



Friday, April 06, 2007



Dog attack claims life of beloved beagle

By JUDITH O. ETZEL

[Top Stories](#)
[Announcements](#)
[Sports](#)
[News-Herald](#)
[Clarion-News](#)
[Good Times](#)
[Local Classifieds](#)
[Place A Classified Ad](#)
[Contact Information](#)


Charges are pending against the owner of the three Great Danes involved in the mauling on West First Street in Oil City.

A typical mid-morning walk down Oil City's West First Street for Joseph Kennedy and his aging beagle, Sady, turned into tragedy Thursday when three Great Dane dogs attacked and mortally wounded his leashed pet.

The end result was a dead dog and multiple charges pending against the owner of the attack dogs.

"My husband was at the corner of West First and Hickory, just within a block from the house, when these three big dogs ran from across the street and went after Sady," Joyce Kennedy said. "Sady didn't deserve that."

Bundling up their bitten and bleeding 10-year-old tri-color beagle, the Kennedys rushed Sady to a local veterinarian's office.

"There was terrific muscle damage and bites to her and we just couldn't put Sady through all that. We had her put down and that was just awful," Joyce Kennedy said.

The incident happened at about 10 a.m. when the 74-year-old Joseph Kennedy, as per his twice-a-day habit, leashed up Sady for a stroll down the heavily traveled West First Street. Just as the three large dogs lit into Sady, city worker Ed Hartle was driving down the street.

"He stopped right in the middle of the street, grabbed a snow shovel and hit one of the dogs with it. And a neighbor, Kay Dale, came at the same time and helped. Joe was lying over Sady and fighting off the dogs, too, and hit one so hard he hurt his hand," Joyce Kennedy said.

As the dogs were driven off, Dale tried to pick up the injured Sady to carry her down the street to the Kennedy home.

"She tried but Sady was in such pain and would just scream. Joe raced home and got a wheelbarrow and brought her home," Joyce said. "Another neighbor, Holly Hazlett, grabbed a blanket to put over Sady so she wouldn't go into shock. We're all dog owners and everyone was affected by this."

Oil City Police Sgt. Tom Stack said his department was called to the scene. The investigation, he said, was turned over to Mark Holben of Oil City, the dog law enforcement officer for Venango and Warren counties. Holben enforces the dog laws set out by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

Holben said he has identified the owner of the three Great Danes and multiple charges are pending against her. They will be filed with District Judge Doug Dinberg of Cranberry Township early next week, he said.

"Those dogs are confined to the owner's residence at this point. I intend to file charges, which are summary offenses that carry fines and possible 90 days incarceration, with Mr. Dinberg," said Holben on Friday.

The attack will probably fall under the state dog law's dangerous dog category. It is a classification that allows a warden to file "the most serious charges."

If a dog is deemed by the court as "a dangerous dog," state law requires that an owner register his or her pet as "dangerous" by purchasing a \$25 certificate and confine the dog or muzzle and leash the dog. The most serious provision, though, is a requirement that an owner must post a surety (liability) bond of \$50,000 for each dangerous dog. That is to insure the owner for any personal injuries inflicted by the dog.

"The bottom line is this - all dogs must be confined properly and cannot roam past the owner's premises without a leash. The law also says if you are walking your dog and that dog listens to voice commands, that is a form of containment. But it comes down to common sense - be safe and use a leash," said Holben.

The dog warden also noted state dog law officers will be out canvassing the area to check dog licenses and confinement law provisions at the end of this month.

As for the Kennedys, they plan to wait a while before getting another dog.

"Sady didn't deserve this. No pet does. This kind of thing, with people walking with pets or their children or joggers and people riding their bikes on West First Street, just shouldn't happen. And I want the public to know about this and be careful," said Joyce Kennedy.