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## Officer kills dog he says tried to bite him

By NATHAN BROWN, Enterprise Staff Writer

Posted on: Wednesday, October 10, 2007

TUPPER LAKE — Labrador retrievers are not generally considered an aggressive breed, but Tupper Lake Police Officer Mike Vaillancourt learned on Friday that such stereotypes aren't always true.

Vaillancourt shot and killed a Labrador that was reportedly menacing people on Arden Street and tried to bite the officer. Police say he did what he had to do to protect himself and the community, but the dog's owner says he used excessive force.

Village police received several calls Friday afternoon that the dog was behaving aggressively and chasing people up and down Arden Street. Allegedly, the dog had chased and tried to attack a small child and a mail carrier. Vaillancourt responded to the calls and attempted to find the owner of the dog. He was unable to find out who the black Labrador belonged to, and the dog continued to menace him and passers-by.

Vaillancourt had to leave briefly to respond to another call about a car accident. When he established that no people were injured in the accident, he returned to Arden Street as quickly as he could and continued to interview neighbors, seeking the dog's owner.

"The dog came after him more than once," Police Chief Tom Fee said. "Finally, the dog came after him one more time, and he realized the only thing he could do to save himself from being bit was to dispatch the dog, which he did with his .40-caliber service pistol."

The first shot didn't kill the dog, however, and it continued to writhe and make noises.


"Whether these were death throes or not, I don't know; I wasn't there," Fee said.

Vaillancourt shot the dog two more times to spare it further pain, and town Dog Control Officer Bill Moody arrived several minutes later.

Police are still investigating the incident and say they will release a report when they're done.

"It's not a people shooting," Fee said, "but it's discharging a firearm inside the village, which we take very seriously. ... We're talking about a dog attacking a person. ... The matter isn't closed until I review statements taken from the witnesses, but it looks like he did what he was supposed to do. At this moment,

*Saranac Village  
at Will Rogers*



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I'm looking at Officer Vaillancourt as the victim."

According to the Tupper Lake Free Press, the dog was owned by the Burnett family, which lives on Arden Street and wasn't home at the time of the incident. Stuart Burnett told the Free Press that his two dogs were always kept inside and that the one must have been let out by mistake. Burnett is angry with the police.

"From talking to some of my neighbors, there was no reason for the officer to shoot my dog," Burnett told the Free Press. "He (Vaillancourt) should have waited for Bill Moody to arrive to apprehend it! ... I can get 100 people who knew my dog to say how friendly my dog was."

Burnett told the Free Press that when he called the police station that evening, Sgt. Eric Proulx told him his dog was foaming at the mouth and acting "vicious." Burnett doubts this is possible, since his dog's rabies shots were up to date.

Neighbor Trish Jaquis told the Free Press that she did not recognize the dog.

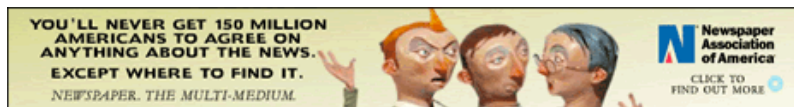
"I've lived on that street for 15 months, and quite frankly, I don't think I've ever seen that dog before."

She told the Free Press the dog wasn't foaming at the mouth but that it was drooling a lot. She said the dog was out for much of the day and didn't bother anyone until a neighborhood child approached it and the dog chased the child.

Fee said he guesses the reason nobody in the neighborhood knew the dog is probably because it spent so much time inside.

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# Adirondack Daily Enterprise

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