

Candia man found guilty in animal cruelty case

By TOBY HENRY

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CANDIA – After a three-hour trial that included the defendant's own 10-year-old son as a defense witness, Judge David LeFrancois found resident Scott Perdue guilty of animal cruelty and criminal threatening.

The case involved Perdue's purported injury of a 7-year-old golden retriever named Sam, belonging to Deerfield residents Denis and Margaret "Peg" Sklarski, during an incident in April when Perdue's German shepherd got in a barking match with Sam and another Sklarski dog near Blevens Drive.



Sam, a 7-year-old golden retriever, made a name for himself two years ago.

Two years prior to this incident, Sam made a name for himself as the "Golden Ghost" by surviving for two years on his own in the wilds of Candia and other area towns.

Perdue was accused of picking up and throwing Sam to the ground after the dogs' April 24 encounter, and he also threatened to run over Peg Sklarski with a four-wheeler vehicle towing a trailer.

Prosecution witnesses Sklarski and Mary Anne Boyle both said they were taking their regular lunchtime walk when the encounter between the three dogs took place, but the women's testimony varied considerably. Neither agreed on which side of the nearby Virginia Avenue they saw Perdue approaching in his OHRV, and Sklarski said Sam was tossed onto his right side while Boyle said the dog was thrown onto his left side.

Defense attorney Ray Raimo placed emphasis on the inconsistencies, and under questioning, Perdue maintained that he felt Sklarski was the one threatening him by standing in front of his OHRV as he tried to drive back home.

Perdue's son stated on the stand that he'd seen his father "throw " the golden retriever out of the way," but denied that the dog had been "tackled" to the degree described by the prosecution.

LeFrancois said he saw "stark contrasts" in the testimony, but concluded there was enough evidence to find Perdue guilty of the cruelty and threatening charges. Perdue was fined \$1,250 plus a \$500 donation to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for the two guilty findings and the OHRV charge, but LeFrancois said he would suspend all but \$600 of the fines and fees, and he also ordered Perdue to get an anger management evaluation within 90 days.

Raimo said he plans to appeal the decision.