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## Dog injures pets; owners fearful

### Louie's wounds cover his body

By Ellie Oleson CORRESPONDENT

**AUBURN**— Louie the dog survived Hurricane Katrina but nearly died during a Thanksgiving Day attack that was a nightmare for one local family.

Christine V. Herbert was in her kitchen at 15 Elizabeth Drive Thursday morning, basting a turkey, while her husband, William M. Herbert, and six relatives were visiting.

Outside, the Herberts' dogs, Maggie, a 90-pound, 9-year-old Portuguese water dog, and Louie, a 27-pound, mixed breed the family had adopted from a rescue organization after Hurricane Katrina, romped with a relative's 1-year-old, 40-pound Goldendoodle. All three dogs were outside, within an electronic invisible fence that surrounds the Herberts' 3-acre property.

"My stepdaughter said Louie was barking strangely and there was another dog out there," Mrs. Herbert said.

She raced out in time to see Louie being shaken back and forth in the mouth of a huge, black Newfoundland, 5 feet from the kitchen door. Blood was spattered everywhere.

"I kicked the dog as hard as I could. The boy that owns the Newfoundland grabbed its tail and tried to pull it off. Louie got free and hobbled into the house. The dog chased him inside, knocking over my 13-year-old daughter. My husband grabbed that huge head in a headlock. Blood dripped down my husband's pants and all over the kitchen," Mrs. Herbert said tearfully, still badly shaken.

While the son of the owner of the Newfoundland left with that dog, Mrs. Herbert rushed Louie in his crate to the Foster Hospital for Small Animals at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University in Grafton.

"I thought he was dead," Mrs. Hebert said yesterday. "There was so much blood. We stayed for three hours while he had X-rays and got stitches all over his body. He came home Sunday night, but has been very quiet. He has a cone around his neck and is so uncomfortable. He's hardly eating or drinking. He didn't even lift his head when I came into the kitchen this morning." She spoke shortly before taking the dog back to the Cummings School to be checked.

"I'm so afraid he'll die. He was protecting us and the other dogs, but what can a 27-pound dog do against a 150-pound monster? I can still see that huge black head with blood dripping from its teeth."

Mrs. Herbert said she is afraid to go out of her house without a baseball bat for protection and has even considered getting a license to carry a gun since this isn't the first time her dogs have been attacked by the Newfoundland.



In June, her other dog, Maggie, was outside when she was attacked.

"Maggie's old and sickly, with Cushing's disease and Lyme disease. She has arthritis and is obese. She went out at about 9 p.m. one night when that same Newfoundland attacked her," Mrs. Herbert said.

The family rescued Maggie and the owners of the Newfoundland took their dog home.

"It was about 10 p.m. before I got the bleeding stopped," Mrs. Herbert said.

When the dog's wounds appeared not to be healing, Mrs. Herbert took her pet to the Cummings School.

"Maggie had emergency surgery and more than 100 stitches. It was awful. She had a wick in to drain her wounds and had to wear a cone around her head. Cleaning the messes was awful. I called the town for help. I was afraid for my grandchildren. I was afraid the Newfoundland would kill my grandson. He loves dogs," Mrs. Herbert said.

She called Dog Officer Kathleen M. Sabina and was reassured that there had been no other complaints about the Newfoundland, and that the owners of that dog would pay all veterinary bills.

After the Thanksgiving Day attack, Mrs. Herbert said something more had to be done. She spoke with Ms. Sabina and several town officials.

Mrs. Herbert did not appear at Monday night's selectmen's meeting, but the owner of the Newfoundland did speak there.

Sally E. Tantarawat of 26 Barnes St., which is less than a quarter-mile away from the Herberts' house, said her Newfoundland, Casey, is a 2-year-old, unspayed female, who is dearly loved by her family.

"I'm doing everything I possibly can. We are heartbroken. She is a sweet dog. I don't want anyone hurt by a dog in my care," Mrs. Tantarawat said.

She said that Casey escaped from her family's car and then wandered into the Herberts' yard last week.

Since Thanksgiving, Casey has been quarantined in the house or in a large pen in a garage until the 10-day quarantine is lifted Sunday.

Andrew R. Pelletier, director of public health, said that the law requires a 10-day quarantine when a dog bites a pet.

"On two separate occasions, the owner failed to restrain the dog. The quarantine has to be in a secure place," he said.

He said a decision to remove the dog from the home was "based on the fact that the animal has a history of escaping."

Mr. O'Connor said he wanted the dog in a secure facility and wanted it there immediately.

"Mr. and Mrs. Herbert are very upset about the ferociousness of the attacks."

Ms. Sabina said she will hold a hearing on the attack tomorrow. Both the Tantarawat and Herbert families will be notified of the hearing.

"My heart is broken for both these families. These are all good, caring people," Ms. Sabina said.

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