



HAWTHORNE POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

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Suitable For Public Dissemination

Elder Abuse / Neglect Cruelty to Animals

On Friday, March 4, 2011, at approximately 2:15 P.M., Hawthorne police officers responded to a residence in the 3700 block of 119th Place, on a "check the welfare" call. Los Angeles County Adult Protective Services (APS) had received an anonymous report from a caller concerned that the home's 90 year old female resident might have passed away. APS in turn, requested that Hawthorne police officers respond to assess the situation.

Upon arrival, officers encountered extremely unsanitary conditions on the property. Trash was piled up in front of the residence in question, and large amounts of animal feces had been covered with cut grass or hay, as opposed to being picked up. When officers knocked on the front door, they were able to hear a television or radio playing at high volume, coming from inside the residence. The odor of spoiled or rotting food emanated from inside the home. However, nobody acknowledged the knocking. Access to the rear of the home was not immediately possible due to the number of the large dogs present there.

Hawthorne animal control officers responded, and upon assessing the situation, requested additional assistance from Los Angeles County Animal Control and the SPCALA. When the dogs outside were removed from the property, animal control officers began planning how to reach the dogs secured inside the house.

At this point, police officers were contacted by two subjects who drove up to the location, Gregory and Janice Bartmess. Janice Bartmess (60 years old) identified herself as the daughter of the elderly resident, an 86 year old woman. Gregory (60 years old) was identified as Janice's husband. Janice provided entry to the residence, and the dogs inside were secured. Police officers then continued their investigation, locating the 86 year old inside the home.

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The woman was conscious, but bedridden, unresponsive, and unkempt. She was suffering from open sores and atrophy. Her gown was soiled with her own feces and urine. The ground inside the home was covered with animal feces. Containers of spoiled food were scattered on the ground in Hanson's room.

Los Angeles County Fire Department personnel were called to the scene. The woman was transported to an area hospital by ambulance. She remains hospitalized at this time, receiving treatment for her various conditions. A mental assessment will be conducted on her when her medical condition allows for one. The results of this assessment will determine where she is placed. She will not be released to Janice Bartmess.

A total of 13 dogs were taken by animal control from the property, all in varying states of neglect. The dogs were placed with Los Angeles County Animal Control.

Hawthorne Police placed Gregory and Janice Bartmess under arrest for suspicion of elder abuse, and suspicion of cruelty to animals.

Hawthorne police detectives and Adult Protective Services social workers will continue to investigate the allegations of elder abuse / neglect. Hawthorne police detectives and Hawthorne animal control officers will investigate the allegations of cruelty to animals.

Anyone with information pertaining to this case is asked to contact the Hawthorne Police Detective Bureau at (310) 349-2820.