

King Boots' owners told to neuter their pet

By Rich Swenson
staff writer

King Boots will be defanged and castrated "within the next few days," said Dr. Richard Huff, the dog's veterinarian. King Boots is the champion show dog accused of killing its owner's elderly mother.

The decision came in response to 48th District Judge Edward Sosnick's ruling Tuesday giving the dog's owners — Kathryn and Charles Schwab — a chance to save the dog.

Both police and Oakland County medical authorities say the prize-winning Old English sheepdog attacked and killed 87-year-old Gertrude Monroe Dec. 19 in the Schwabs' Birmingham home.

Sosnick, reading his decision in a courtroom packed with media representatives and curious onlookers, ruled that the city of Birmingham had proved that the dog had "vicious habits." He ordered that the dog be destroyed within 21 days unless the Schwabs had the dog castrated and defanged.

THE SCHWABS ALSO would have to confine King Boots to their property, plus post a \$2,500 bond to guarantee that they will comply. They have three weeks to appeal Sosnick's ruling to the Oakland County Circuit Court.

"The decision is not exactly what we expected," Huff said. Huff was a witness in the bizarre case. "But it's favorable for the dog and its owners. They didn't want to have to put the dog to sleep, and an appeal is not very sensible."

The operations will be performed "as soon as the dust settles," Huff said. According to the judge's order, 16 teeth — 4 canines and 12 incisors — would be extracted to prevent possible attacks. The castration would prevent the dog from possibly passing vicious traits on to puppies he might sire.

"HOPEFULLY, IN the next two or three days, I will alter (castrate) the dog and remove its teeth," Huff said. "We castrate a lot of older dogs for medical reasons anyway. That part of the decision would have happened eventually anyway."

"But there'll be a lot of flak from removing the teeth. You just don't do that to dogs. But once the Schwabs get over the shock, they'll be as happy as they were six weeks ago. It (the operation) won't change King Boots' personality."

Sosnick's ruling — his first major decision since he took the bench Jan. 2 — ends one of the more eccentric and controversial trials in recent memory — a trial that attracted national and international attention.

Sosnick had to weigh contradictory testimony from expert witnesses in the five-day hearing before issuing his middle-of-the-road decision.

SOSNICK had to sort out conflicting testimony on how the incident occurred, the number of bites inflicted by the dog and the cause of Monroe's death.

The judge had to determine which of two autopsies performed on Monroe gave the correct findings as to the cause of death. Oakland County Medical Examiner Bill Brooks said Monroe died of multiple dog bites due to an animal attack.

But Dr. Henry Kallet, a pathologist who performed an autopsy on Monroe at the request of the Schwabs on Christmas Day in Pittsburgh, contradicted Brooks' findings. Kallet said Monroe died of a heart attack before she fell on the sleeping dog. He also said the injuries resulted from one bite.

Sosnick also had to weigh evidence that connected King Boots with two

previous biting incidents. Judy Piet, the former family maid who was bitten by King Boots last August, required nine stitches to close a wound on the back of her head. King Boots also had bitten the Schwab's daughter-in-law.

SOSNICK SAID his first duty was to protect the public from possible attacks. But he also was concerned with the plight of the Schwabs, who not only lost Monroe, but now were faced with losing their pet.

He acknowledged the possibility that Monroe could have suffered a heart attack. Sosnick also agreed with the defense attorney's findings that the wounds inflicted on Monroe came as a result of one bite. But those facts didn't alter his decision.

"In terms of my decision, it really doesn't matter whether the heart at-

tack happened before or after the attack. Most of the time King Boots is a lovable dog, and most of the time he's not harmful to others."

"THE PROBLEM is we have a pattern here. Under present conditions, the dog will react in a manner that constitutes viciousness. King Boots has shown vicious habits. . . . The dog must suffer the loss of his life."

"But I'm going to give an alternative to the Schwabs."

The reaction to Sosnick's decision was mixed.

"My clients are feeling extremely disappointed to the point of devastation," said Richard Selik, the Schwabs' attorney. "It's been extremely difficult for them."

"We're very happy with the decision," Birmingham City Attorney Jon

Kingsp said. "We're satisfied that the interest of the public has been served. This is a ruling where there had to be some control exercised over the dog, and it does that."

CASTRATING THE dog will not cost the Schwabs a lucrative stud fee, Huff said. They had no interest in breeding him, and Huff believes the dog is sterile anyway.

"King Boots' semen isn't satisfactory for freezing," Huff said. "He's over the hill."

Birmingham Police Chief Edward

Ostin said Tuesday King Boots would be transferred later this week from the city pound to Gasow Veterinary Clinic in Birmingham for temporary holding. The Schwabs are building a house and dog kennel on 48 acres near Rochester. King Boots, who officially retired from the show circuit Jan. 1, will join them — if the Schwabs comply with Sosnick's order.

"This was a rather dramatic end to King Boots' career," Huff said. "But he should live another four or five years. He'll give the Schwabs a lot of enjoyment."

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CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS
REGULAR PUBLIC HEARING/REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 21, 1985
Mayor Dolan opened the combined Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council on January 21, 1985 at 7:30 p.m. Members present: Alkateeb, Dolan, Dudley, Marks, Sorosen, Williams and Wolf. Officers present: City Manager Coetlich, City Clerk Reynolds, Assistant to the City Manager Birkholz, City Attorney Pohlman, and Planning Consultant Coates.
A presentation was made by Fire Chief Marinucci to Steve Swamba, who saved a two year old girl from drowning in the swimming pool at the Holiday Inn on January 16th. Council approved Charter Site Plan #0-5-84 for Alan Gottlieb at the southwest corner of Ruth and Polson in the NE 1/4 of Section 34.
Council approved application of Farmington School Board for a land fill of approximately 30,000 cubic yards of fill between Beechview School and I-494 in Section 14. The application of Kenington Corporation for a land fill in an area off the westbound exit ramp of I-494 was withdrawn at the request of the proponent.
Council introduced a new Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance for the City of Farmington Hills City Code, No. C-2-85, Chapter 60, including changes in P-1 District. Council denied the introduction of Zoning Map Amendment ZR 33-9-84 for 24275 Middlebelt, between Owenwood and Ten Mile Road in the SE 1/4 of Section 23 from OS-1 to B-1.
Council denied the introduction of Zoning Map Amendment ZR PC 36-10-84 for 26.12 acres on west side of Haledale, south of Carson Road in the SE 1/4 of Section 18 from RC-2 and RA-1 to B-1.
Council introduced Zoning Map Amendment ZR PC 35-10-84A, located on the south side of Twelve Mile Road, east of Haledale in the NW 1/4 of Section 17 from RA-1 to OS-1A.
A resolution was adopted naming Farmington Hills Administrative Office Building located at 31555 Eleven Mile Road as the Floyd A. Cairns Municipal Building. Approval was granted for Quit Claim Deed for Grand River Sanitary Sewer Arm to the Oakland County DPW with the request for reimbursement to the City Sanitary Sewer Interceptor Fund in the amount of \$27,647.21.
Meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m.
A. JANETTE E. DOLAN, Mayor
JOAN REYNOLDS, City Clerk
Publish January 23, 1985

Safety counts snowmobiling

Secretary of State Richard Austin today asked all snowmobile operators to put into practice safe operating procedures whether on trails, on the road or in the woods.

Austin said there have already been eight snowmobile deaths for the current winter snow season — half as many as were killed in the winter snow season of 1983-1984.

Austin, chairman of the state Safety Commission, said that with exception of restrictions for operators under 16, no license and no training or testing are required by law to operate snowmobiles. For this reason, to a large extent, every operator must train himself or herself.

At the same time, snowmobile operators are exposed to more risks than other motorized vehicles.

Falling through ice and being struck by motor vehicles are the leading causes of snowmobile deaths and injuries. Turning over and striking trees and buried obstacles are another major cause of death and injuries. Reducing speed helps reduce this type of accident, Austin said.

Because snowmobile operation requires a high degree of physical coordination and skill, Austin advised operators not to consume alcoholic beverages before or during trips.

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