sufficient quantity and quality to allow for normal growth or maintenance of body weight; adequate access to water in sufficient quantity and quality to satisfy the animal's needs; access to adequate protection from the weather; and veterinary care to alleviate suffering and maintain health." (Title 4 Definition)

For a violation of paragraph (4) of subsection a. of this section, or subsection c. of this section, a sum of not less than \$500 nor more than \$2,000.

Wilferth is scheduled to appear in Flemington Borough Municipal Court on January 28, 2016, at 6:30 pm.

Rescue-Watch

July 20 ·

NJ SPCA charge has rescue owner rethinking the future

Catnip Friends Rescue / Linda Wilferth

July 20, 2016 / NJ.com / By Sallie Graziano

Flemington, NJ — Linda Wilferth knows by name all the feral cats she's trapped, had checked by a veterinarian and neutered or spayed, then returned back to the wild. "They're my extended family," she said recently. "Why wouldn't I name them?"

For 16 years she's been tending cat colonies around the area. It all started when she stopped by a computer shop on Main Street in the borough. "There were cats all over," Wilferth recalls. "Dead ones. Live ones. Babies. I asked, 'Whose cats are these, can I take one?'"

An elderly man who owned a neighboring property eventually said she could have one so she went to pick one out. "I didn't know what a feral cat was," Wilferth said recently. "I couldn't get near any of them."

Dorene Schultz, who was caring for a feral cat colony at the old Agway warehouse, "laughed at me," Wilferth said. "She told me, 'You need traps.'"

She met Schultz and picked up some traps. Then Wilferth skipped a Fourth of July trip to the shore with friends and instead set out the traps. "I got my first four kittens that weekend," Wilferth said.

Sixteen years later, and Wilferth has trapped, neutered and released hundreds of cats around Agway, on Church Street, apartment complexes, Brown Street, Liberty Village.

Van Gogh was one of the first she took to get neutered. In a feral colony, to tell cats that have been treated from those who haven't, it's customary to have the tip of an ear snipped off, Wilferth said. Van Gogh, a brown tiger with white paws, ended up with more ear taken off than most.

Her TNR (trap-neuter-release) efforts have produced results. "I was proud one day," Wilferth said. "I went into a restaurant and heard a lady saying, 'I haven't been to Flemington recently, but this place used to be really bad for cats. Now I don't see them anymore.'"

Today, she cares regularly for around 100 cats. That means every day she's checking on them, feeding them, trapping any new cats to have them treated then returned. In winter it means chipping ice out of water bowls, spreading fresh straw around, replacing fresh food that's frozen from the cold. In summer it means battling ants, flies. "The food can get really awful from the overheating," she said.

"But without us, they don't eat that day. You've got to make the commitment. It's not something you do part time."

Around five years ago Wilferth's shelter, Catnip Friends Rescue, started facilitating dog adoptions. "There's huge dog overpopulation in the southern states," she said, and adding dogs to the mix helps to bring attention to the cats that need placement.

An incident with a puppy she adopted out led to difficulties that have Wilferth rethinking her future as an animal shelter provider.

Someone adopted a puppy, paying Catnip Friends \$275, Wilferth said. Then a few days after the adoption the puppy was returned, sick.

"We followed our normal protocol for a sick animal," Wilferth said.

"The animal is taken to a local vet with whom we have a long-standing and good relationship. We do this for a foster in our care, a feral cat on the streets, or in this rare case, when an animal that has been adopted develops an unforeseen medical issue."

The puppy was alert, she said, drinking on its own, and appeared to have nasal discharge. "We relayed this information to the vet, who promptly prescribed medication based on our reported symptoms," Wilferth said.

The next morning, however, the puppy wasn't doing well, and it died before its scheduled appointment with the veterinarian.

"Anyone who rescues puppies sadly knows that they can go downhill fast without warning," Wilferth said. "No other dog adopted that weekend was affected."

A call to the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal's hotline prompted an investigation into the dog's death, and on Nov. 20 the agency filed two counts of animal cruelty against Wilferth for failing to provide necessary care, in this case veterinary care. One charge was criminal, a disorderly person's offense, and the other was civil.

In a court hearing at the end of January, Wilferth says she was overwhelmed. "The whole thing was confusing for me," she said.

Her lawyer advised her to take a plea deal, she said, promising "no liability, no prohibition" from continuing to operate the shelter. "My name will be good?" she asked.

She recalls the judge asking the SPCA representatives and her lawyer, "What are we charging her for?" The upshot, she said, was that she took the dog to the veterinarian for treatment, but not quickly enough.

"Did I plead guilty to animal cruelty?" she still asks herself. "I didn't want to do that. ... Can you reopen a plea deal?"

Rather than protecting her name, the civil conviction has had the opposite effect, Wilferth says, shaking her head in dismay. "How one puppy died, after I went to my vet the way I always do, it's ruined my life.

"I'm posted on shame pages. I'm a scammer. I'm on all these horrible sites," Wilferth said. "I've read on Facebook pages that I have a barn with ringworm cats. I don't even have a barn. It's been a hard pill to swallow."

She had been planning a series with the Animal Planet network, but they won't work with her now, she said. "For healing purposes, I'm thinking of writing a fictional book based on my experience," she added.

People tell her to walk away from animal rescue work, but Wilferth is still facilitating some pet adoptions, working with Pet Valu. "They've been supportive through this whole thing," she said. "There are vets out there supporting me, too. The people that truly know me are still working with me."

Her work with feral cats continues as well, but she's not taking on new colonies. The ones she's caring for are getting smaller as the cats die of old age, car accidents or attacks by dogs. "Binky, at 16, is still alive and living on the streets," Wilferth said, noting that the cat was among the first she trapped, had treated and returned.

"There's no quality of life out there for feral cats," Wilferth said. "It's always been my goal to end the suffering. And it's worked."

http://www.nj.com/.../nj_sPCA_charge_has_shelter_owner_rethin...

Previous media coverage:

NJ pet rescue owner takes plea deal in cruelty case

http://www.nj.com/.../catnip_friends_owner_takes_plea_deal_in...

N.J. SPCA charges Catnip Friends Rescue owner with animal cruelty

http://www.nj.com/.../nj_sPCA_charges_catnip_friends_owner_wi...

Lauren Bivona

Pet Watch NJ has received numerous complaints about Catnip Friends / Linda Wilferth over the last few years and has referred complainants to the NJ SPCA, Animal Control, and the Hunterdon County Health Department. Most of the adopters who ended up with sick puppies within days of "adopting" had no qualms about signing their names to formal complaint forms. It's the others who complain but refuse to actually act, for whatever reason, and that includes other rescues and even veterinarians who are aware of Catnip's practices but don't want to get involved. So if anyone wants to know why nothing can be done to shut her down, this is why.

Unfortunately, Pet Watch NJ has no legal authority or enforcement powers to shut down bad rescues and puppy flippers like this one. If we did, she would have been gone a long time ago. It was mentioned here and I can confirm that she has worked with some bad rescuers over the years, i.e. Jessica Isenhour/Saving Fur Kids and Joy Bohannon/Love to Live, both of whom were prosecuted for selling sick puppies in Hunterdon County.

Catnip Friends deals in a lot of puppies which go right from the southern transports to the pet supply store floor the next day, no quarantine period, no nothing. Wilferth adopts to anyone on the spot, to which Tasha has attested. Linda gives the "shots" – the puppies and dogs are allegedly never seen by a NJ vet prior to sale/adoption, based on paperwork submitted to Pet Watch. The so-called "health record" provided to adopters is laughable.

Tasha has been advised to file a police report for "theft of property" and "theft by deception" since she is Lily's legal owner. No surrender forms were ever provided or signed by her. No "permission to medically treat" was ever given. Where is Lily? Where are copies of medical records showing she was treated by a licensed veterinarian? What was her cause of death? Where is her body?

Linda Wilferth and Buff Barr, Catnip Friends' co-founders, have treated Tasha abysmally over this matter. They have shown no compassion or empathy. So, let them get a lawyer. The truth is on Tasha's side and after this, I bet others will come forward with their horror stories.

Linda and Buff "got some explaining to do" and hopefully they will be forced to answer in a court of law.

**Lauren Bivona**

9/25, 5:43pm

Do. Not. Let them cremate that puppy- Libby is now hypothesizing that you euthanized yourself & feels the DEA should investigate. Please, someone, put her back in her effing cage.

Linda Wilferth

Karen Talbot

20 mins ·

It has come to my attention YET again that the self proclaimed pet detective Libby Williams of Rescue Watch and Pet Watch NJ who absolutely hates anyone who rescues animals from out of state, has once again gone after yet another rescue. Please tell me , why all these rescues give this woman any power and validate her self proclaimed mystery sleuth ways by feeling the need to answer her questions? Ignore the fart in the wind. She eventually moves on to her next victim. She only has power over you because you allow her to have it. Yep Libby , its out there now. Come after me now , I will chew you up and spit you out if you dare start with our group again. Get a life troll!

Like Comment Share

19 people like this.

Comments

View 1 more comment

Paul Glassman

Paul Glassman I think she would want that. Attention is what she seeks.

Like · Reply · 14 mins

Cindy Alderton

Cindy Alderton Isn't there some pesticide spray we can spray on them all???

Like · Reply · 1 · 12 mins

Gayle Igarashi

Gayle Igarashi Those who actually do the rescues know who to believe! We're behind you!

Like · Reply · 1 · 10 mins

William Sanderson

William Sanderson Libby Williams is pathetic. She's the worst example of the sanctimonious a-holes who cower behind their computers and attempt to dictate to legitimate rescues what dogs they should save, while they save NO dogs. Disgusting and pathetic are the first words that come to mind.

Rescue Scams

DISCLAIMER:This is our list of rescue scams and animal abusers. RESCUE SCAMS information is based on the standards of rescue by which the participants of RESCUE SCAMS hold in high regard. Please be advised that DNR/DNA lists are subjective:For that reason, we share the reason why these people have been added to this list via information and links. It is up to each and everyone of you to do your own due diligence and form your own opinion of the rescues or persons named.

| Home |

Friday, December 25, 2015

Catnip Friends Rescue by Linda Wilferth

"A Phillipsburg woman who runs a Hunterdon County animal rescue operation has been charged in the death of a dog in her care.

Linda Wilferth, 57, of the 300 block of Hudson Street, allegedly sold the dog for \$500 but it fell ill within days. Wilferth took the dog back but did not provide veterinary care and the animal died the next day, according to the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.



A Phillipsburg woman who runs a Hunterdon County animal rescue operation is charged with animal cruelty for allegedly failing to get a sick dog in her care to a vet before it died. (NJ Advance Media file photo)

Two counts of animal cruelty were filed Nov. 20 in Flemington municipal court, the NJSPCA announced Friday.

Wilferth owns and operates Catnip Friends Rescue" Read full article using this

link http://www.lehighvalleylive.com/phillipsburg/index.ssf/2015/12/rescue_operator_charged

Posted by Animal Advocates at 11:32 AM

Our Do Not Adopt (DNA) List

DISCLAIMER:This is our list of rescue scams and animal abusers. RESCUE SCAMS information is based on the standards of rescue by which the participants of RESCUE SCAMS hold in high regard. Please be advised that DNR/DNA lists are subjective:For that reason, we share the reason why these people have been added to this list via information and links. It is up to each and everyone of you to do your own due diligence and form your own opinion of the rescues or persons named.

Blog Archive

- 2016 (44)
- ▼ 2015 (976)
 - ▼ December (28)
 - Bueno, Minnie Leticia
 - Cauchi, Tony
 - Cauchi, John
 - Manzano Jr., Fidel
 - Pursell, Leighton
 - Hein, Michael
 - Quick, Sandra & Allen
 - Montesi, Jessica
 - Thomas, Jeanine
 - McElhany, Stephanie Michelle
 - Moore, Andrew Julian
 - Pelt, Van
 - Livermore, Ronald Albert
 - Cruz-Padro, Luis Junior
 - Miller, Caroline
 - Wilferth, Linda
 - Shoemaker, Phillip
 - Gross, Faith
 - Seton, Kathy
 - Doyle, Richard
 - Attleson, Robert
 - Bergman, Jeanette
 - Mathis, Ashley Nicole
 - Mathis, Quinton Eugene
 - Fields, Stephanie of Homeward Bound Animal Rescue
 - Jessen, Nicole
 - Clum, Jenn Rose
 - Keel, Melani
 - November (44)
 - October (106)
 - July (59)
 - June (45)
 - May (52)
 - April (132)

Friday, December 25, 2015

Wilferth, Linda

"A Phillipsburg woman who runs a Hunterdon County animal rescue operation has been charged in the death of a dog in her care.

Linda Wilferth, 57, of the 300 block of Hudson Street, allegedly sold the dog for \$500 but it fell ill within days. Wilferth took the dog back but did not provide veterinary care and the animal died the next day, according to theNew Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.



A Phillipsburg woman who runs a Hunterdon County animal rescue operation is charged with animal cruelty for allegedly failing to get a sick dog in her care to a vet before it died. (NJ Advance Media file photo)

Two counts of animal cruelty were filed Nov. 20 in Flemington municipal court, the NJSCPA announced Friday.

Wilferth owns and operates Catnip Friends Rescue" Read full article using this link http://www.lehighvalleylive.com/phillipsburg/index.ssf/2015/12/rescue_operator_charged_with_a.html

Posted by Animal Advocates at 11:33 AM

G+1 Recommend this on Google

Newer Post

Home

Older Post

Four legged friends (and enemies)

Tuesday, February 2, 2016

New Jersey: Linda Wilferth, 57, who runs Catnip Friends Rescue, takes plea deal in cruelty case

Why we need to scrutinize anyone who runs a non-profit rescue and brags about pulling animals from "kill" shelters. According to tax records, Wilferth managed to get more than \$80,000 in donations for her rescue in 2014. Where is the money going? Is anyone keeping track of these animals they pull from shelters and proof that they are actually finding homes for them??

Catnip Friends Cat Rescue Inc
Flemington, New Jersey
EIN: 26-1687705

ADDRESS: 203 MAIN STREET NO 137, 08822-1680

IN CARE OF NAME: LINDA WILFERTH

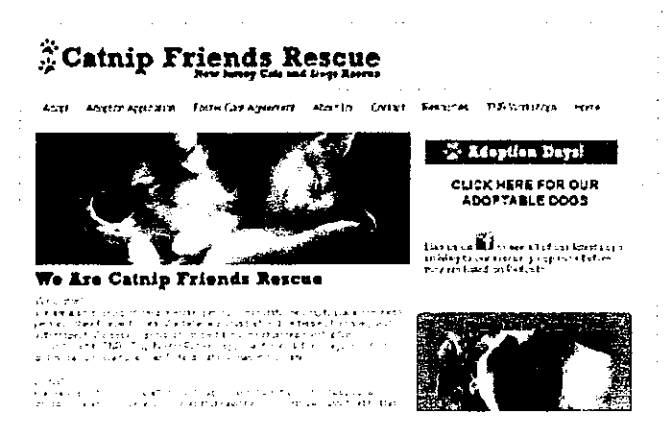
TAX PERIOD: 12/2014

INCOME AMOUNT: \$81,796.00

NEW JERSEY -- The owner of a New Jersey-based pet rescue group accepted a plea agreement Thursday in connection with cruelty charges in the death of a dog.

Linda Wilferth, 57, of Phillipsburg runs Catnip Friends Rescue in the Flemington area.

Wilferth appeared in municipal court on Thursday to answer to two charges of failing to provide an animal with necessary care — one charge was civil and one was criminal. Before trial began, she accepted a plea agreement and pleaded guilty to the civil charge, a court administrator confirmed.



The criminal charge, a disorderly persons offense punishable by up to \$1,000, and up to six months in jail or community service, was dropped. Wilferth was ordered to pay a \$500 fine and court costs, which came to \$33.

A call to the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' hotline prompted an investigation in November into the online purchase of a dog that later became sick and died.

"NJSPCA's investigation revealed that Wilferth sold a dog for \$500 to a consumer," Col. Frank Rizzo, superintendent of the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' law enforcement division, said in a press release in December when the charges were announced.

A few days later the dog became ill and its owner returned the dog to Wilferth, Rizzo said. "Wilferth knowingly took the sick dog back into her possession and failed to provide any veterinary care," he said. "The dog died the following day."

Catnip Friends operates online, said New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals spokesman Matt Stanton, but the person who purchased the dog returned it to Wilferth in Flemington. That's why the charges were filed in Flemington Municipal Court, Stanton said.

(NJ.com - Feb 2, 2016)

Earlier:

- Linda Wilferth, 57, who runs Catnip Friends Rescue, charged with animal cruelty



Recommend this on Google

Labels: animal cruelty, animal death, february 2016, involved in rescue, new jersey, non-profit, rescue group

No com

Linda Wilferth <lindacps@yahoo.com>

Jul 21 at 9:28 PM

To Esq. Dante DiPirro

Hi Dante,


I know it is not common but I want to go to trail. I am sick of this dog and pony show brought on by Libby Williams.

Please let me know how to proceed.

Thanks You!

Linda


· Reply · 1 · 2 hrs

 **Rescue-Watch** "SERGEANT AMATO: The complaint, Your Honor, came from the consumer who purchased the puppy from Ms. Wilferth who has a rescue in Hunterdon County. The puppy was purchased, it wasn't sick at the time, got sick the next day, there's -- could be an incubation period of an illness. According to the e-mails and the discovery obtained from the consumer, the corresponding between Ms. Wilferth and the consumer states that the day that Ms. Wilferth offered to take the puppy back in accordance with the consumer fraud act to assume liability the dog was taken back, it was sick that day. According to my finding she did not take the dog to the vet. She called the vet, as the vet has clearly told us that she did not see the puppy but she gave what would be standard medication of symptoms that Ms. Wilferth was explaining. Unfortunately, that dog did pass away. It was also related to the consumer that the dog was euthanized, the dog was not euthanized. It passed away so there was a concern of a misrepresentation of what really happened to this animal.


THE COURT : All right. That does, therefore, raise the issue of timeliness, had the animal been taken to the vet rather than receive phone information this charge may not -- might not have been filed on both circumstances."

The real story.


Like · Reply · 2 hrs

 **Bob Cogswell** Was the puppy ever vetted, vaxed? I'm only guessing, if yes, the court would have gotten that info from her lawyer.

Like · Reply · 1 · 1 hr

 **Rescue-Watch** Bob Cogswell, we have obtained the entire court transcript.

Like · Reply · 1 hr

 **Bob Cogswell** Just the part that's said by the judge... Do you understand you are pleading guilty (or no

Rescue-Watch

December 11, 2015 ·

N.J. SPCA charges Catnip Friends Rescue owner with animal cruelty

December 11, 2015 / NJ.com / by Sallie Graziano

http://www.nj.com/.../nj_sPCA_charges_catnip_friends_owner_wi...

Other media coverage:

Rescue operator charged with animal cruelty in dog's death

December 11, 2015 / By Steve Novak | Lehigh Valley News

http://www.lehighvalleylive.com/.../rescue_operator_charged_w...

NJ animal rescuer just let sick dog die, NJSPCA says

December 11, 2015 / NJ 101.5 / By Louis C. Hochman

<http://nj1015.com/nj-animal-welfare-officer-just-let-sick-.../>



N.J. SPCA charges Catnip Friends Rescue owner with animal cruelty

A Phillipsburg woman faces charges for failing to provide veterinary care for a dog that later died.

NJ.COM

Like Comment Share



8

Top Comments

18 shares

2 Comments



Write a comment...



Harve Morgan Looks like this one may participate in the dog flipping game in order to maintain the cat rescue. No money in cats.

Like · Reply · 3 · December 11, 2015 at 7:31pm



Harve Morgan Is this the one who is an ACO or something?

Like · Reply · December 11, 2015 at 7:33pm



Rescue-Watch No, not sure why one media outlet(NJ 101.5) referred to her as an "animal welfare officer" because she is not.

Linda Wilferth <lindacps@yahoo.com>

12/26/15 at 10:23 PM

To Esq. Dante DiPirro

Pet Watch New Jersey added 5 new photos.

September 26 ·

A rescue puppy, distemper, a missing body, unanswered questions.

Where is Lily?

Catnip Friends Rescue / Linda Wilferth
Flemington, NJ

On Saturday, September 19, a young woman named Tasha and her sister walked into the Flemington, NJ Pet Valu and after filling out an "adoption application" and paying \$275, walked out with a new puppy named Lily.

By Tuesday, 3 days later, Tasha emailed Linda to report that Lily had been coughing since the first day but now was "tired, throwing up, has diarrhea, can't really walk, and has no appetite!"

Linda replied: "i will come get her. can you meet me at pet valu" and Tasha's mother delivered her to Linda at 2 PM for what she thought would be vet medical treatment by Catnip's veterinarian.

Tasha, hearing nothing by that evening, repeatedly emailed and called Linda for updates and then received a call from Linda on Wednesday that Lily had been "euthanized for distemper and that all her organs had shut down".

Tasha, stunned and grief-stricken beyond belief, emailed Linda after their brief conversation, frantically asking "what tests were run; what was her diagnosis; what about our other dog getting sick; what about the other puppies in the same litter; can I order an autopsy; who was the vet; on what grounds was Lily euthanized; you euthanized her without my permission, knowledge or approval; when can I have her back, I want her body back; what hospital was she kept in overnight; I want all her vet and vaccine information, all phone numbers, I want everything, she was my dog and you decided for me without giving me the option to take her to my vet for treatment! I need answers. Oh and why didn't you answer my phone calls that morning? And why was my fb post on the Catnip page deleted when I demanded someone get in touch with me?"

Her numerous calls and emails went unanswered until Thursday afternoon, September 24, when Linda finally emailed:

"Hi Tahsa (sic),

It is heartbreaking to lose a puppy and this is really sad for us as well. You get in rescue to save lives and do the best you can to get them to that happy ending!. You wanted to foster I actually think that would be a good experience for you, when you walk in someone else's shoes you can see what happens from their vantage point. You see the happy times when you take them to the vets for simple spay, neuter and try and heal them. There are the sad times when you get a pit in your stomach hold them

when their time is up. And yes that is what fostering is about the good and sad. What ever that individual needs.

In the south puppies not making it happens pretty much daily. I do not know how they deal with it. We got a call the same day you returned the pup from transport that the pup had been exposed to distemper from another rescue on board. I believe none of them made it I did not call the other people to find out it is not my business.. To figure out exact causes of death takes test and time. Vets do not instantly know but can go on clinical experience and take educated guesses like we do at times. Your pup was vaccinated, dewormed and for some reason took a turn for the worse fast! WE will never know if she had perfect, lungs, heart kidneys inside to process things. There are events in life that even though we try our best we can not for see (sic) and money can not (sic) fix.

My vet says parvo can break at anytime until they have all 3 vaccines. So any puppy in any rescue runs this risk. We have a good track record but because we are in rescue sadly once in a while something like this can happen. We try our best to prevent it. I am sorry this happened and I have had to heal my heart many times for the cats, kittens and pups who have not made the sad fate of being a pet discarded by humans. You have to remember the people who don't care to spay their pets, not even keep them in houses. Your dog was also a victim of people who just did not care. I honor and respect the vets I work with. They have pulled through the ones they could and have kindly transitioned the ones they could not. IF you did not try he may have fallen prey to heart worm and suffered even more.

So I hope you are still up to the task of fostering in the future when you are through the grieving process. We need more people to help and care so few do. Time does heal.

I am sorry you had to go through this but I can't fix it. I am so sorry you had to go through this. I wish I could take the pain away.

Best Always,
Linda"

Catnip Friends deals in a lot of puppies which purportedly go right from the southern transports to the pet supply store floor the next day, no quarantine period, no nothing. According to the manager at Pet Valu, she has puppies in his store every Saturday. Wilferth purportedly adopts to anyone on the spot, to which Tasha has attested. Linda gives the "shots" – the puppies and dogs are allegedly not examined by a NJ vet prior to sale/adoption, based on paperwork submitted to Pet Watch. The "health record" provided to adopters is laughable and while Catnip Friends talks about the severe overpopulation problems in the south, does not spay and neuter puppies before releasing them.

Tasha is and was Lily's legal owner. No surrender forms were ever provided to or signed by her. No "permission to medically treat" was ever given by her. According to Tasha, Catnip's vet told her "she has not seen Linda or the puppy and knows nothing about the case and that her body is not there at her office."

So we and many others want to know:

ewa kutylowska <evavoytek@yahoo.com>

08/03/05 at 11:00 AM

To Linda Wilferth

Linda, I do not know her. Call our shelter & ask for Kelly, Karina or Danielle, see if they know her. I will call my friend from NYCity, she knows a lot of people. Also call NJ health Dept., they should have info on shelters & rescues. Good luck, Eva

Linda Wilferth <lindacps@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hi Eva,

I have been living a nightmare. 8 cats from an apt complex in Flemington were caught by a hired pest control agency and the property manager did not tell me. This happened last Tuesday when I was out trapping the tenants told me the good news. He said they would all go to shelters and now get adopted which is what they deserved.

I was a crazy lady....of course it was moms and babies and I had already spayed 3 females and adopted out 5 kittens.....so I was doing my best on top of the other colonies I handle.

I was told the cats were in the Edison shelter and of course they were not. It just so happened that that day Al Peterson was there from NJSPCA and he told me he would help locate them. By Thursday evening he had not and we were told they were handed off to Jane Osgood (do you know her) a rescuer.

Al was supposed to check it out and when he did not I complained about him on Friday and said how slow they were to respond and this could mean cruelty or animal dealing. I wanted my spayed cat back and her kitten.

I have no answers. Do you know of Jane Osgood? Is she real and is the place clean etc.

I thought you would enjoy this one. I was hysterical

1 your client in. You will offer brief testimony and
2 acknowledge her right to a trial and acknowledge a
3 representation by counsel and that she's voluntarily
4 waiving the same. All right?

5 MR. DiPIRRO: Yes, Your Honor.

6 THE COURT: Ma'am, please keep in mind your
7 voice is being recorded. That black device is a
8 microphone, you do not have to speak into it but you do
9 have to keep your voice up and audible. You can't nod
10 your head. If you nod your head, or otherwise don't
11 speak loudly enough, I will be asking you to keep your
12 voice up, do you understand?

13 MS. WILFERTH: Yes.

14 THE COURT: All right. If you raise your
15 right hand please.

16 L I N D A W I L F E R T H, DEFENDANT, SWORN

17 THE COURT: All right. Put your hand down.
18 Please state your name and then spell your last name
19 for the record.

20 THE WITNESS: My name is Linda Wilferth, W-i-
21 l-f-e-r-t-h.

22 THE COURT: All right. Mr. DiPirro, please
23 proceed.

24 MR. DiPIRRO: Thank you.

25 EXAMINATION BY MR. DiPIRRO:

1 Q So you've heard today that you're agreeing to
2 dismiss -- that -- have the criminal charge dismissed
3 but you are willing to settle the civil charge and to
4 pay a civil sum of -- in the amount of \$500?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Okay. And you understand that you have an
7 opportunity to go to trial today but instead of that
8 you're agreeing to the settlement?

9 A Yes.

10 Q Okay. And you agree that Mr. Amato or the
11 SPCA will be able to contact the vet, make sure that
12 any care that you're getting is appropriate?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay. And in terms of what's been alleged
15 here, it was alleged that you failed to provide care,
16 could you briefly state what kind of care you provided
17 to this particular animal?

18 A I did take the puppy in question to the
19 veterinarian, she did prescribe medicine and
20 unfortunately the puppy still passed away.

21 Q Okay. And you understand that instead of
22 going to trial you voluntarily and knowingly are
23 willing to settle this civil allegation today?

24 A Yes.

25 MR. DiPIRRO: Okay. Anything further, Your

1 Honor?

2 THE COURT: There is an issue of timing, is
3 that what I understand counsel, as to whether or not
4 this was all done in a timely fashion? Is that the
5 reason the complaint was issued?

6 SERGEANT AMATO: The complaint, Your Honor,
7 came from the consumer who purchased the puppy from Ms.
8 Wilferth who has a rescue in Hunterdon County. The
9 puppy was purchased, it wasn't sick at the time, got
10 sick the next day, there's -- could be an incubation
11 period of an illness. According to the e-mails and the
12 discovery obtained from the consumer, the corresponding
13 between Ms. Wilferth and the consumer states that the
14 day that Ms. Wilferth offered to take the puppy back in
15 accordance with the consumer fraud act to assume
16 liability the dog was taken back, it was sick that day.
17 According to my finding she did not take the dog to the
18 vet. She called the vet, as the vet has clearly told
19 us that she did not see the puppy but she gave what
20 would be standard medication of symptoms that Ms.
21 Wilferth was explaining. Unfortunately, that dog did
22 pass away. It was also related to the consumer that
23 the dog was euthanized, the dog was not euthanized. It
24 passed away so there was a concern of a
25 misrepresentation of what really happened to this

1 animal.

2 THE COURT: All right. That does, therefore,
3 raise the issue of timeliness, had the animal been
4 taken to the vet rather than receive phone information
5 this charge may not -- might not have been filed on
6 both circumstances.

7 MR. DiPIRRO: If I may on that issue, Your
8 Honor, again, my client strongly defends her position
9 in this matter and that's why she's settling without an
10 admission of liability as has been agreed by the
11 parties and the Court, and it's because of the
12 allegations and the vagaries of proceeding more than
13 anything else that she's willing to settle on the civil
14 matter. Again, when she obtained, she rescued this
15 dog, she was given copies of vaccinations for
16 everything for the dog.

17 THE COURT: Counsel, no one is alleging
18 obviously that she mistreated the dog, that's not --
19 that's not the issue here, and even though it is the
20 civil proceeding I still need a factual basis --

21 MR. DiPIRRO: Yes, Your Honor.

22 THE COURT: -- which supports the charge.

23 MR. DiPIRRO: Understood.

24 THE COURT: And as far as I understand it,
25 based upon what the sergeant just placed on the record

1 and the information that the defendant just provided
2 during her voir dire, it's the timeliness issue. Had
3 she taken the dog to the vet this charge may not have
4 been filed. Again, I don't know the full factors, but
5 that in-and-of-itself, as far as I'm -- I'm satisfied
6 that that establishes --

7 MR. DiPIRRO: Perfect, Your Honor.

8 THE COURT: -- the requisite factual basis.

9 MR. DiPIRRO: Very good.

10 THE COURT: Therefore I will accept the
11 agreement that has been reached and I will follow the
12 recommendation, again, with the consent of the SPCA
13 officer. The fine will be in the amount of \$500 and
14 that is to the ZZA 014626 charge and court costs in the
15 amount of \$33. The related charge under ZZA 014625
16 will be dismissed, and further an order will be
17 submitted which counsel has agreed to draft.

18 And in it, counsel, I will ask that you
19 specifically provide for the one year agreement in
20 addition to the other factors which I know you need on
21 behalf of your client.

22 MR. DiPIRRO: Yes.

23 THE COURT: A copy will then be provided to
24 Court and a copy will be provided to the SPCA as well.

25 SERGEANT AMATO: Thank you, Your Honor.

1 MR. DiPIRRO : Thank you, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: Thank you both for your -- all
3 three of you rather, for your cooperation.

4 Payment tonight or do we need a time payment
5 schedule?

6 MR. DiPIRRO: Yes we can pay.

7 THE COURT: It'll be paid tonight. Thank you
8 very much. Thank you, sir.

9 MR. DiPIRRO: Thank you, Your Honor.

10 THE COURT: Thank you.

11 * * * * *

LAW OFFICE OF DANTE DI PIRRO, LLC
By: Dante DiPirro, Esq. # 0323411987
77 Snyderstown Road
Hopewell, New Jersey 08525
dante@dantelawyer.com
609.429.0779

Attorney for Defendant Linda Wilferth

Flemington Municipal Court
Docket Numbers:
2289-ZZA-014625
2289-ZZA-014626

State of New Jersey,

Civil Action

v.

ORDER

Linda Wilferth.

This matter having been resolved on January 28, 2016, and this form of Order to memorialize that resolution having been submitted to the Court, the Municipal Prosecutor, and NJSPCA pursuant to the five-day rule, and for good cause shown.

It is on this 12th day of April, 2016.

hereby ORDERED as follows:

WHEREAS, in September 2015 Linda Wilferth's non-profit animal rescue group, Catnip Friends, rescued a puppy and found the dog a home; and;

WHEREAS, on September 22, 2015, the adopter called to say the dog was sick, Wilferth took back the dog and called her veterinarian, the vet prescribed antibiotics, and Wilferth picked up and administered the antibiotics; and;

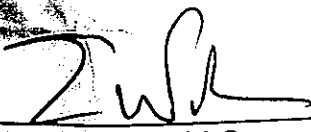
WHEREAS, notwithstanding this, the dog passed away the following morning; and;

WHEREAS, Wilferth received complaint #2289-ZZA-014625 under N.J.S.A. 4:22-17a4 (disorderly persons charge - failure to provide necessary care) and complaint #2289-ZZA-014626 under N.J.S.A. 4:22-26(4) (civil allegation - failure to provide necessary care); and

WHEREAS, the complaints were resolved on January 28, 2016 in Flemington Municipal Court prior to trial.

NOW THEREFORE, the resolution is hereby memorialized as follows:

1. Complaint #2289-ZZA-014625 is hereby dismissed.
2. Complaint #2289-ZZA-014626 is hereby settled without any admission of liability. Wilferth agrees to pay the sum of \$500, and for a period of one year the NJSPCA shall be permitted to talk to her veterinarian, Maryann Millford, DVM, about the care provided to her animals.
3. Nothing herein shall prohibit Wilferth from performing animal rescue, or possessing or working with animals.


Eric Perkins, J.M.C.

From: "Dante DiPirro, Esq." <dante@dantelawyer.com>
To: Linda Wilferth <lindacps@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 31, 2016 6:47 PM
Subject: Re: wilferth: interesting question

Linda, it sounds like your friend is referring to the prosecutor, a woman named Mary Mott of Baptistown NJ. She was sitting in a room immediately to the right of the court officer who was doing the security scans. She was wearing a skirt/dress. She had straight dark brwn hair a few inches below her shoulders. I would not be surprised at all if Libby Williams called her (as Phil Amato clearly did before the trial). If she did speak with Williams on the phone she may not have known what she looked like and took your friend for her by mistake. Dante

Dante DiPirro, Esq.
Law Office of Dante DiPirro
77 Snyderstown Road, Hopewell, NJ 08525
(Phone) 609.429.0779
(E-mail) dante@dantelawyer.com

On 2016-01-30 10:48 am, Linda Wilferth wrote:

— Forwarded Message —

From: Buff Barr <barbuff@yahoo.com>
To: Linda Wilferth <lindacps@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 30, 2016 10:46 AM
Subject: interesting question

Forgot to tell you about my arrival at court the other night. I was the first one there. After being checked in by the cop there was a lady in the office off to the right that started asking me who i was when I told her I was there for the SPCA case. She had straight dark brown hair a few inches below her shoulders and I think was wearing a navy outfit, maybe a skirt or dress? She asked me at one point if I was Libby Williams which I find to be interesting. I know she was in on the whole orchestration of getting us charged, but for her name to be so well know and just thrown around I think is interesting. She obviously played a key role when she couldn't even have known the facts.

Buff Barr <barrbuff@yahoo.com>

12/24/15 at 7:54 AM

To Linda Wilferth

since we haven't been "shut down for animal cruelty" On Rescue Watch=Sanctuary Watch this morning.

Rescue-Watch shared Sanctuary Watch's photo.

December 22 at 1:07pm ·

Sharing from Sanctuary Watch

"We believe the greatest challenge facing animal rescue today is the pressure to take in more animals than can be responsibly cared for."

 Sanctuary Watch's photo.

Sanctuary Watch

Like Page

December 22 at 1:37am · Seattle, WA ·

We believe the greatest challenge facing animal rescue today is the pressure to take in more animals than can be responsibly cared for. There are more rescue groups with animal care facilities than there were 10 years ago—and some of these rescues are run on good intentions and lack the professional expertise and resources required to care for large numbers of animals. The result is an increasing number of animal rescues being shut down for animal cruelty. The ASPCA estimates 25% of new hoarding cases in the US are rescues and shelters, and that percentage grows year-over-year.

Here are just a few from this year: Sugar Bear Dog & Cat Sanctuary, Peaceable Farms, Catnip Friends Rescue, Lawrence County Animal Shelter, Canterberrie Creek Heritage Farm, Pit Bulls for PTSD, Sweet Paws Spa, Drey's Alert Dogs, Pit Bull Kisses, Oops-A-Dazy Rescue, Golden S Rescue, Dogs Deserve Life.

The tragic pattern in these failed rescues is a good intentioned rescuer that exceeds their capacity for care but doesn't stop rescuing animals. Their mission to save an animal's life supersedes all else, and they can't see the quality of care slip and the negative impact it has on their animals.

With over-capacity shelters desperate to reduce euthanasia rates, a rescue group's offer to pull a dog can be an answer to a prayer. With so many lives to try and save, animals are leaving the shelter, but where are they going?

The Humane Society of North Texas (HSNT) knows! Their rescue placement protocol raises the bar on quality of life. In addition to providing a determination letter from the IRS that proves a rescue group is a registered 501c3 and filling out an application, rescues must complete an interview process that includes an onsite evaluation of their facilities. Learn more about HSNT's protocol in Gail Bennison's article, the State of Sheltering: <http://www.fwtx.com/artic.../fwtxmag/features/state-sheltering>

LAW OFFICE OF DANTE DI PIRRO, LLC
By: Dante DiPirro, Esq. # 0323411987
77 Snyderstown Road
Hopewell, New Jersey 08525
dante@dantelawyer.com
609.429.0779

Attorney for Defendant Linda Wilferth

Flemington Municipal Court
Docket Numbers:
2289-ZZA-014625
2289-ZZA-014626

State of New Jersey,

Civil Action

v.

ORDER

Linda Wilferth.

This matter having been resolved on January 28, 2016, and this form of Order to memorialize that resolution having been submitted to the Court, the Municipal Prosecutor, and NJSPCA pursuant to the five-day rule, and for good cause shown,

It is on this 12th day of April, 2016.

hereby ORDERED as follows:

WHEREAS, in September 2015 Linda Wilferth's non-profit animal rescue group, Catnip Friends, rescued a puppy and found the dog a home; and;

WHEREAS, on September 22, 2015, the adopter called to say the dog was sick, Wilferth took back the dog and called her veterinarian, the vet prescribed antibiotics, and Wilferth picked up and administered the antibiotics; and;

WHEREAS, notwithstanding this, the dog passed away the following morning; and;

WHEREAS, Wilferth received complaint #2289-ZZA-014625 under N.J.S.A. 4:22-17a4 (disorderly persons charge - failure to provide necessary care) and complaint #2289-ZZA-014626 under N.J.S.A. 4:22-26(4) (civil allegation - failure to provide necessary care); and

WHEREAS, the complaints were resolved on January 28, 2016 in Flemington Municipal Court prior to trial.

NOW THEREFORE, the resolution is hereby memorialized as follows:

1. Complaint #2289-ZZA-014625 is hereby dismissed.
2. Complaint #2289-ZZA-014626 is hereby settled without any admission of liability. Wilferth agrees to pay the sum of \$500, and for a period of one year the NJSPCA shall be permitted to talk to her veterinarian, Maryann Millford, DVM, about the care provided to her animals.
3. Nothing herein shall prohibit Wilferth from performing animal rescue, or possessing or working with animals.


Eric Perkins, J.M.C.





91

he sick one-year-old Chiweenie adopted by the Gottlieb family from the Catnip Friends Rescue ton. (Photo courtesy of the Gottlieb family)

confused. He and Nate Barson(ACO) were at Dr Milford's office in Ringoes NJ where I took the pup's body for cremation and they knew she treated the puppy as she does for us all the time if she is not around. This is based on our 8 years of working together.

I asked Dr Milford what they said and she told me " Nate Barson said to her " I KNOW IT IS RESCUE BUT YOU HAVE TO DO BETTER".

End of story we thought nothing of it. Sometimes animals just die. Even at her office where we have boarded cats sometimes they have died in her care. Nate Barson and Dr Milford have a business arrangement. Nate brings all the strays that he picks up for boarding to Dr Milford's in Ringoes.

Nate Barson called me that Monday night after his investigation of our rescue and said " Phil Amato and I are not shutting your rescue down but we are charging you with an administrative charge for no "NJ health certificate." I said I did not know we needed a NJ health certificate but thank you for letting me know. I will pass the information along to Buff Barr, the woman I started the rescue with. I was still confused but they were the authorities.

Tasha Hawash who signed our adoption contract and took the puppy home, we later found out she has mental illness known as "Conversion Disorder" . This kind of explains why she went seriously crazy on FB called NJ 101.5, Kane in your corner. It was a sad and challenging time. She wrote on Channel 12 news FB page" I have contacted Libby Williams and the NJSPCA and I Want to get her in trouble"

Two months passed by and we heard nothing from the NJSPCA. Then on Thanksgiving I got title 4 charges for Animal Cruelty civil and criminal. not the administrative charges Nate Barson said we would get. You can imagine how I felt. Buff and I have been in the streets of Hunterdon county NJ spaying and neutering cats for over 15 years. My life has been about ending the suffering of strays and shelter animals. I am no martyr it is in my heart and soul to do this quietly with Buff and a few friends.

They were serious charges of criminal animal cruelty. The NJSPCA made some things up like the adoption fee and they said I just let the puppy die in the story they posted on their FB page and the ones they sent to the media.

People who read it told me it seemed like something was missing. it was a story but not really. I have helped so many people over the years it was big gossip in my community.

I was horrified and scared so I went on an Animal Law Page to Hire an attorney. The first person I spoke to was Elena Strauss and she said she hated pups coming in to NJ and they had to see me as a weak person to file charges because I had a vet prescribe treatment.

She is also friends with a woman named Libby Williams who runs Pet Watch NJ and Rescue watch and within minutes of that phone call my citations were all over facebook and are still up there today.

Being a single woman alone and never have been to court the fear was overwhelming. I hired Dante DiPirro from Hopewell NJ from the animal law page and asked him if he covered cases like this.

A woman in Cream Ridge NJ named Stacey Tilton of Amazing Mutts Puppy Rescue had just got the same charges as me a week before and she had 4 counts of them. Her attorney reached out to me and said have Dante reach out to him. I sent an e-mail twice to Dante asking him to contact William and Dante only replied back he was all prepared. So I figured he and Bill Spoke. They never did. Dante ignored me and lied to me.

Libby Williams mentioned above who is also friends with Phil Amato of the NJSPCA for over 7 years that I know of posted on her 2 web sites (Pet Watch and Rescue Watch) and told people if they ever had a flea or a worm on an adopted animal from me could contact her and "she would file the" Animal Cruelty charges against me" for the NJSPCA". These 2 facebook pages were kept open for 2 years for Phil Amato's case against me and are still up today!

I pointed them out to Dante DiPirro and he did not even contact her. He said he could not find them. I sent him the links and I have copies of that in writing. There is a lot of fiction/fabrication on that page.

I got my vet Dr Milford to come to court as the main witness. I thought she was on my side and she had no reason not to be but looking back I think she came because she has a "HISTORY" with not only my rescue group but also with Nate Barson (ACO) and others of prescribing medication without seeing the pet.

The night of my court case was also the very first time I met Dante DiPirro and Phil Amato.

I met Dante for the very first time in the parking lot. He had us all waiting in front of a dark court house with no lights on and it was close to 6pm. One of my fosters went up to the door and read a sign that said court will be in the Police Station.

My vet was next to arrive and I said hi to her. Dr Milford's first words to me were "I talked to my brother in law, he is a lawyer" and "I legally *can prescribe medication to you without seeing the animal.*"

I honestly thought I sure hope so because we have been doing this for over 8 years if you were not available immediately for an appointment.

My vet said hi to Phil Amato as we were walking into the police station and she said he had come into her office the day before my court case to prepare her. My lawyer just got back from Mexico on Monday with his girlfriend and told me he only needed Monday to prepare for my case not to worry.

He had no discovery and had me bring my vet to court so I am not sure what he prepared. It was my idea to have all my fosters come to court to show I have never denied vet care, nor would I. I

had over 25 people show up and could of had more. Mary Melfi the Hunterdon County clerk was an advocate of me helping the cats in Flemington when she was on council.

I have an e-mail From Dante saying that if we did not have discovery before the court date he would reschedule. But that did not happen.

On 1/28/16 Dante Dipirro left me in the hall of the police station and did not explain what was happening. He came up to me with the printed "Facebook page from Rescue-watch and said "have you ever seen this"? At that time I was in disbelief, I said Dante I sent that to you. That was my first clue he never read my e-mails. He was reading it out loud to me when they all went in a room and shut the door in my face.

I have no idea what they said about me. He popped out of a door in the hall and said NJSPCA will give me a really good deal and my name will be cleared if I pay a \$500 fine. I wanted it dismissed and did not know why that was not happening. Dante said it could be worse I could go to trial and loose and then have criminal charges against me. He said this "cleared my name", kind of like a "dismissal with a fine".

I was really scared and confused, things were happening really, really fast. When Dante walked to the door and looked at the judge and shrugged his shoulders and said maybe we would win or maybe not I thought he knows best but I really do not understand being charged at all. I did the best I know how to do and in a manner like I always did.

My Dad and Mom wanted to come to court. My Dad is 86 years old and would sit in his chair reading on the NJSPCA page on FB on I should be killed, locked up and he would cry. My parents both foster kittens for me. I told Dante that and he never read that as well. At that moment I wish my Dad was there to give me advice. If he and my Mom came to court I would have just worried about them being upset. I think if Dante did what I hired him to do this case would have been dismissed.

Dante was absent for long periods of time. He did not tell me his mother died. He did not contact William Sanderson like I asked twice who won a similar case like mine with the NJSPCA.. He said he would reschedule the trial if he did not have discovery but instead forced me to make a decision without REAL counsel. He never read all of my e-mails. Doesn't a paid attorney do that? He told me in an e-mail judges side with NJSCPA after my case when I asked him what happened that night because it was never explained to me so I had to make choices without full information.

Dante Dipirro still has a refund check for me from the transcript company he never dropped in the mail. I asked for proof in writing my named was cleared and he said ok I will ask the judge. When he wrote the letter for the judge to sign Phil Amato said that I agreed the NJSPCA officers could "come in my house and my fosters houses at any time to make sure we were treating the animal properly". I never would put myself or foster through that. To prove that I did not agree to that Dante told me he needed another \$100 from me for the transcript.

I sent him the money and of course it was not in the transcripts. I got a refund of \$43 and Dante said pick it up in my office. I said I am not driving to Hopewell drop it in the mail. He said my Flemington office, I own a solar panel company. When I hired him I did not know I was hiring a solar panel salesman. Where does he put his efforts? Still to this day he has not mailed my check back. He just keeps asking me for more money. I did talk to another lawyer after all this happened and he said I was "railroaded." In his opinion no judge would have given me criminal charges for this. I still believe I am 100 per cent innocent and it should have been dismissed.

When you pay a lawyer can you expect them to do as you ask or at least call you and tell you they do not want to do it? When you take a dog to the vet you have used for over 8 years and she prescribes medicine for a puppy that someone else had for 4 days...and it passes.

Why would the NJSPCA not look into the adopter and vet as well? Why would each day Nate Barson and Phil Amato keep changing their stories about what I am or what I did?

Why did 60 days later I get animal cruelty charges. If it was real animal cruelty, would they not charge you right on the spot?

Sincerely ,

Linda Wilferth
331 Hudson Street
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865

11/13/17 * I DO NOT KNOW what
the "discovery" was for my first
case *. Yet the attorney who
told me to take a deal that
has hurt me,
it can not find work
am slipping into the poverty
Why - why - why?? would you allow
this.
07v

WebMD

Conversion Disorder

Important

It is possible that the main title of the report Conversion Disorder is not the name you expected. Please check the synonyms listing to find the alternate name(s) and disorder subdivision(s) covered by this report.

Synonyms

- Briquet's Syndrome
- Hysterical Neurosis, Conversion Type

Disorder Subdivisions

- None

General Discussion

Conversion disorder is a mental illness characterized by the loss or alteration of physical functioning without any physiological reason. These physical symptoms are the result of emotional conflicts or needs. The symptoms usually appear suddenly and at times of extreme psychological stress. A lack of concern over the debilitating symptoms (la belle indifférence), which commonly accompanies this illness, may be a clue to distinguishing it from the physiological disorder it may mimic.

Resources

National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse

1211 Chestnut Street
Suite 1207
Philadelphia, PA 19107-6312

Dante DiPirro, Esq. <dante@dantelawyer.com>

02/25/16 at 2:03 PM

To: Wilferth, Linda

Linda, this is to follow up on my call to you earlier today.

This will confirm that you have approved the purchase of the transcript of the January 28, 2016 proceeding in Flemington Municipal Court in which we put the settlement on the record. We will use this to review what was agreed to, and hopefully in support of the form of order that I submitted to the judge (which we contend should not include a provision allowing the NJSPCA "visits" to your home or those of other rescue families. The transcription service estimates the cost of the transcript to be about \$50, and you need to provide a deposit of \$100. I have filled out the form for the transcript request. You can drop off a check to me made out to J&J Court Transcribers, Inc. for the transcript deposit.

Please also drop off a check made out to Law Office of Dante DiPirro for \$953.50 which is the balance due for legal services up to today. For your files I am attaching a statement (listing the invoice amounts and payments) and providing a copy of invoices for December, January and February (up to this morning).

Thank you. Dante PS You can drop them off to me in Flemington today at 270 S. Main Street, Suite 203, Flemington NJ 08822.

--
 Dante DiPirro, Esq.
 Law Office of Dante DiPirro
 77 Snydertown Road, Hopewell, NJ 08525
 (Phone) 609.429.0779
 (E-mail) dante@dantelawyer.com

99

RARITAN TWP
CMM1130

NJ AUTOMATED COMPLAINT SYSTEM
CHARGE DISPOSITION INQUIRY

09/22/2017
14:29

COMPLAINT NO : ZZA 2017 016965 COURT CODE: 1021 COURT DATE : 09 06 2017
DEFENDANT : LINDA WILFERTH RELATED COMP: N
CHARGE SEQ : 001 CHARGE STATUS: DISP COMPLAINT STATUS: DISP
OFFENSE: 4:22-17A(3) ACSX: AUX OFFNS: DRUG CODE:
DEGREE: 0 CRUELTY TO ANIMALS-UNNECESSARY CRUELTY
PLEA : 2 PLEA DT: 09 06 2017 DISP DT: 09 06 2017 FINDING: 2 MODIFY TYPE:
CONDITIONAL STATUS: AMENDED OFFENSE: LICENSE SURRENDERED:

SENTENCE	TERMS CODE	DURATION	TERMS STATUS	SERVED CREDIT
1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.	3.

AMOUNT	AMOUNT	CODE	AMOUNT	CODE	AMOUNT	CODE
FINE:	1.		2.		3.	
COST:	4.		5.		6.	
	7.		8.		9.	
	10.		11.		12.	

OFFENSE COMMENTS:
DISP COMMENTS:

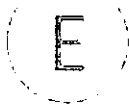
< **Eve, Linda, Melissa Cell.**



Mon, Feb 27, 2017 1:50 PM

Linda/Eve. We love Gidget and are very disappointed with your care for her. We noticed a cough and itching when we were there. SHE HAS FLEAS. Melissa saw that and we verified with our vet. Additionally she has beginning of kennel cough. My wife is cleaning our house and we are worried about our other dog and kids. You should know this because other animals you have rescued may be sick. This has cost us a lot financially and emotionally. We are keeping Gidget? What can you do to make this right?

< **Eve and 2 others(3)**



I'm sorry to hear that. When I was fostering her, I didn't notice any kennel cough, it could be that it has an incubation period. As a foster, we are doing this on a voluntary basis. We all have the best interest. If you want to return Gidget, I will meet up with you and pick her up.

Let me touch b



View all



2:01 PM

Thank you eve. Just wanted to let you know for your other animals. More interested in how linda runs a business putting our family in a bad position. Non profit or not she cannot do this to families. It makes me want to call the spca and rescue me to site



Group conversation



< **Eve and 2 others(3)**



Eve

E

Linda and all the fosters have the animals' best interest at heart. It's not a business, many times she takes money out of her own pocket to take care of these animals. As a foster, I should have been more diligent on taking care of them.

2:14 PM

Linda

L

I am surprised and sorry to hear that. Eve has had gidget in her home playing with her animals and has posted cute pictures of her on fb. We all love gidget and had other families who wanted to adopt her but we held her for you. I think she had been given next guard which is a flea treatment .I will



Group conversation



< **Eve and 2 others(3)**



View all



3:02 PM

Did she get nextguard and when? We were going to give to her tonight and do not want to overmedicate. No where on documents did it say that. Please be honest so we can safely treat gidget

3:07 PM

Linda



The vet should have it noted on your paperwork with the spay the heartworm test, rabies shot, and distemper vaccine. i will call them when I get home from work if you can not see it. There was a lot of vet records to read.

3:33 PM

Melissa called both vets in georgia and neither gave any flea treatment?

3:52 PM

Linda



Group conversation



< Eve and 2 others(3)



Linda

Front line was used per cindie ga foster mom about 2weeks ago. The bordatella vaccine is for kennel cough .

7:07 PM

Tuesday, February 28, 2017



Linda

When we get time we will drop a check in the mail for the nextguard and clavamox. Eve feels awful and her dogs are all fine. her time with gidget was filled with fun and playful moments. We know shes an awesome dog and a great little dog. We all work full time so maybe friday. Have fun with her.

10:09 AM

Fecal sample came back. Gidget has hook worm. Again may want to check other animals. It can be passed on to humans. I informed pet valu

4:46 PM



Group conversation



< **Eve and 2 others(3)**



Tuesday, February 28, 2017

Linda



When we get time we will drop a check in the mail for the nextguard and clavamox. Eve feels awful and her dogs are all fine. her time with gidget was filled with fun and playful moments. We know shes an awesome dog and a great little dog. We all work full time so maybe friday. Have fun with her.

10:09 AM

Fecal sample came back. Gidget has hook worm. Again may want to check other animals. It can be passed on to humans. I informed pet valu

4:46 PM

Eve



Thank you for the update and the info.

9:07 PM



Group conversation



< Linda, Eve(2)



Saturday, February 25, 2017

Eve/ Linda, a picture of gidget at home. She has been scratching herself. Did she have any skin problems? Also wasnt sure if she was microchipped? Thanks brett



6:16 PM

Eve



Group conversation



< Linda, Eve(2)



6:16 PM

Eve



No she is not microchipped. I'm not aware of any skin problems. Try and give her a bath. She looks adorable in her new home.

6:23 PM

6:24 PM Thks

Linda



If you think you will loose her microchip her. If you do not loose your dogs I would not do it. Some vets think it may be bad .dr karen becker who I follow thinks it might add to be another burden on the body that can help contribute to cancer

6:27 PM

Linda



A foreign metal in het bo for y for no reason

6:28 PM



Group conversation



< Eve and 2 others(3)



Monday, February 27, 2017

Linda/Eve. We love Gidget and are very disappointment with your care for her. We noticed a cough and itching when we were there. SHE HAS FLEAS. Melissa saw that and we verified with our vet. Additionally she has beginning of kennel cough. My wife is cleaning our house and we are worried about ou

1:50 PM



View all



1:51 PM

We are keeping gidget... not?

Eve



I'm sorry to hear that. When I was fostering her, I didn't notice any kennel cough, it could be that it has an incubation period. As a



Group conversation



Dante DiPirro, Esq. <dante@dantelawyer.com>

01/31/16 at 6:47 PM

To: Linda Wilferth

Linda, it sounds like your friend is referring to the prosecutor, a woman named Mary Mott of Baptistown NJ. She was sitting in a room immediately to the right of the court officer who was doing the security scans. She was wearing a skirt/dress. She had straight dark brown hair a few inches below her shoulders. I would not be surprised at all if Libby Williams called her (as Phil Amato clearly did before the trial). If she did speak with Williams on the phone she may not have known what she looked like and took your friend for her by mistake. Dante

Dante DiPirro, Esq.
Law Office of Dante DiPirro
77 Snyderstown Road, Hopewell, NJ 08525
(Phone) 609.429.0779
(E-mail) dante@dantelawyer.com

On 2016-01-30 10:48 am, Linda Wilferth wrote:

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Buff Barr <barrbuff@yahoo.com>
To: Linda Wilferth <lindacps@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 30, 2016 10:46 AM
Subject: interesting question

Forgot to tell you about my arrival at court the other night. I was the first one there. After being checked in by the cop there was a lady in the office off to the right that started asking me who I was when I told her I was there for the SPCA case. She had straight dark brown hair a few inches below her shoulders and I think was wearing a navy outfit, maybe a skirt or dress? She asked me at one point if I was Libby Williams which I find to be interesting. I know she was in on the whole orchestration of getting us charged, but for her name to be so well know and just thrown around I think is interesting. She obviously played a key role when she couldn't even have known the facts.

Dante DiPirro, Esq. <dante@dantelawyer.com>

01/13/16 at 6:08 AM

To Linda Wilferth

Linda, yes, normal. In municipal court, no one tends to get down to it until the day of the hearing. I'll push for discovery. You'll push your vet to be available. And we'll set up for the 28th. Dante

Dante DiPirro, Esq.
Law Office of Dante DiPirro
77 Snyderstown Road, Hopewell, NJ 08525
(Phone) 609.429.0779
(E-mail) dante@dantelawyer.com

**Comments on
The New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to
Animals V. Linda Wilferth**

John C. Saccenti

August 29, 2017

Responsibilities of Expert Witness

1. Identify the authority and powers of an SPCA officer AKA Humane Law Enforcement Officer
2. Identify the content of training given in the classes I have offered and attended by HLEO Philip Amato including training related to identifying animal cruelty, arrest search and seizure, report writing, investigation responsibilities, and the issuance of summonses.
3. Identify the Police Training Commission mandated performance objectives for the Humane Law Enforcement Officers Course
4. Identify the history and legal status of the NJSPCA
5. Identify the training requirements of a Humane law Enforcement officer and their appointment process
6. Identify the actual training materials used in the training of Mr. Amato
7. Identify the appropriate steps and standards, as identified in the training received by Mr. Amato and current law enforcement practices, for conducting an investigation, and issuing a summons for violations of Title 4 Animal Cruelty Statutes
8. Review all available materials related to this case.
9. Offer an opinion based on training and standard practices regarding the propriety of the actions taken by Mr. Phillip Amato and the merit of the summonses issued to Ms. Wilfrefth

Qualifications

I retired from the Division of Criminal Justice, Police Training Commission, where I was responsible for the development of all basic law enforcement training programs. These programs, which I designed, included the Basic Course for Police Officers, the Basic Course for Investigators, the Basic Course for County Correction Officers, the Basic Course for State Correction Officers, and the Animal Cruelty Investigators Course. When I said I designed these courses, relying on the input from subject matter experts and field interviews, I actually wrote every performance objective in each course, as well as developing all lesson plans where they were required.

After retiring from the Police Training Commission, I was also retained by the NJ Division of Criminal Justice to write the Humane Law Enforcement Officers Course and by the NJ Office of Counter Terrorism to develop counter terrorism training.

I am now the President of Career Development Institute (). We deliver the New Jersey Department of Health approved Certified Animal Control Officer Course, the New Jersey Department of Health approved Certified Animal Cruelty Investigators Course, which is also approved by the NJ Police Training Commission, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection approved Basic Course for Wildlife Rehabilitators. We also offer the New Jersey Police Training Commission approved Basic Course for Humane Law Enforcement Officers, Phase 1. I am also an instructor for these courses in six colleges and three Police Academies in New Jersey where we have offered these courses. Additionally, we also operate animal control/animal cruelty investigator training for the Department of Health of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. where I am a certified animal control officer/cruelty investigator, as well as for the Department of Health of the State of Delaware. Additionally we offer a variety of in-service training programs for law enforcement officers and public health officials who wish to receive continuing education units through the New Jersey Learning Management Network at Rutgers. All NJ certified animal cruelty Investigators have been trained by us and about 80 percent of all animal control

Officers over the last 10 years have been trained by us. Additionally approximately 80% of all SPCA Officers in NJ have been trained by me and my staff.

I have served 8 years as President of the New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association which represents over 400 Boards of Health in NJ. Under the Public Health Practice Standards, the members of Local Boards of Health are responsible for animal control and zoonotic disease control and prevention. I have served as chairperson of the South Brunswick Board of Health or Advisory Board of Health for 29 years and I am still serving in that capacity. Additionally, I served as the President of the National Association of Local Boards of Health. I am presently on the Board of the New Jersey Local Boards of Health Association. In these roles, I have responsibility for issues of zoonotic diseases and animal control and protection. As Chairperson of the Animals in the Community Task Force of Sustainable Jersey, I and other Task Force members work with municipal officials by providing them materials that will assist them in meeting their responsibilities to the residents in regard to animal control and protection.

I have been certified by the Mercer County Superior Court as an expert witness in Law Enforcement/Police training and Animal Welfare training including Animal Control Officer training and Animal Cruelty Investigator training.

Based on the above experiences I have the following comments:

Material Reviewed

I have reviewed the following materials:

1. Letter dated April 7, 2017 from Animal Healthcare of Marlboro LLP with attached billing and treatment comments
2. An unsigned, undated and unattributed document purportedly from the NJ State SPCA carrying the title Case# 20170228-051079
3. Statement dated 4/30/ 2017 by Brett Gottlieb

4. Dog Adoption Contract for Gidget dated 2/25/2017 signed by Brett Gottlieb
5. Documents supplied by the Vidalia Medical Clinic in Vidalia Georgia relating to the health and treatment of Gidget indicating veterinary care on 2/8/17, 2/10/2017 and 2/14/2017
6. Georgia State Department of Agriculture Certificate of Veterinary inspection dated 2/14/2017
7. NJSA Title 4
8. The Police Training Commission approved Basic Course for Humane Law Enforcement Officers including all performance objectives
9. Training manuals, lesson plans and PowerPoints used in the Basic Course for Humane Law Enforcement Officers class attended by Mr. Amato
10. The American Veterinary Medical Association document on *Disease Risks for Dogs in Social Settings*
11. Text messages between Eve Chang, Linda Wilfreth and the Gottliebs dated May 25 through May 27
12. Summon number ZZA 016964 and ZZA 016965
13. Photos taken of Gidget in her foster home in Georgia, taken in her foster home in NJ immediately prior to adoption, and taken with the Gottliebs on adoption day.

Who/What are the SPCA ?

The SPCA was created by an 1868 statute. It is a private corporation and not a government agency. They are private citizens who under this archaic statute are allowed to carry firearms and enforce NJSA Title 4. They are for the most part unpaid volunteers. However some are paid a salary while some are paid by receiving part of the fine money they generate either in cash or benefits. They are

basically unsupervised and answer to no one with the exception of the Bergen County SPCA chapter that now answers to the County prosecutor. The State Commission of Investigation referred to the SPCA a gun club and is presently investigating it for corruption. Most recently the Middlesex County Prosecutor has ordered the NJSPCA to desist operating in that county.

I designed the Humane Law Enforcement Course while working as a consultant to the Police Training Commission and offered the first Course in 2012. It was the first time any SPCA agents or officers were ever formally trained in their history.

Training Review

HLEO Phase 1

From April 28 through June 30, 2012 Mr. Amato completed Phase 1 of the Basic Course for Humane Law Enforcement Officers at the Bergen County Public Safety Institute. This training was conducted primarily on Saturdays and consisted only of 9 days of training. Based on this training he was certified by the New Jersey Police Training Commission as having completed phase 1 of the Basic Course for Humane Law Enforcement Officers. (As a point of interest Certified Animal Cruelty Investigators (ACI) receive 14 days of training and Police Officers receive an average of 22 full weeks of training)

Career Development Institute delivered the training Mr. Amato received. I was one of the instructors in that training attended by Mr. Amato. The material covered all aspects of law enforcement as identified by the Police Training Commission. Training in the HLEO Course and the ACI Course is conducted by Police Training Commission certified instructors who are subject matter experts. I was one of the instructors in that training course attended by Mr. Amato.

Students receive a binder which includes materials addressing all performance objectives approved by the NJ Police Training Commission including PowerPoints and handouts. I am attaching a copy of the official Police Training Commission approved HLEO Phase One training. Please note that all performance objectives were addressed during the training. My comments and conclusions are partially based on these materials.

Any subsequent training, known as Phase 2, received by Mr. Amato would have been conducted by and at Division of Criminal Justice Training Academy as per Police Training Commission requirements. This training is firearms range training and is required in order for a HLEO to carry a firearm. State law and an Attorney General Directive also require firearm requalification semi-annually. It would seem prudent to ask for proof that the requalification actually occurred. If not Mr. Amato would be carrying illegally.

Comments on evidence/documents

Based on the review of the above materials and training I am making the following initial comments:

Comments on the Letter dated April 7 from Animal Healthcare of Marlboro LLP with attached billing and treatment comments

The letter describes routine treatment for common problems veterinarians address in the treatment of dogs on a daily basis. Notably there is no indication the veterinarian felt that these conditions were animal abuse despite Mr. Amato's apparent desire to have them characterized as such.

Comments on an unsigned and undated unattributed document purportedly from the NJ State SPCA carrying the title Case# 20170228-051079

Even though it is unsigned and does not even have the name of the person who may have written it, which is against all law enforcement practice and the training he received, and therefore is attributable and possibly inadmissible, I will treat it as if it did in fact come from Mr. Amato.

This document is not an investigative report. In fact it indicates that no independent investigation occurred. It appears to be a biased, unprofessional replication of allegations made by the Gottliebs without a full investigation. At no point do these notes indicate that Amato even attempted to interview the defendant. That is contrary

to basic investigatory techniques and training. Mr. Amato had been taught standard police investigation procedure including fairness, the necessity of investigative reports including how to write one and what was to be included. In fact I taught him that material. This document is not even close to an investigative report. Had he turned this document in during the training he would have failed the class for its omissions, bias and absurd conclusions.

The first paragraph of this document refers to an unrelated incident that occurred on or about 2/28/2016 that would, if presented to a jury or a judge, be prejudicial to the defendant and may indicate a bias Mr. Amato already had against Ms. Wilfreth.

He alleges that Ms. Wilfreth somehow was responsible directly for issues that are common to dogs. However even the Gottliebs admitted that the defendant provided medical records indicating Ms. Wilfreth performed due diligence in insuring that Gidget was in good health through the papers submitted to the Gottliebs from the Vidalia Medical Clinic in Vidalia Georgia and the State of Georgia Department of Agriculture.

There is an unsubstantiated allegation that Ms. Wilfreth was aware that Gidget had fleas prior to sale. He indicates that this admission was in text messages between Eve Chang, the Gottliebs and Ms. Wilfreth. I have reviewed those messages and there is absolutely no indication of this allegation in anything contained in the text.

Comments on Dog Adoption Contract for Gidget dated 2/25/2017

This is a standard contract used by many adoption agencies. Given the fact that many issues with pets are not immediately visible and according to the American Veterinary Medical Association may manifest themselves later, the following statement was agreed to by Mr. Gottlieb by both initialing this section and signing the entire agreement. The contract outlines the responsibilities of the adopter and includes the following statement:

Please indicate you agree with the following statement:

This is an animal that is rescued from an animal shelter and may have come in contact with worms, parasites, parvo, kennel cough, and other possible disease. Even though Catnip Friends Rescue has attempted to treat any known illness, it is your responsibility as the adopter to get this animal to your veterinarian as soon as possible for a complete checkup

Mr. Gottlieb was therefore completely aware that unforeseen issues may occur that would be his responsibility and not the fault of the Ms. Wilfreth.

Comments on the American Veterinary Medical Association (AMVA) document on Disease risks for Dogs in Social Settings. The American Veterinary Medical Association

The AMVA refers to Fleas as one of the “fairly common dog problems” Ms. Wilfreth took every precaution to protect Gidget by having her treated prophylactically with Capstar

The AVMA states that parasites, such as hookworm can be transmitted through water, soil or licking another dog. Ms. Wilfreth took precautions to safeguard Gidget by having her cared for in a private foster home with an experienced caregiver rather than a kennel.

The AVMA recommends dogs receive the Bordetella vaccine to protect against kennel cough. Ms. Wilfreth took the AVMA recommended precaution to protect Gidget by having the veterinarian in Georgia give her the Bordetella vaccine.

Ms. Wilfreth insured the safety of Gidget by all means possible despite the fact that she was not its owner and never had possession of Gidget until approximately one hour before its adoption.

Comments on Photos taken of Gidget in her foster home in Georgia, in her foster home in NJ immediately prior to adoption, and with

the Gottliebs on adoption day and resting playfully on a chair in the Gottlieb home after adoption.

These photos show a happy healthy dog with no indication of discomfort or hair loss prior to the adoption, on adoption day with the Gottliebs happily holding Gidget and later living in the Gottliebs home. There is no indication of any problems. In the Adoption Day photo the Gottliebs appear to be pleased and see no problems with Gidget.

Comments on Charges

The name of the complaining officer on both summonses is unclear. However the complaining officer appears to be different than Mr. Amato. The box on the summonses is checked indicating the complainant was a law enforcement officer If not Amato then who? The issuing officer appears to be Mr. Amato although "his" signatures on the summonses do not match.

Summons ZZA 01698 alleges a violation of NJSA 4:22-17a (3)

4:22-17a (3) states:

A person who shall

Inflict unnecessary cruelty upon a living animal or creature, by any direct or indirect means, including but not limited to through the use of another living animal or creature; or leave the living animal or creature unattended in a vehicle under inhumane conditions adverse to the health or welfare of the living animal or creature; or

None of these conditions even remotely exist in this case.

Amato also charged Ms. Wilfreth with a violation of NJSA 4:22-17a (4)

NJSA 4:22-17a (4) states

Fail, as the owner or as a person otherwise charged with the care of a living animal or creature, to provide the living animal or creature with necessary care.

This claim is patently ridiculous based on the documentation discussed earlier including veterinary care only 11 days prior to adoption and being cared for in a foster home with an experienced loving care provider.

Conclusion

This case is completely without merit. The summonses are absurd and unwarranted. The basic premise that having fleas and/ or kennel cough or even hookworm is criminal animal cruelty goes beyond reason. Should the court agree that fleas are criminal animal cruelty then it would require every Veterinarian in NJ to lose their license for failure to report "animal cruelty" to an appropriate authority. The vast majority of pet owners would be possibly arrested included judicial and law enforcement personnel.

Besides this absurdity, the evidence clearly indicates that every effort was made to maintain Gidget's health by Ms. Wilfreth though veterinary care and a healthy, loving environment. Photographic evidence also indicates a healthy, happy dog. In fact Ms. Wilfreth accomplished this even though she never owned Gidget and never had physical possession of the dog until approximately one hour before adoption by the Gottliebs. It was in fact physically impossible for her to be responsible for the allegations made by Amato.

During training, our students are asked how they would resolve various situations and complete a report. Had this been one of the scenarios and the student indicated he would issue summonses, they would not have been found ready to graduate. The fact that this is so outrageous would lead me to ask if there were/ are ulterior motives particularly since Mr. Amato began his comments with a biasing statement regarding a previous incident with Ms. Wilfreth that he engineered.

08/29/2017

Of particular interest in this regard, I would note here that all fine monies in this case, if required, would go to the NJSPCA and that Mr. Amato recently publically announced he was given a new \$40,000 vehicle for his own use by the officers of the NJSPCA because, as he said, he brings in a lot of fine money. Any system that lets an individual gain personally from issuing summonses to our citizens is inherently corrupt. The blatant misuse of power in this case is an example. The State Commission of Investigation has recommended that the NJSPCA be disbanded because of these issues. The new report will most likely reiterate this recommendation based on their new investigation and supported by the stories of the massive financial corruption in the NJSPCA that has been revealed in recent news media reports.

I would also question why the NJSPCA felt it necessary to contact the press and make negative and inaccurate statements about Ms. Wilfreth. This damaged her reputation and biased opinion against her prior to trial.

Based on my analysis of the evidence presented to me and discussed in this report, I would say that any finding of guilt would be a grave miscarriage of justice and most definitely overturned on appeal.

John C. Saccenti President

Career Development Institute

www.cditraining.org

NJSPCA, Phil Amato, Nate Barson, Dante DiPirro, NJSPCA,
Dear Legislators,

On 9/19/15 a puppy was adopted out from my rescue group Catnip Friends in Flemington NJ to Tasha Hawash of Flemington NJ. After a period of 4 days the puppy was returned to us because the pup became sick. We did not see signs of illness on the day she went home or we would never let her go. The puppy returned to me at Lunch time on 9/22/15 by her mother and the pup appeared to be well hydrated and had a nasal discharge like she had an upper respiratory illness

I was told she was throwing up and had diarrhea. I took the puppy to our vet of over 8 years who was right down the road in Ringoes NJ on that same afternoon (9/22/15), about an hour later. I knew this was during Dr Milfords normal business hours.

When I arrived and stepped in the building, her office manager said she left early for the day. I asked if I could leave a puppy there for evaluation and treatment and she said no but she will call her and I could get medication and just bring her back tomorrow. **The office manager Amy, called the vet and got the medication I needed for overnight. I paid the bill, got the medications and headed home with the pup to see what was going on.**

Our rescues prototype for sick animals and our vet on record is Dr Maryanne Milford in Ringoes NJ. Dr Milford prescribed standard medication for vomiting and an antibiotic her for one night , I paid the bill and took the puppy home and gave them to her like I have done a dozens of other times with our pets. This is exactly what we would always do.

The Puppy seemed fine, she was quiet but that was it. She slept in my kitchen on a blanket and had access to food and water. She got up and drank water while I sat on the floor and watched her. I force fed her some chicken baby food but she did not really want it. I went to bed and the next day to my shock passed away in the early am. I had no indication that this was going to happen. She was alert, hydrated and drinking on her own all good signs.

Tasha Hawash seemed like a sensitive girl so instead of blaming her for violating our adoption contract, by leaving the puppy sick and not taking her to a vet or calling us so we could take her to the vet....

I thought it might be a nicer thing to just tell her the vet put the puppy down. No one who properly cares for an animal would just let the puppy be sick and do nothing. Blaming her and making her feel guilty was not going to bring the pup back. We are easy to reach, the pet store is a place we have been going for 8 years, our phone number is at the top of every contract and that is explained to everyone involved. Sometimes puppies get sick, and it is not often but it is part of life.

Then on Monday 9/28 Phil Amato of the NJSPCA who came to my house, I was not home so I spoke to me over the telephone about this puppy. I told him the above facts and the next day he sent me an e-mail and called me and told me I was like Prada puppies and could get fines of \$55k. He then asked if I had read the information sent me on Prada and I said yes and was very

- Forwarded Message -----

From: Libby Williams <libbywill@embarqmail.com>
To: Linda Wilferth <lindakps@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2013 12:41 PM
Subject: FW: fraud rescue/"lemon" puppy?

Fyi (haven't heard back from her yet. I hope she follows up with the SPCA for starters)

-----Original Message-----

From: Libby Williams [mailto:libbywill@embarqmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2013 5:26 PM
To: 'Amy Pinder'
Subject: RE: fraud rescue/"lemon" puppy?

Hi Amy,

I'm so sorry to hear about your sick puppy. Linda briefly told me about the incident and I will try to help. We're both quite familiar with Joy Bohannon and her out-of-state rescue group. I'm sure you know that it's incorporated under the GARD name but when she comes to NJ, she morphs into Love to Live. I'm assuming she wants everyone to think she's a NJ-based group.

I'm not sure if Consumer Affairs would take this complaint but we can try; and it can also be reported to the NJ SPCA; Phil Amato, an investigator with the SPCA, is a familiar with Bohannon too.

So, a few questions and comments:

Did this adoption/sale take place at Rosedale Mills in Pennington? Would your vet be willing to give you a written statement saying she examined the puppy while under the custody of Love to Live and warned Bohannon about the heart murmur? If so, this could prove that she "knowingly and willingly" sold a sick puppy to you and this would be a violation of the NJ anti-cruelty statute, Title 4.

Do you have all of the email communication between you and Bohannon? Health records to prove she didn't disclose this condition? I would love to see them if you are comfortable sharing them. They could be used as supporting documentation to file a formal complaint with Consumer Affairs, too. Rescues aren't regulated in NJ and wouldn't necessarily fall under the Pet Purchase Protection Act (puppy lemon law) unless the investigator determines this was more of a sale than a legitimate adoption. I feel it's a sale but I don't have any enforcement powers.

On a personal level, I'm appalled that Bohannon, who is in the business of dog rescue and brings a lot of dogs up here from GA, does not spay or neuter the dogs beforehand and still charges you quite a bit for an adoption fee, one that does not include the surgery.

Please let me know how you want to proceed but my suggestion is to first contact the NJ SPCA at 1-800-582-5979 and tell the dispatcher that you need to have Phil Amato call you back about this. He covers Hunterdon County and I'm not sure if Pennington is in Mercer County so Amato may direct you to another officer.

Joy Bohannon has a history here with being banned from several other stores and I would love to see her banned from NJ. But first we want to see justice for your puppy. She should, at the very least, refund the adoption fee.

She also is listed on Pet Abuse.com for selling a sick dog and not having interstate health certificates: <https://www.pet-abuse.com/profiles/20107>.

Please keep me posted, okay?

Libby Williams

-----Original Message-----

From: Amy Pinder [mailto:amy.lauren.pinder@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2013 11:17 AM

To: info@rescue-abuse.com

Subject: fraud rescue/"lemon" puppy?

From: Amy Pinder <amy.lauren.pinder@gmail.com>

Subject: fraud rescue/"lemon" puppy?

Message Body:

Hello,

I was referred to your website by Linda Wilferth of Catnip Friends Cat Rescue because I adopted a beagle mix puppy with a pre-existing, undisclosed heart condition this past August from Love to Live Animal Rescue.

Upon bringing our puppy to our vet for her first visit, our vet informed us she recognized this puppy, had seen her while she was still under Love to Live's care and informed us she had a documented grade 3/4 heart murmur. Our vet stated that Love to Live was informed of this condition but did not disclose to us. They charged us \$300 to adopt our puppy unspayed and refused to accept responsibility for her heart condition. We are not currently treating her medically for the heart murmur as she is not symptomatic but she continues to present with a murmur in both chambers/valves and we are keeping a close watch on her health and behavior. We are certainly keeping and caring for her, but are nervous about the medical costs she might incur in the future. We were also unable to use the "low cost" spay/neuter clinic recommended by Love to Live because we were told the risk was too high to not use a standard vet with full equipment for our "special needs" puppy. We payed \$450 for a spay surgery on top of the adoption fee.

Upon Linda's recommendation, I am writing to ask for your guidance in pursuing this matter. We would like to report the agency to the proper authorities to help other's make informed adoption decisions. We would also like to know if we might be eligible for financial reimbursement/compensation under NJ's puppy lemon laws to assist in paying vet bills.

11/12/2017

(5074 unread) - lindacps@yahoo.com - Yahoo Mail

Thank you so much in advance for your assistance!

--
This mail is sent via contact form on Rescue-Abuse.com <http://rescue-abuse.com>

12/12

November 13, 2017

The Senate Economic Growth Committee
State House Annex
Trenton, NJ 08625-0068

Dear Senate Economic Growth Committee Members,

First, I would like to thank you for having this very important hearing and examining an institution that has tremendous influence on the outcomes of animal cruelty cases in our state.

I wanted to share my experience regarding a 2016 animal hoarding case in Hopatcong, NJ and the court outcome that was determined as the result of the NJSPCA recommendation.

At the time, I was fostering a dog from this hoarding case through Ferndog Rescue Foundation (now called Rescue Haven Foundation). As the trial date approached, I thought it might be helpful to provide some additional evidence for the judge and prosecutor in this case. I asked the vet that initially treated/saw 33 of the 47 dogs rescued from the Vogt house in Hopatcong in June 2016 to write a letter to the court about the general state of health of the dogs. She very readily agreed to do this. I also asked the leader of another rescue that had taken in six of the dogs to write a letter of her experiences with the dogs from this case. She also was very happy to do this. Finally, I had written a letter myself to the judge and prosecutor of my own experiences with my foster dog from this hoarding case. I hand delivered these letters to the municipal court before the trial date to be sure the prosecutor and judge had them before the court date/time.

To give you some sense of this case, 47 dogs were found in this house in Hopatcong. As reported by some of the local media, one dog had its paw chewed off...another dog had an open artery in its mouth. The original charges in the case against Lester Vogt, the husband of the couple in this case, were 47 animal cruelty charges and 47 aggravated animal cruelty charges.

Seven members of our rescue organization attended the court hearing. We were there for almost four hours. The NJSPCA officer assigned to the case was two hours late. When he showed up, he said that he had had a flat tire. The court had said that they could not proceed without the NJSPCA representative.

When the case was finally dealt with, it appeared to us that the only evidence that was entered into the record that night were the 3 letters that I had hand delivered to the prosecutor and judge. The prosecutor and the judge seemed to be moved by the content of these letters. However, the outcome of the case was that all charges were dropped except for three counts. Lester Vogt paid a mere \$5000 fine (which he seemed to be ready to pay in full that night), and he was told he had a life-time ban on living with/owning animals.

Members of our rescue group were quite upset that 91 of the charges were dropped just like that. When one of our members confronted the prosecutor after the court session as to what happened, the reply was that the prosecutor's hands were tied by whatever the recommendation of the NJSPCA officer was. The prosecutor conveyed to our member that he would have sought jail time and a more stringent penalty had his hands not been tied by the NJSPCA's recommendation.

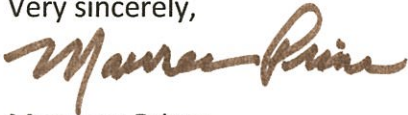
We were distraught by this greatly reduced sentence. It did not seem to us that there was much justice for those 47 dogs that night, all of whom have individual stories and struggles as a result of living in such inhumane conditions for so long. Additionally, none of the collected monies went to any of the rescue groups that took in these dogs (as I understood it).

We felt that the NJSPCA did not properly represent the best interests of those 47 dogs that night in court.

I just wanted to share this information with your committee.

Thank you for your time and your work on this issue.

Very sincerely,



Maureen Prince
Volunteer / Rescue Haven Foundation
maurengprince@gmail.com

ADDITIONAL APPENDIX MATERIALS
SUBMITTED TO THE
SENATE ECONOMIC GROWTH COMMITTEE

for the
November 13, 2017 Meeting

Submitted by Linda Wilferth, representing Catnip Friends Rescue:

Sallie Graziano, "N.J. SPCA charges Catnip Friends Rescue owner with animal cruelty,"
NorthJersey, December 11, 2015.
©2017 New Jersey On-Line LLC.

Louis Hochman, "NJ animal welfare officer just let sick dog die, NJSPCA says,"
December 15, 2015, *New Jersey 101.5*.

Dave Hutchinson, "NJ pet rescue owner charged in second animal cruelty case," NJ
Advance Media, April 26, 2017.
"Update: On Sept. 6, 2017, Linda Wilferth was found not guilty in Raritan Township
Municipal Court," NJ Advance Media, October 12, 2017.
©2017 New Jersey On-Line LLC.