

DA: Man abandoned two dogs

BY ELLEN YAN
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An Elmont man moved out of his apartment but left behind his two Great Danes, who were found in such bad shape that one died after vomiting pieces of fabric, the Nassau district attorney's office said Monday.

Mian Siddique, 49, was arraigned Friday on two misdemeanor counts overdriving, torturing and injuring animals and two counts of animal abandonment, lesser misdemeanors.

Siddique moved out of his Oakley Avenue basement apartment on Jan. 1, and on Jan. 14, a Hempstead Town animal control officer went there to conduct a welfare check of a dog, authorities said.

In the basement apartment, the animal control officer discovered two emaciated dogs, brothers named Sheru and Maverick, prosecutors said.

A veterinarian exam at the town animal shelter found the two dogs were severely emaciated at 30-40 pounds underweight and had been neglected for at least two to three months, officials said.

Sheru had severe dental disease, multiple pressure sores and was very weak, and during treatment, the dog vomited fabric and finally succumbed to the neglect, prosecutors said.

Maverick was found with hair loss, pressure sores and dental disease and has since been adopted, officials said.

Siddique, arrested and arraigned Friday, was released under certain conditions and faces up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine if convicted on the top charge.

He was represented by The Legal Aid Society of Nassau County, which has a policy of not commenting in the early stages of a case. Siddique could not be reached Monday night.

A video posted on the district attorney's Facebook page shows a white dog with a metal chain around his neck, and protruding hips, spine and ribs.

"This defendant allegedly moved out of his apartment abandoning his two Great Danes to die of dehydration and starvation," District Attorney Madeline Singas said in a statement. "When pet owners neglect or abuse their animals, we will hold them criminally accountable."



NEWSDAY / THOMAS A. FERRARA

Nassau cops get a helping hand

Members of the Nassau police Commissioner's Community Council, who will provide feedback to police, are sworn in Monday in Garden City.

School calendar changes get OK

Regents approve amended rules to lessen time lost

BY JOHN HILDEBRAND
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A divided state Board of Regents on Monday approved controversial new rules aimed at giving school districts greater flexibility in scheduling annual calendars — a change that includes the potential for additional ethnic and religious holidays.

Essentially, the new regulations, backed by many educators on Long Island, allow districts to count instructional periods in hours rather than days in order to meet the state's time requirements. Such accounting,

which is being adopted by a growing number of states, is meant to lessen class time lost to storms and other interruptions.

The policymaking Regents board split on the calendar change with 14 members in favor, two abstaining and one opposed, following an hour and a half of often heated debate. Long Island's representative on the board, Roger Tilles of Great Neck, voted with the majority, which took action during its monthly meeting in Albany.

At one critical point, following 90 minutes of public deliberation, the Regents took the unusual step of breaking from their formal meeting to work out the details of a final resolution in private discussions.

Monday's vote, by a Regents

committee responsible for elementary and secondary education, must be ratified by the full board on Tuesday — a procedure that is normally a formality.

Bad weather, including a series of nor'easters that shut schools in Nassau and Suffolk counties last month, was frequently cited in recent weeks as a factor behind the state's move toward flexible calendars.

Less often mentioned, but even more important, according to many local educators, were the growing pressures faced by districts to recognize a greater number of holidays celebrated by the Island's increasingly diverse population. Such holidays include Lunar New Year, the Hindu festival of Diwali and the Muslim observances of Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr.

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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

- 1790** President George Washington signed the first United States Patent Act.
- 1866** The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was incorporated.
- 1912** The British liner RMS Titanic set sail from Southampton, England, on its ill-fated maiden voyage.
- 1925** The F. Scott Fitzgerald novel "The Great Gatsby" was first published by Scribner's of New York.
- 1947** Brooklyn Dodgers President Branch Rickey purchased the contract of Jackie Robinson from the Montreal Royals.
- 1971** A table tennis team from the United States arrived in China at the invitation of the communist government for a goodwill visit that came to be known as "ping-pong diplomacy."
- 1998** The Northern Ireland peace talks concluded as negotiators reached a landmark settlement to end 30 years of bitter rivalries and bloody attacks.
- 2017** Justice Neil Gorsuch took his place as the newest addition on the bench of the Supreme Court, restoring a narrow conservative majority.