



# OTSEGO COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

172 County Highway 33W  
Cooperstown, New York 13326

## MEDIA RELEASE

RICHARD J. DEVLIN, JR  
SHERIFF



CAMERON S. ALLISON  
UNDERSHERIFF

**Type of Arrest / Charges: 5 Counts-- Overdriving, torturing and injuring animals: failure to provide proper sustenance.  
1 Count-- Growing of the plant known as cannabis by unlicensed persons  
1 Count—Unlawful Possession of Marijuana.**

**Date of arrest: 04/14/2018**

**Names(s), age(s) and address: William J. Desimone, 43 years old, T/ New Lisbon  
Gabrielle Bastian, 52 years old, T/ New Lisbon**

**Court information/incarceration: Town of New Lisbon Court**

Narrative: Otsego County Sheriff Richard J. Devlin, Jr. announces the arrest of the above named defendant's following an investigation of a report of an electrocuted goose in the fence at the front of the residence. Responding Deputy Thornhill arrived on scene and confirmed there was a goose deceased at the fence from electrocution. When Deputy Thornhill attempted to make contact with, the later arrested, homeowners she could hear multiple dogs in the lower portion of the basement. After negative contact with the homeowners Deputy Thornhill was advised by neighbors that the homeowners are only at the residence intermittently, and that complaints had been filed with the local Animal Control Officer Elizabeth Fish. Deputy Thornhill contacted ACO Fish, and together they attempted to check the welfare of the dogs. In the basement of the residence 7 dogs were discovered. One was locked inside a standard wire dog cage which was half full of excrement allowing only enough room for the dog to crouch. One dog was located tied to a wall with a rope only the length of its body, and standing on top of inches of its own excrement. The door to the side room of the basement could only be pushed open a few inches due to the severe depth of excrement piled on the floor. There were 5 dogs living in that room. There was no food or water for any of the 7 dogs located in this basement. All of the dogs were covered in their own excrement, and to date it is unknown what medical conditions might exist. At the time it was unknown how long the dogs had been left like this but, one report from a witness advised that the owners had not been seen in a week.

Contact was made with owners whom advised that they were about three hours away and would be responding home to make contact with the Deputies.

Sgt. Stalter and Deputy Kimmerer responded to assist with the investigation as it was discovered that there were numerous animals all across the property that were kept and maintained in the same deplorable conditions as the dogs in the basement. Due to the size of the scene and nature of the conditions the Criminal Investigative Division of the Sheriff's Office was notified and adopted the investigation.

After the homeowners arrived home, and interviews completed, consent to search the property was

completed.

Located on the property were 20 pigs, 7 donkeys, 13 chickens, 3 ducks, 25 geese, 13 sheep, 7 rabbits, 1 turkey, 1 guinea hen, 2 parakeets, 1 pigeon, a cat and a tortoise. All of the animals were either without food, water, or both. All of the animals were living on top of inches to feet of their own waste, or wallowing belly deep in feces and mud. In some cases the living areas were so small that the animals barely had enough to turn around, and some animals shared over crowded cages causing fighting and loss of feathers and fur.

This Office secured Ownership Surrenders for all the animals on the property.

The ASPCA was contacted to seize the dogs for their well being. Stacie Haynes and multiple other volunteers arrived and assisted with the seizure of 9 dogs and one cat. Dr. Kathy Mahon, and the Leatherstocking Veterinarian Staff, provided outstanding assistance with the check up of all the animals, as well as assisting in finding them homes.

All the animals were relocated to safety by the following evening, Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup> 2018.

Upon investigation of the inside of the residence there were two areas dedicated to the unlawful growing of marijuana. There were over 50 plants seized as well as a quantity of dried product.

Due to mitigating circumstances William J. Desimone was provided an appearance ticket and released. Gabrielle Bastian was arraigned in the Town of New Lisbon Court, in front of Judge Burdick. Bastian was held on \$2,500 dollars cash bail and was returned to the Otsego County Correctional Facility. Bastian was later released after posting bail. The Defendants are scheduled to reappear on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 in the Town of New Lisbon Court at 5pm.

607-547-4273

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Otsego County Sheriff's Office is committed to partnering with the people we serve in order to prevent crime and injustice. We are driven to enhance the quality of life of our community as we hold ourselves to the highest standards of professionalism, performance and ethics.*

STAR\_\_\_WDOS/WSRK\_\_\_WBNG\_\_\_PRESS\_\_\_CRIER\_\_\_WZOZ\_\_\_WBUG\_\_\_OTHER\_\_\_

**Submitted by:**  
Investigator William W. Henn