

# Facing cruelty charges, Durham breeders say they're concerned for their seized dogs

By KIMBERLEY HAAS Union Leader Correspondent  
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**DURHAM** — The owners of 18 cocker spaniels seized from a house Tuesday are champion breeders who say they are concerned about the welfare of their dogs.

“They’re some of the best cocker spaniel show dogs in the country,” Bonnie Pike said Wednesday morning.

Bonnie Pike, 65, and her husband, Wilson Pike, 67, operate Silverhall Cocker Spaniels from their home on Packers Fall Road.

Last year, the Pikes were named Breeder of the Year sporting group winners by the American Kennel Club. According to a news release issued at the time, they were inducted into the American Spaniel Club Hall of Fame in January of 2018.

“The signature stamp of a Silverhall dog is unmistakable and seen all over the world with top winners in Russia, Asia, Europe and Australia,” the release said.

Bonnie Pike said Wednesday that the couple plans to meet with an attorney to review their options after being arrested Tuesday. The Pikes each face a misdemeanor count of animal cruelty and their dogs are being held at the Stratham SPCA.

Police allegedly discovered unsanitary conditions in the full-size basement where the seized animals were being held during a search.

Bonnie and Wilson Pike are scheduled to be arraigned in Dover Circuit Court on April 10 but might be able to recover their dogs before then.

Deputy Police Chief Rene Kelley said Wednesday that for that to happen, the Pikes would need to obtain a court order.

“They’re held for safekeeping until a judge tells us they can be released, or they surrender their animals,” Kelley said.

According to the American Kennel Club, since 1983 Bonnie and Wilson Pike have bred 250 champion show dogs.