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Last modified: Saturday, October 20, 2007 8:02 AM EDT

Lynn teacher mauled by pit bull

By Robin Kaminski / The Daily Item

LYNN - A grisly dog attack left a Lynn woman fighting for her life after a pit bull mix bit her 15 times on Wednesday.

Numerous deep wounds and frightening flashbacks have psychologically paralyzed the victim, Julie Potter, a special education teacher at the Shoemaker School who said she is afraid to leave the safety of her own home after the attack.

Animal Control Officer Kevin Farnsworth said the attack was far more aggressive than an average bite.

"It definitely sounded like it was above the average dog bite," he said. "It was an unprovoked bite that was pretty aggressive."

Potter said she was jogging on Lynnfield Street when she came across the raging Labrador/pit bull mix, shortly before 5 p.m. Wednesday.

Breaking loose from its leash, Potter said the dog furiously raced after her, growling and in hot pursuit.

"It was so horrific, it was surreal," she said. "I was literally minutes away from home when I saw a young boy about 13-years-old with a large black dog. He stared at me like he was nervous and when the dog broke loose from its leash, he said, 'Oh no, I'm so sorry.'"

Potter, a young mother to a 2-year-old son, said she

paused momentarily when the dog leaped toward her, thinking it merely wanted to sniff her or say hello.

Instead of a friendly gesture, Potter said the dog knocked her to the ground, biting her on her arms, legs and back.

A bystander who was traveling down Lynnfield Street witnessed the attack, bite by bite, which left Potter covered in blood and screaming in fear.

The witness reportedly steered her truck toward the enraged animal in an attempt to pry it away from the victim.

Running toward the witness's truck, screaming for help, Potter said the animal lunged toward her once again, knocked her on the ground and sunk its teeth deep into her skin.

"The dog was actually hanging from my arm when I got up," she said. "At first I was hesitant to get into her car because I saw a baby crying and I have a 2-year-old son, but she yelled at me to get in the car."

Breaking free from the animal's grip, Potter said she quickly climbed into the waiting vehicle, her white t-shirt completely saturated in blood.

Arriving at Union Hospital, Potter said she received 11 stitches for the 15 bite wounds that she suffered.

"She (the witness) was like an angel, she saved my life," she said. "She brought me to the emergency room and called my husband for me. She's like a hero and I can't wait to see her again when I feel better."

Farnsworth, who was unable to make it to the scene of the attack, said there is a definite possibility that the animal will either be put down or banned from the city.

The animal reportedly had its rabies vaccination and was also listed as a Labrador/rottweiler mix.

"The owner obviously didn't have any control of the animal, so we'll have to take proper procedures from here," he said. "Right now the dog is on quarantine for 10 days and then we'll have a hearing."

Potter said she isn't satisfied with Farnsworth's actions and would like city officials to revisit the leash law and a law to ban certain breeds from being allowed to reside in the city.

"Let's face it, that dog was crazed and would definitely have killed a young child, an elderly person, or myself if I had my son with me, because I would have tried to protect him instead of myself," she said. "If a man had stabbed me 15 times, he would be in jail, but this dog, a killing machine, is free."

Farnsworth said several pit bull attacks have taken place in the city over the past summer, one that resulted in the dog being shot to death.

"We had about three incidents and there is a definite possibility that this breed will be banned," he said.

Still, Potter said she is afraid for her life.

"I feel as if my freedom is gone and that's not right," she said. "I will do everything in my power to have that dog killed."

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