

COURT

‘IF YOU FEED IT, YOU OWN IT’



GETTY IMAGES

“Animal cruelty cases,” Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney Shannon Pollock told the court, “take an emotional toll on the community.”

UVa football player pleads no contest to animal cruelty after being caught beating dog

HAWES SPENCER
The Daily Progress

Pleading no contest to a charge of animal cruelty after getting caught on video repeatedly beating his dog, University of Virginia football player Solomon Marshall Beebe agreed relinquish the animal to his father and accept a five-year ban on possessing any dog.

The deal, accepted Thursday in Albemarle County General District Court, dropped two additional counts and envisions dismissing the charge after a year in which Beebe must take an anger management class, obtain mental health treatment, perform 100 hours of community service and stay away from the dog, named Jeb.

“Your client’s looking at a year in jail if he doesn’t do this,” the judge warned Beebe’s lawyer as Beebe listened from the defense table.

Dressed in black and accompanied to

court by his parents, Beebe spoke little during the hearing. The hearing lasted nearly an hour, but it was broken up by recesses to resolve disputes, and one of them concerned where to send Jeb.

Albemarle Animal Control Supervisor Mason Walsh testified that policy requires that Jeb remain at the local SPCA shelter until the case is fully resolved.

However, in answer to a question from the judge, Walsh said that Beebe’s father has cared for Jeb since shortly after the dog was seized on Aug. 13. The judge agreed to let the father, Lee Beebe Sr., continue to keep Jeb at his home in Montgomery, Alabama.

The 20-year-old Beebe was arrested Aug. 17 after three alleged incidents of hitting Jeb at Maximilian at Stonefield, an apartment complex north of Charlottesville where Beebe lives. The worst incident, according to Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney Shannon Pollock, occurred Aug. 10.

The prosecutor said that Beebe was seen at the complex’s dog run hoisting Jeb by

the scruff of his neck before dragging him and hitting him multiple times. That and other incidents were reportedly caught on surveillance cameras, and they require some atonement, said Pollock, mentioning the community service requirement.

“Animal cruelty cases,” Pollock told the court, “take an emotional toll on the community.”

Beebe’s attorney downplayed the incidents.

“There was never an allegation that the dog was injured,” said Staunton-based attorney Thomas Weidner. “He used an open hand when hitting the dog.”

Although never mentioning his client’s status as a student-athlete, Weidner said his client was overwhelmed with responsibilities.

“He’s a first-time dog owner,” said Weidner. “I don’t think he realized how much work it is to take care of the dog.”

Two weeks ago, Weidner obtained a court order modifying Beebe’s bail to allow

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ELECTION 2026

Albemarle registrar sends out mail-in ballots without required postage

DAVID VELAZQUEZ
The Daily Progress

Albemarle County’s registrar has sent out multiple mail-in ballots without the necessary postage for them to be returned ahead of Election Day.

The news is concerning for a variety of reasons. Chief among them: Early voting is already underway in Albemarle, the largest locality in Virginia’s 5th Congressional District, and Virginia is notoriously the worst in the nation for on-time mail delivery.

“This is our office that made an error and then we corrected it as quickly and as best as we know how,” Albemarle County Registrar Jonell McFadden told The Daily Progress on Tuesday.

Of the 7,400 ballots McFadden’s office has sent out to voters since early voting began Sept. 18, she could not say how many did not include postage. She said her office has sent out thousands

of letters explaining the error with postage included.

The Daily Progress was able to independently confirm that at least some Albemarle voters had received McFadden’s follow-up letters and postage.

McFadden said she’s not worried — despite the multiple Albemarle voters who reached out to The Daily Progress saying they were, in fact, worried.

“It’s not that I’m not concerned about the delivery of ballots, it’s just I see them coming in so easily. There’s just no evidence that there will be a holdup,” she said. “But we are watching to make sure that our ballots continue to come in like they normally do.”

As of Tuesday, 4,577 ballots have been cast in Albemarle, up from 2,547 at this point ahead of Election Day 2022.

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REAL ESTATE

Charlottesville Common House building sells for \$2.15 million

HALEY SANDLOW
The Daily Progress

The historic property that once housed the flagship Common House social club in downtown Charlottesville has sold.

The \$2.15 million deal was closed on Sept. 20. The buyer was listed only as 206 W Market LLC, a limited liability corporation using the property’s address as its name.

Although rumors have swirled since Common House abruptly closed in April that the real estate could be reopened as a social club or bar, the brick, three-story, 6,890-square-foot building was listed by commercial real estate agency Cushman & Wakefield | Thalhimer as office space.

The building originally opened in 1913 as the Mentor Lodge, a Black social club.

Common House opened in the building in 2017 under the ownership of Derek Sieg, Ben Pfinsgraff and Josh Rogers. As a social club, the property served multiple

functions: restaurant, bar, coworking space, wedding venue and conference center.

It served as a model for future Common House clubs in Richmond and later Chattanooga, Tennessee, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Common House founders sold the business, but not the Charlottesville property, in 2024 to Denver, Colorado-based Ben Wood, who had already tried and failed to launch a social club in years past.

The relationship between tenant and landlord was rocky, and complicating matters more was flagging membership, event reservations and, as a result, revenue, according to current and former Common House employees. In the year prior to its closure, hours were cut and staff was downsized.

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