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Kennel owner mauled by dog

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Chico Enterprise-Record

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A Chico woman who runs a kennel was badly mauled Thursday by a dog she had rescued.

Tracy Hon sustained severe injuries and is recovering in Enloe Medical Center's intensive care unit, said Patricia Vaughan, a friend of hers.

Hon's injuries included a badly mauled arm and legs, facial lacerations and a severed trachea, Vaughan said. She had surgery at the hospital.

Hon is active in Boxer Rescue, an organization whose members take care of unwanted boxers and try to find homes for them. Sometimes she rescues pit bulls and other dogs.

Vaughan said the dog that attacked Hon was a small female bulldog mix. Vaughan, who works with Hon at rescuing dogs, said the two of them had brought the bulldog to the kennel a couple of months ago and were trying to find a home for her.

When they learned the dog had cancer, they arranged for her to have operations. However, the illness turned out to be terminal. Hon had been taking the animal home with her at night, trying to give her some comfortable days before she had to be put to sleep, Vaughan said.

Because Hon is unable to talk, it's not known just what might have precipitated the attack, Vaughan said.

Hon was working alone Thursday morning at her kennel, Canine Retreat, which is off The Esplanade in north Chico, when the bulldog started biting her, Vaughan said. She had been moving dogs from their kennels into a larger exercise area.

Rescue workers said they were amazed Hon was able to get away from the dog and make it to a phone to call 9-1-1, she said.

Hon is expected to be in intensive care for up to a week, she said. It's not known how long she'll be in the hospital after that.

Vaughan said Dr. Liz Grauer, a veterinarian in Vancouver, Wash., who works with Boxer Rescue, has started a fund with Bank of America to help Hon with the cost of her medical expenses.

Checks can be sent to the Tracy Hon Fund, c/o Bank of America, 3308 N.E. Auto Mall Drive, Vancouver, WA, 98662.

Vaughan said she and others who got to know the bulldog can't understand what happened. The dog

seemed to be gentle.

"It wasn't the dog's fault," she said. "She lost her mind. She might have been in pain."

Animal control had the animal euthanized on Thursday.

Vaughan said e-mails have been coming in to Hon's computer from people all over the country who are involved in dog rescues. The typical reaction is, "Oh, my gosh, this could have happened to us," she said.

Hon was featured in an Enterprise-Record story earlier this year about Assembly Bill 1634, which would require that all dogs and cats in the state be spayed or neutered unless they were purebreds used for breeding or were too old or sick to have surgery. The bill passed the state Assembly Wednesday by a vote of 41 to 38. It now moves to the state Senate.

Hon said she was 100 percent behind the measure. The fact there are so many unwanted dogs and cats means hundreds of thousands are kept in crowded shelters at great expense and many end up being euthanized, she said.

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BACKGROUND: Tracy Hon owns a kennel in Chico and rescues unwanted dogs.

WHAT'S NEW: On Thursday, Hon was severely mauled by a dog she had rescued.

WHAT'S NEXT: Hon is expected to be in intensive care at Enloe Medical Center for up to a week.

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