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DOG TALES Canines in Court

By TOM FARLEY

SINCE he can't drive a car, is seldom addicted to shoplifting and doesn't beat his wife, the average dog has few run-ins with the law. However, when Fido is summoned to "tell it to the judge," he usually fares pretty well. If you don't believe the rights of dogs command serious attention in our courts of jurisprudence, here are some convincing examples right out of the records:

A California Court of Appeals ruled that it is not a Great Dane's fault if he bowls over a small woman, because small women should know better than to let Great Danes lean on them.

A Tennessee court solemnly declared that "where a pack of dogs is on a railroad track, it is not necessary to blow the whistle for such particular dog."

A Maine judge decreed that a dog was not liable for biting a little boy who hugged and kissed him, since dogs, too, have a right to be particular about who kisses them.

When five year old Jimmy Doyle of Chicago appeared in court last November 17 as complaining witness against a neighbor whose dog had bitten him, he started something.

"Are you afraid of dogs?" Judge Oscar Caplan asked Jimmy at the time. Indeed he wasn't, he told the judge. Just this one. "Would you like a dog of your own?" the judge went on. "Oh, boy!" Jimmy exclaimed.

Judge Caplan explained that his Cocker Spaniel, Sandy, had just had a litter of six puppies and if Jimmy would come back December 20, by which time the puppies would be older and stronger, he'd give him one as a Christmas present. "The Chicago papers printed the

story. Then came a deluge of letters to the judge from other youngsters which resulted in new juvenile masters for the five remaining puppies.

In the case of a chicken owner who charged his neighbor's dog scared his chickens, the Supreme Court of Iowa ruled that the owner need not hide his dog's face since "it is not your duty to live a life beautiful for your neighbor's fowl."

In Memphis, Dixie, a black and white bulldog won out in an inheritance case over human opposition. Dixie was permitted to keep a \$6,000 inheritance for her very own while her late master's step-granddaughter was left out in the cold. The Tennessee Court of Appeals ruled that the will of Gerald S. Richberg, leaving his entire estate to Dixie, was valid.

If dogs are allowed to share the privileges of their human masters, however, they are also asked to share some human headaches. Pity the Salem, Mass., Spitz that had to pay an inheritance tax on a \$2,000 legacy! It must have cramped his plans for that fine new doghouse.

Dogs are also expected, under the law, to pay heed to the same kind of rules that govern human society. For instance:

A Chicago judge enjoined a raucous Scottie, tenant in a crowded apartment house, from "barking after 11:00 p.m. . . or before 7:00 a.m., except in the case of emergency."

And the Supreme Court of New York ruled that a person may take up arms against a dog that barks all night on his porch because "the health and comfort of your family are dearer even than the life of a dog."

ards which were brought to the attention of the commanding officer for correction.

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Mother doesn't distinguish between her children because one has red hair or another, blue eyes. She cherishes them all -- and knows that what they are is determined, not by what they look like, but by what is in their hearts.

So it is with all men. As children of God, all mankind is equal, one to another. As we attend church each Sabbath, let us heed the words of the minister of our faith . . . and let us pray for guidance, that we might learn to understand and love all our neighbors and fellow citizens . . . and teach our children the ways of truth and understanding. And let us resolve now, at the start of this New Year, to support our churches liberally, and attend them regularly. For it is through them -- and them alone, that we can find true peace.

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