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Article published Jun 13, 2006

Labrador retriever bites older woman: 75-year-old victim treated and released after Sunday attack

By Dean A. Radford
Journal Reporter

Renton — This time, it's a popular family dog — a chocolate Labrador retriever — who's sitting in quarantine for biting a senior citizen on her arms and neck.

The attack occurred about 10 a.m. Sunday as the woman was walking near her home just east of Renton off the Benson Highway or 108th Avenue Southeast.

The 3-year-old dog, named Cocoa, was being walked on a leash by three children, one age 8 and two 6-year-olds. For some reason, the dog attacked the 75-year-old woman, Young Sook Ji.

The reason why is being investigated, although the dog might have felt protective of the children.

A passer-by came to the woman's aid and the children also were able to help control the dog, said Al Dams, assistant manager for King County Animal Services.

The woman was treated for her injuries at Valley Medical Center in Renton and released.

The attack by what many consider a quintessential family dog makes a point for King County Animal Control.

"There are good and bad dogs in every breed," Dams said. "Every dog has the potential to bite, given the right circumstances."

More often, it's an attack by a pit bull that tends to make headlines, Dams said.

The county doesn't track dog bites by breed, but in 2005, there were 360 reported animal bites and 1,482 vicious dog complaints, which might have included a dog bite.

Typically, dog bites are reported by acquaintances of the animal's owner or by strangers and rarely by family members, he said.

Cocoa now is waiting his fate in the King County Animal Shelter in Kent, locked in a kennel away from other dogs in a similar situation. He and several others are kept in an area with an extra gate for security.

Monday, he was sitting near the gate to his kennel, shaking.

Animal Services will determine what to do with the dog once its investigation is done. One option is euthanasia. Dams said the dog has no prior offenses.

The dog was adopted by its owner as a puppy, Dams said. She expressed surprise when told of the attack, he said.

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