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Print Date: Friday, November 16, 2007

Last modified: Wednesday, November 14, 2007 2:23 PM PST

## Rescuers offer neglected Afghan hounds a paw up

By: Loryll Nicolaisen, Journal Staff Writer

It looks like Lilliput gets to stay put.

The Afghan hound, in the care of Grass Valley residents Robert and Deborah Todd, is one of 11 dogs that can now be adopted by foster families after their prior owner entered a guilty plea to an animal neglect charge last week.

"We've been on pins and needles," Deborah Todd said Tuesday. "I've definitely gone through a roller coaster because of this. We're really thrilled. It's been a long, hard struggle."

Placer County Animal Services removed 13 dogs from the Meadow Vista residence of Irene and Robert Robocker in February after the family was served a warrant. Both Robert and Irene faced 13 misdemeanor counts of keeping an animal without proper care. Irene plead guilty to one count of keeping an animal without proper care, the Placer County District Attorney's Office reported via press release Friday.

"We don't like that she only copped to one misdemeanor but if that's what's going to get the dogs back, then whatever," Todd said Tuesday.

Irene Robocker faces three years probation and will not be allowed to own, possess or maintain dogs of any age or at any location, according to the release. As a condition of the plea, Robocker was required to release ownership of the remaining 11 dogs - two have died since the original 13 were taken earlier this year. The plea bargain did not require Robocker, who has no prior criminal record, to serve jail time, but she could if she fails to comply with the terms of her probation, according to the release.

As part of the plea agreement, charges against Robert Robocker were dismissed Nov. 7, upon his agreement to release any claim of ownership of the dogs.

A woman answering the phone at the law office of Al J. Patrick, who represented Robert Robocker, said the attorney did not wish to comment on the case, other than that charges were dismissed.

Carl Mayhew, Placer County deputy district attorney, said Tuesday that the Robockers have a restitution obligation-a condition of Irene Robocker's probation - and that a hearing is scheduled for Feb. 6.

"It will be up to the judge, what they are required to pay," Mayhew said.

The Robockers relinquished 28 dogs to Placer County Animal Services in January - eight puppies and 20 adults - after Animal Services received a complaint about the dogs' welfare, according to prior Journal reports.

"Getting the dogs has been the primary concern for us," Robert Todd said Tuesday. "I was there when the dogs came in. It's sad they had to go through the abuse they did. They're just such loving dogs."

Todd was quick to offer praise Placer County Animal Services staff, including Cindy Leonard, animal care



Astrid Pryor pets an Afghan hound taken from its owner by Placer County Animal Services earlier this year. Meadow Vista resident Irene Robocker and husband Robert Robocker are not allowed to own dogs after Irene Robocker's recent guilty plea to one charge of keeping an animal without proper care. Courtesy

supervisor; Mike Winters, program manager; and Tim Goffa, senior supervising animal control officer.

"They were so good to us, and they were so accommodating and helpful," he said. "They were grateful that we were there, but we were definitely thankful that they let us be there."

The original 28 surrendered dogs have since been adopted, and now the remaining 11 dogs taken from the Robockers can be adopted as well.

"I'm very happy that the dogs have been released and I know the foster families are happy too because they've absolutely fallen in love with them," said Astrid Pryor, a Grass Valley resident and the northern direction director of Afghan Hound Rescue of Southern California.

Pryor also noted that the dogs could now be spayed and neutered.

"People are probably making appointments as we speak," she said.

Todd said she and her husband, who owned one Afghan hound prior to Lilliput, have been working with the Robockers' dogs since they ended up in Animal Services' custody. They think the recent turn of events means a happy ending for the Afghan hounds.

"The dogs are just magical," she said.

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