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BABY | Improving from several injuries

From Page A1

Chrissie and Michael Smith and their son Alexander James

patch of grass outside their Jessamine County home.

During a news conference Tuesday, Michael Smith said his son had a cracked skull and cracked ribs — and had one collapsed lung and one partially collapsed lung — but had stabilized and appeared to be improving. Alexander, known as "A.J." to his parents, also had a cut on his cheek and had a couple of wounds on the back of his head.

In an interview Wednesday with Diane Sawyer on ABC's *Good Morning, America*, Smith described the Monday afternoon scene as UK Hospital staff worked to save the baby's life.

"You know they had about 20 people working on him, and his heart had physically stopped at the hospital and they used little paddles to resuscitate him, and the doctor's pretty much crying. You think the worst," Smith said. "Then you just fight through it, and he's a fighter. He's fought the whole way."

Dakota, the female wolf hybrid at the center of the controversy, has been in quarantine at the Jessamine County SAVE Center in Nicholasville. Michael Smith has said Dakota is a Native American Indian dog and the breeder told him the animal's grandparents were "90 percent wolf."

State law requires dogs, cats and ferrets that have bitten a human to be quarantined for 10 days, said Beckey Reiter, director of Boone County Animal Control.

A veterinarian told the Jessamine County Sheriff's Office and Jessamine County Animal Control that Dakota had been vaccinated for rabies.

But some experts question whether such a vaccination is effective in a wolf hybrid, said Sherman Jett, director of Jessamine County Animal Control. He would not identify the veterinarian who administered the rabies shots to Dakota.

"If this child gets sick, or it comes up with some type of disease — an animal can transit dozens of zoological diseases other than rabies — and the kid ends up getting some type of infection, it's best to have the animal, and then they can order the animal to be euthanized to be tested for those types of diseases," Jett said.

Michael Smith has said he does not want Dakota destroyed. He said she cannot return to their home, and he hopes someone will adopt her.

Jenise Smith, director of the Jessamine County SAVE Center, said that shelter has been inundated with calls from all over the country from people wanting to adopt the dog.

Whether the dog will even be available for adoption is up in the air because there might be some liability issues. The SAVE Center and the county could potentially be sued if the dog were to be released and then bites or injures someone.

"I wouldn't send it back out," Reiter said. "If I have knowledge that an animal posed a threat to a family member, why would I put an animal that posed a threat to anyone back into another family?

"Does that mean that no one can take this animal and contain it in such a manner that it wouldn't pose a threat? No, not necessarily," Reiter said.

In any case, Jett said, he wants to discuss the matter with Jessamine County Attorney Brian Goettl. The sheriff's department and county health department will also have to sign off on any decision, Jett said.

"When I talked to the owner this morning, Mr. Smith understood," Jett said.

Assuming those approvals are received, Smith or the SAVE Center would be allowed to find a new home for the dog. "We've had dogs that have bitten other folks before, and after the period of 10 days they were released back to their owners," Jett said.

In some cases, animals are destroyed. Those typically involve an unprovoked attack on a human; the animal must be deemed vicious by a veterinarian; and a judge must decide that the animal should be put down.

"We have had cases where a court has ordered an animal to be destroyed," Jett said.

Greg Kocher covers Jessamine County for the Herald-Leader. Reach him in the Nicholasville bureau at (859) 885-5775.

DOG | Little agreement about this breed

From Page A1

GREG KOCHER | gkocher@herald-leader.com

Dakota, one of the Smiths' 4-year-old Native American Indian dogs, rested Tuesday at the Jessamine County SAVE Center, a Nicholasville animal shelter for dogs and cats.

backyard dog at all?

When Michael Smith, Alexander's father, spoke to the media Tuesday, he said Dakota was "a Native American Indian" breed and said the breeder told him the dog's grandparentage as "90 percent wolf."

Critics argue that hybrids are unpredictable and dangerous, that they make poor pets and that there is no rabies vaccine available for wolves or their hybrids. Proponents claim the hybrid wolf is a good companion and is useful in educating the public about wolves. Many claim "once you have had a wolf hybrid, you will never own a dog again."

Mary Ann Zeigenfuse, a Lexington dog trainer and owner of Best Friends Obedience, said if Dakota is part wolf, she is no expert.

"If this is a wolf-hybrid, this is not a dog," she said. "It is still partly undomesticated. It may, in some cases, have no fear of humans."

When asked if she and loving pet owners could domesticate a wolf, she responded, "if I had 10,000 years."

There have been numerous reports of wolf hybrids injuring people, sometimes fatally. In 2002 in Ballard County, a wolf hybrid killed a 5-year-old boy; the animal's owner pleaded guilty to a charge of reckless homicide.

Janece Rollet, a certified canine behaviorist in Georgetown, is among the people who say that wolf hybrids are potential trouble. She said they are essentially wild animals.

A wolf hybrid "is not an animal you want living in your house," Rollet said. "Because you're dealing with the basic tenets, the basic behavior of a wolf, not the basic behavior of a dog."

David Wise of Frankfort is among those who defend wolf hybrids.

"It's probably one of the most loyal animals I've ever had," Wise said. "I had one for 15 years, and it was the most docile animal you ever had. He never once snapped at a child."

So how does Wise respond to reports of wolf hybrids biting and injuring people?

"It's all in how they're raised," Wise said. "When they're pups, pups are going to be rough. But as they get older, you show 'em more affection than the rough-housing, and they're gentle as a lamb. They're no different than any other breed of dog in that respect."

A matter of controversy

Michael Smith says they have had Dakota and Nikita, her sister, for four years — since they were pups. They got the dogs from a Michigan breeder.

But are Dakota, and her sister who still remains in the Smith home, wolf hybrids?

The dog breed itself is a matter of some controversy. Is it the same as a Carolina Dog or an American dingo?

Depends on who you ask.

Spokesmen for the American Kennel Club and United Kennel Club said Wednesday that those registry organizations do not recognize the Native American Indian dog as a breed.

However, do an Internet search and you will find sites that refer to Native American Indian dogs. According to Web sites devoted to the dog, there are only five breeders in the United States, and there's much discussion about their position and whether they have any verifiable claim to a dog with a specific native American origin with wolf ancestry.

Apparently, even the legal status of the dog has been challenged by some Native Americans.

Sherman Jett, supervisor of Jessamine County Animal Control, said he has never heard of a Native American Indian dog, nor has his predecessor. Beckey Reiter, director of Boone County Animal Control, also said "that's not a breed I'm aware of."

Jett said he could not say with certainty what type of animal Dakota is. "I honestly don't know," he said.

There are animals known as Native American dogs, "but they do not contain wolf," said Rollet. Native American dogs, she said, "are a combination of multiple, larger dogs: husky, German shepherd, malamute and so on."

A classic mistake

Dr. Andrew "Butch" Schroyer from the Animal Care Clinic in Lexington said that in 25 years of practice, he has never seen nor treated this breed of dog.

That means it's hard to talk about its predilections. Still, he added, if it is a wolf hybrid, it is unpredictable, which is not good in a pet. And, he cautioned, like any exotic pet, "just because you can have one, doesn't mean you should have one."

The disposition of the Native American Indian dog is being hotly defended this week.

Karen Markel, a breeder at Majestic View Kennels in Lowell, Mich., said that in general, Native American Indian dogs are social and get along well with children. "Any dog trainer will tell you it's negligence" to leave a small child alone with any kind of canine, she said. "Of course the dog will suffer as a consequence."

Ray Coppinger, a biology professor at Hampshire College who studies canine behavior, said the dog's history — where it came from, what it has experienced — is exponentially more important than what breed it is. He's seen similar incidents happen with dachshunds, he said.

Coppinger said that although what happened to the Smiths is tragic, it's a relatively common problem.

The Smiths made a "classic mistake, out of ignorance, and now they're suffering badly for it," he said. Dogs like Dakota don't recognize infants as people, Coppinger said. "It's no more of an act of violence on the dog's part," he said, "than you eating a steak."

Native American Indian dog

The Native American Indian dog is a medium-size, working and herding type said to trace back to the Plains Indians of North America.

General appearance: They resemble coyotes or wolves. They have large, pricked, upright ears and a long, gently sloping bushy tail. The nose and lips are black. Their eyes are almond-shaped pale yellow or amber and sometimes blue, rimmed in black.

Color: Their coat is medium length with an undercoat. The hair is longer on the chest, ruff, back legs and tail. The colors vary from black to silver and tortoiseshell but all have a sable shading with dark guard hairs. There is also a broken color pattern.

Height and weight: While there seems to be quite a range in height and weight, multiple sources report wide ranges from around 18 to 34 inches in height at the withers, weight varying from 35-100 pounds.

Sources: www.dogbreedinfo.com
Various sites about dog breeds

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Introducing your dog to your baby

How to acclimate your dog to your new baby

- Make sure the dog is house- and obedience-trained, with reward and motivation, not punishment. Make sure it understands sit, stay, off, leave it, and lay down.
- Address any possible "sibling" rivalry by rewarding the dog with attention while the baby is present. Try not to push the dog aside but occupy it with new toys and equal time.
- The dog should be not allowed too close to smell or lick or lay down with the baby. The dog should not be allowed in the baby's bedroom, even if others are present, nor in any place when the child is not supervised.
- Teach the dog to ignore the baby scent with deliberate training. For example, lay a blanket or used diaper on the floor and keep the dog from going near it.
- Allow suitable time for the baby and the dog to get to know one another. Don't expect them to be best buds overnight.
- If there is any concern about the obedience and control of the dog at any time the baby is present, it should either be on leash or in a crate. This includes any mouthing or biting behavior, even if playful.

For more information, go to www.sniksnak.com/doghealth/babyintro.html or www.my-dog.info/getting-a-dog/newborns_and_dogs.asp.

Source: Mary Ann Zeigenfuse, Best Friends Obedience, Lexington; Dr. Andrew "Butch" Schroyer from the Animal Care Clinic, Lexington.

Wanted: swine flu vaccine testers

VOLUNTEERS OF ALL AGES SOUGHT FOR SAFETY STUDIES

By Lauran Neergaard
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The race is on: The government and vaccine makers are seeking thousands of volunteers, from babies to the elderly, to roll up their sleeves to test whether a new swine flu vaccine really will protect against this novel virus before its expected rebound in the fall.

On Wednesday, the National Institutes of Health tapped a network of medical centers around the country to begin a series of studies, with the first shots to go into the arms of healthy adults of any age, in early August. (The nearest sites to Kentucky are in Cincinnati and Nashville.) If there are no immediate safety concerns, testing would soon begin in children as young as 6 months.

The tests, plus research from vaccine manufacturers, are crucial as the government decides whether to offer swine flu vaccine to millions of Americans starting in October — assuming that enough is produced by then — which is still a big question, because the vaccine is hard to manufacture. Health authorities in other countries are looking to the U.S. studies, too, as they make their own plans.

It's crucial to test all ages. Unlike the usual flu that is most dangerous to people older than 65 and younger than 2, this new swine flu seems to target school-age children, teenagers and young adults.

Will the results come in time? "It's going to be very, very close," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

"We are racing to provide them as much information as we possibly can," said Dr. Karen Kotloff of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, who is helping to lead the NIH study. She said doctors and other health workers already were asking about enrolling in the study themselves.

It'll be a confusing fall, as doctors struggle to administer vaccine against the regular winter flu and tell patients to stay tuned for when and whether they can return for a shot or two of swine flu vaccine.

The test plan: All volunteers will get two swine flu shots, given 21 days apart. By early September, blood tests should show how much immune protection the initial dose triggered — and whether a low-dose shot worked or a higher dose was needed. It will take a month to get information on the second shot.

Will parents want to enroll very young children? The NIH chose study hospitals with experience in testing vaccines on the very young, and "it's not a radically different vaccine from what they already get anyway," Fauci said.

Some human strain of H1N1 has been included in regular influenza vaccine for 33 years, Fauci said — and the seasonal flu vaccine has a safe record for all ages. Yet because it's a unique H1N1 strain, with genes that originated in swine, scientists worry that it might be harder than usual for a vaccine to trigger protection.

POP

Ohio police chiefs accused of digging dirt for tabloids

Parker

A special prosecutor said Wednesday he is reviewing findings of an investigation of two eastern Ohio police chiefs accused of doing celebrity digging for tabloid material.

State agents have been looking into allegations that the chiefs illegally entered a home in May to obtain information about a woman carrying twins for actors **Sarah Jessica Parker** and **Matthew Broderick**. The surrogate mother, who gave birth in June, was not home at the time.

Farrah's final hours

Ryan O'Neal says even as **Farrah Fawcett** lay dying, she clung to life.

He told NBC's *Today* show that doctors said Fawcett had a couple of hours left, but she held on for a couple of days. O'Neal says Fawcett "wouldn't pass," and "it was awful."

He says Fawcett's eyes were open for the last three weeks of her life. Finally, he says, Fawcett closed her eyes and she was gone. She died last month after a long battle with anal cancer.

O'Neal says he writes to Fawcett in his journal, fulfilling a promise he made to his longtime love. He said he'd "see her every day" after her death.

Browne settles with GOP

Jackson Browne has settled a lawsuit and received an apology from **Sen. John McCain** and the Republican Party over use of his song *Running on Empty* during last year's presidential campaign.

The settlement announced Tuesday includes a pledge by the GOP not to use any musicians' work without proper permission in future campaigns.

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