



THE TRIBUNE

MAKING A DIFFERENCE...DAILY

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Toughen up bylaws

By **ALLAN BENNER**, Tribune Staff

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Local News - PORT COLBORNE - Eric Arenburg ran outside Saturday to find Freddy, the family's five-year-old dog, lying dead where he'd been tied out that morning.

The two dogs that had apparently killed the purebred pomeranian stood over his lifeless little body.

It was a frantic telephone call from a neighbour across from their Cross Street home that alerted him to the trouble.

"She was yelling on the phone, telling me to go out front," the 20-year-old recalled.

But by the time he got to Freddy's side and chased away the two mixed breed black labs, it was much too late.

"He was torn almost in half," Eric told The Tribune.

Eric grabbed a baseball bat and chased the dogs around the corner onto McRae Avenue.

He followed them for two blocks onto Johnson Street where they attacked a second dog a little pit bull.

While continuing his pursuit of the dogs, Eric yelled to the pit bull owners to call the police.

The dogs led Eric to their home on Johnson Street, but their owner wasn't home. Instead, a neighbour put the dogs in his garage.

Eric loved that dog, he said, but it was even more precious to his mother Edie.

"He was my baby," she cried. "I know that sounds really silly, but to me that's what he was.

"Every move I made he was at my heels, as soon as I moved on the couch, he was at my feet. When I got out of bed in the morning, he was right there shaking and waiting for me. He's going to be missed a great deal."

Freddy was tied out that morning just as he had been everyday since since he came to live with the family about four years ago. The family always kept him on his leash, trying to keep him safe.

The fact that Freddy died so violently despite their efforts left Edie speechless.

"Words can't describe the feeling," she said.

It's not the first time the dogs had been terrorizing the neighbourhood.

"They have killed at least one other dog that I know of," Edie said. "And they attacked my dog two years ago."

At that time, she said a friend was walking him along the road when the same two dogs attacked him. She's seen the same two dogs running loose many times since.

"When I went over and found out where they were living, three or four of the neighbours came out and were complaining about the dogs too," Eric added. "They couldn't let their dogs out because these dogs would attack them."

As of Monday afternoon, the dogs were being held at the humane society's Port Colborne shelter. And Edie hopes that's where they remain.

"They'd better not be set free again," she warned.

Welland and District Humane Society manager Ted Bettle said the humane society is limited in determining penalties by municipal bylaws.

And they've been lobbying to add some teeth to Port's animal control policies.

"In fact, we are in the process of looking at the bylaw structure in Port Colborne to add some severity to it," Bettle said adding the dog attack Saturday will likely help the humane society's efforts to do that.

"I think this incident would certainly help that process," he said.

Port Colborne's director of community and corporate services, Peter Senese, agreed that the city's animal control bylaws could stand for some improvement.

"What they do need are stiffer fines on them," Senese said. "Over the next few months we're going to be working with the humane society in reviewing our bylaw. If there's anything there they feel we could provide more to that would help them do their job easier and better, then we would probably look at considering those and bringing any amendments to the bylaw to council at that time."

As of Monday afternoon, investigators still hadn't made contact with the owner. And since the investigation was ongoing Bettle couldn't delve into much more detail such as releasing the name of the dogs' owner.

Still, Bettle was confident charges would be levied against the owner.

"A muzzle order and fines are pending," said Bettle.

While dog attacks of that severity don't happen very often, Bettle said it's the same sort of situation that can result in injuries to people especially children who might try to break up the fight.

"It's very unfortunate," he said. "This is a rarity, and thank God it is, but obviously it happens."

It's ironic that the second dog that was attacked was a pit bull a breed of dog that was the topic of the province's recent viscous dog legislation.

"It makes a good point," Bettle said. "This legislation should have covered this circumstance as well, not just the breed. That's what we were hoping it would do, but unfortunately the provincial government never followed through with any suggestions from any of the humane society's or the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)."

For Edie, the tragic loss of her companion is something she never wants to have to bear gain.

"That's it for me, no more pets. I can't do this," she said.

"I can't go through this again. It's like losing one of my family members. It just breaks your heart."

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