

Pet groomer charged in dog's death

Golden retriever's owner says she's 'traumatized' by loss
By Max Sullivan, seacoastonline.com

HAMPTON — Police charged a local pet groomer with animal cruelty after a dog died while in her care in June.

Beth Bessemer, owner of Mrs. Doolittle's Bath House, is charged with two counts of cruelty to animals, both Class A misdemeanors. Police allege she negligently permitted a 5-year-old golden retriever named Teddy to endure unnecessary suffering by leaving the dog in a crate with a heated dryer blowing on him and a noose around his neck, causing his death.

Additionally, police allege an alternative theory that on the same date, that Bessemer negligently deprived the dog of necessary care and sustenance by leaving him unattended in conditions that were detrimental to his well-being, which caused his death.

Police said they received a complaint from the dog's owner, Joanne Schwope, on Aug. 28. Bessemer turned herself in on an open warrant for her arrest Wednesday and was released on her own recognizance by a bail commissioner, police said. She is scheduled to be arraigned Oct. 30 in Seabrook District Court.

As part of her bail conditions, Bessemer has been prohibited from contact with any pets, according to police.

Schwope, who previously shared her story with Seacoast Media Group, said via email Wednesday, "I hope for the best possible outcome." She could not be immediately reached for further comment. She previously said necropsy results now show Teddy died from overheating. She said she was "traumatized" the day she left Teddy for an appointment at Mrs. Doolittle's and learned Teddy had died when she returned to pick him up.

Bessemer acknowledged before her arrest that Teddy died at her facility, adding she was saddened by it, but said Teddy had no heat on him when Bessemer left to get lunch. She also said Teddy's noose at the time was not attached to anything.

"I swear on a Bible there was no heat on that dog," Bessemer said a few weeks before her arrest.

Anyone with information on the incident can call Hampton police at (603) 929-4444.

Tips can be made through the Crimeline for the Hamptons at tipsubmit.com by selecting "Hamptons" as a region, or by texting the keyword "Hamptons" to 274637(crimes).