

157 dogs seized

8-1-89

Animal Welfare



Photos by Shmuel Thaler

Animal control officers Sue Seider, right, and Paulette Christopher team up on animal evacuations.

Humane officers raid SV home

By ERIN BLAIR
Sentinel correspondent

SCOTTS VALLEY — Animal control officers with a search warrant raided a Mount Hermon Road home Monday and seized 122 adult dogs and at least 35 puppies.

Humane officers presented Betty Cox with a search warrant at 9 a.m. after anonymous complaints about noisy and unhealthy dogs. They found Cox's 4,200-square-foot home littered with newspapers, rags and feces, said Judy Cassada, director of education for the Santa Cruz Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Cox has bred Shi-tzu, Lhasa-Apso and Maltese dogs at her house for 14 years.

No charges have been filed against Cox, but the District Attorney's office will review evidence from the case and decide whether to prosecute.

It is not clear whether Cox has a current kennel license.

Cassada said a kennel license allows a breeder to have as many animals as can be adequately fed, sheltered and given veterinary care. The SPCA and other humane societies perform kennel inspections.

"My dogs are my life. My puppies are healthy; people buy them," Cox said. She declined to show the house to



Betty Cox

'My dogs are my life'

reporters after her daughter, Cecily Zazueta, advised against it.

"We just don't want anyone inside," Zazueta said. "We don't need any sensationalism." Zazueta's husband,

Fernando, is Cox's legal counsel.

Workers in surgical masks, gloves and coveralls removed the dogs from the house. Volunteers filled out forms for each dog and snapped a Polaroid picture of every animal. SPCA vans took the dogs to shelters from Monterey to Marin.

"It's a good thing the other (humane) agencies can help out," Cassada said. "One hundred or more pets would overwhelm our shelter."

"Our goal is to bring the dogs back to health and get the puppies adopted," Cassada said. Cox cannot reclaim the dogs.

She was allowed to keep two of her dogs. One is pregnant.

Dr. Bill Fellner, a veterinarian, said he saw parasite-related skin diseases, eye and ear infections and badly soiled and matted hair on the dogs he examined. Some were also underweight and anemic.

"Most of the problems come from having too many animals and not enough room to care for them," Fellner said.

Dr. Betsy Bowerman, another veterinarian working with the SPCA, said she was surprised at the friendliness and general good health of the dogs despite their neglected condition. She

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said none of the dogs had Parvo viruses.

Nancy Keck, a shelter volunteer, said Cox seemed very attached to her dogs. "She knows the name of every dog that's come out here, she knows their ages and all their health problems," she said.

Cox suspects that breeders and a neighbor may have complained to the SPCA, but said the organization never warned her that they might seize her dogs.

"It's a put-up job," she said.

The SPCA has heard complaints about Cox for several years. In 1984, humane officers cited her for having 57 unlicensed dogs, but the case was thrown out of court.

"I can't see how anyone could say I didn't do the best I could," Cox said.



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

SPCA officers document one of dogs removed from home.