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4 youngsters accused of strong-arm attempt

By Steven Elbow
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Four boys ages 9 to 11 threatened to beat and tried to rob a 58-year-old woman on Madison's east side Wednesday, police said.

The woman told police she was taking a walk at about 12:15 p.m. in the 2900 block of East Washington Avenue. She stooped to pick up a penny and the boys approached her from behind on two bicycles. They surrounded her, demanded money, yelled profanities, and the 11-year-old tried to yank her wallet from her hand.

The woman held onto her wallet and walked to the Walgreens at the East Side Shopping Center while one of the boys threatened to knock her down and take her wallet.

The boys followed the woman into the store and she called police, who arrested the boys in a neighborhood several blocks away.

"It's incredibly tragic they were so young and knew to do this," said police spokesman Mike Hanson. "At that age they should be into 'Star Wars.' "

All four boys - two age 10, one age 9 and one age 11 - were tentatively charged as juveniles with strong-arm robbery. The 11-year-old was being held at the Juvenile Reception Center, while the other three were released to parents.

Dog fight:

At least one person was bitten and a dog was seriously injured Wednesday when two pit bulls and a Dalmatian mixed it up near the downtown area.

Police said the fight started in the 900 block of East Johnson Street about 11 a.m. when a woman was walking her two pit bulls and passed a car with a Dalmatian in it, the windows rolled halfway down. The 14-year-old Dalmatian leaped through one of the windows and attacked the pit bulls, a 3-year-old male and a 5-year-old female.

In the ensuing fight, the female pit bull latched onto the Dalmatian's neck and would not let go.

The fight drew about eight passersby who tried to help break up the

fight, resulting in one of them being bitten on the hand.

The Dalmatian is expected to survive.

Animal control officers were investigating the incident.

Armed robbery:

A man making a night business deposit at a Monona bank Wednesday was robbed at gunpoint.

Police said the man was at Chase Bank at 802 West Broadway about 10:15 p.m. when two men approached. One held a handgun and demanded money while the other stood by.

The men then fled with an undisclosed amount of cash toward the 6300 block of Metropolitan Lane, near Bridge Road.

Spill scare:

A bottle of plant fertilizer Wednesday prompted the evacuation of several people from a home in the town of Burke.

Dane County deputies said residents moving into a home at 4583 Dennis Drive discovered several boxes of chemicals in the attic. While moving the boxes about 5:15 p.m., a small amount of clear liquid was spilled onto the garage floor, prompting deputies to call in Madison's Hazardous Incident Team.

Deputies cordoned off the area and evacuated neighbors on both sides of the home, fearing the chemicals might be volatile.

Madison Fire Department spokeswoman Lori Wirth said the resident handling the boxes was wearing gloves and there was no reason to put anyone through a decontamination process.

About 3 hours after the spill, authorities determined that the liquid, a mixture of fertilizer and water, posed no danger.

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