



## THE EXPRESS-TIMES

### Dog attacks again, sending teen to hospital

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By **COURTNEY LOMAX**  
The Express-Times

BATH | Evan Talaber was playing basketball outside his home Wednesday evening when he noticed a neighbor's dog in the road.

The 14-year-old Northampton Area Middle School student jogged over to the Akita to bring it back to its home across the street in the 100 block of Spyglass Hill Road.

That's when the large male dog attacked.

Mel latched onto Evan's leg, ripping the flesh and leaving a large gash above Evan's right calf muscle.

Evan doesn't know how long the dog attacked him before the owner and his daughter pulled Mel off of him. He said it felt like a long time but might have been only a couple of minutes.

Mel has a history of attacking. The dog mauled two other neighborhood children in September 2005, leaving the children emotionally scarred and afraid of large dogs, the victims' father says.

Evan will likely have scars and might need plastic surgery to repair his leg, his father, Joe Talaber, said Thursday from St. Luke's Hospital. The wound will stay open until doctors can be sure there isn't an infection.

Dog owner Terrance Jackson signed Mel over to the Northampton County SPCA, Colonial Regional Police said Thursday. Deputy Chief James DePalma said Jackson will be cited for allowing his dog to run at large.

Jackson would not comment Thursday evening.

The dogs are usually behind a fence on the Jacksons' property, Talaber said. But sometimes they get out.

Michael and James LeBus were attacked in September when they went to play with one of Jackson's children.

"The dogs rushed out (of the yard) and began mauling my kids immediately," Robert LeBus said. LeBus' sons are 11 and 12 now. The family moved from Bath to Walnutport seven months after the dogs attacked but LeBus' children are still afraid of dogs.

"They have some psychological trauma," LeBus said. "A professional dog trainer is working with my sons to get them around larger dogs." He said his sons have "emotional breakdowns" at soccer games when they see large dogs near the field.

LeBus said police should have done a better job to make sure the dog didn't attack after the September incident. He said he called the police two days after his children were attacked and was told police weren't going to do anything.

DePalma said an incident report was written up about the September attack but didn't say whether Jackson was cited for that attack.

Mel won't attack anyone else in the neighborhood but he isn't the only Akita the Jacksons own. There are three other dogs living in the home.

"I don't want these dogs in the neighborhood anymore," Talaber said. "I think these dogs should be put down."

He said his family likes dogs and has one of its own, but the Akitas are dangerous.

"I've been home since this happened and (the neighbors) said they are very concerned about these dogs," Talaber said. He said the dogs bark when anyone walks past the home.

LeBus, a former borough councilman, said there were several reasons his family moved from Bath, but the dogs down the street certainly helped the decision.

LeBus said his children were afraid to walk past the house to catch the bus.

Evan will likely walk past the house to the same bus stop in a few weeks when school starts. But for now, he'll stay in the hospital at least until today.

"The goal here is to make sure there is no infection," Talaber said of his son.

Reporter Courtney Lomax can be reached at 610-863-3841 or by e-mail at [clomax@express-times.com](mailto:clomax@express-times.com).

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