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## Woman buys 'Net names of puppy mill suspects

By JEFFREY SIMPSON Staff Reporter  
Tue, Jan 20 - 1:33 PM



Gail Benoit outside a Digby court in December 2007. (BRIAN MEDEL / Yarmouth Bureau / File)

A Halifax woman has seized the Internet domain names of a Digby County couple facing animal cruelty charges to prevent people from buying their puppies.

Joan Sinden, who lives in Spryfield, last week bought <http://gailbenoit.ca> and <http://danabailey.ca>, which link to a site on her server with information about the activities of the husband-and-wife team with a controversial history of selling allegedly unhealthy dogs.

"I just want to educate people," Ms. Sinden, a self-described animal activist dedicated to stopping puppy mills and brokers, said in an interview Monday. "I thought someone should do it and I already had most

of the information together already."

The Nova Scotia SPCA this month laid eight charges against Dana Bailey, 46, and his wife, Gail Ruth Benoit, 39, of Roxville for allegedly selling four dogs that died hours after their new owners received them last summer.

Mr. Bailey and Ms. Benoit each face four animal cruelty charges under the Criminal Code of Canada and four under the provincial Animal Cruelty Prevention Act. Autopsies showed the dogs died of parvovirus, a highly contagious canine illness often fatal in young dogs.

The couple are due in Digby provincial court on Jan. 29 on other charges stemming from the SPCA seizing several seriously ill puppies that were for sale.

Ms. Sinden said she hasn't had any personal contact with Ms. Benoit and Mr. Bailey and doesn't know anyone who has bought animals from them; she just wants to persuade the couple to earn a living another way.

"I have owned dogs that came from puppy mills and I have seen the effects of it," Ms. Sinden said. "I see the fact that their teeth are rotten and they have no hair and that they've had a really shitty life and I don't think it's right for animals to have to live like that.

"While they're alive, they should have a certain quality of life, just like humans have a certain quality of life. I don't think that animals are any different than us."

Her website links to information about parvovirus and news clips of the couple on YouTube, including a hip hop-style montage.

Mr. Bailey said he isn't responsible for the deaths of any dogs and doesn't plan to check out Ms. Sinden's website.

"There are so many websites out there now, another one ain't gonna hurt one bit," he said. "I'm not one bit concerned."

Mr. Bailey said he and Ms. Benoit, who declined to comment for this story, are still selling dogs and have no plans to stop.

"We've got proof of what the dogs died from but we're not bringing it out until after the

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SPCA goes through with some more so-called charges — and then we're going to show what the dogs died from," Mr. Bailey said.

"I have video of what the dogs died from."

David Tidswell, 21, of Halifax, said he recently found an ad of Ms. Benoit's on the classified website kijiji.ca offering a purebred chihuahua for \$300. He said he was selling his computer at the same time and struck a deal to make a trade.

They met at an Esso gas station parking lot in Bridgetown on Jan. 3 at about 10 p.m. After getting the dog home, Mr. Tidswell said, he did some research on the Internet and learned about Ms. Benoit's alleged selling practices. A few days later, the dog became ill and died, he said.

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