



Palo Verde Valley Times Quartzsite Times & Blythe, California and Quartzsite, Arizona

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Police Chief saves woman from attack

Neighborhood women serve as Chief's backup in battle with dogs

Tuesday, February 26, 2008



By Marty Bachman

Blythe Police Chief Robert Whitney rescued a woman from a vicious dog attack late in the afternoon of Feb. 15, in the area of Eagle Court and Fairway Villa Dr., near the Blythe Municipal Golf Course.

Whitney was at home and off-duty when he heard a woman screaming on the streets nearby.

"Initially, when I first heard her, it sounded like she was calling her dog, like trying to get her dog to come closer," Whitney said. "Seconds later, that tone in her voice sounded like something was going bad and she was scared and frightened. That's when I stood up and took a closer look and I saw the two dogs chasing her dog toward Fourth Street."

Whitney rushed outside and around the corner and found Jilyne Gouvion, 58, who was out walking her friend's dog, being attacked by two American bulldogs.

"The bigger of the two dogs was attacking her dog and it appeared she was down on the ground trying to protect her dog," Whitney said. "When I got to the two dogs I could see the bigger one had a choker chain so I lifted him off while he was pulling on the dog's shoulder blade area."

Whitney said that the smaller dog then grabbed Gouvion's ankle and started growling and shaking its head.

"I was trying to control the bigger dog, which probably weighed 100 lbs. when two other ladies pulled up.

Elaine Merritt and friend, residents of Rancho Ventana, were coming back from a trip into town when they saw the commotion.

"When we came around the corner at Fourth Avenue, there was a lady standing over her dog and she was asking us, 'please help me, they're going to kill my dog,'" said Elaine Merritt. "The chief of police had a chain on the biggest dog and was trying to control him. The smaller dog was attacking the woman's Australian Shepherd and it was just lying there. I jumped out and got the dog into the car. He was covered in blood."

Merritt said that the smaller dog had the lady's arm in his mouth and her jacket got ripped as she pulled away. He then grabbed her leg and threw her to the ground.

"My friend got out and she had swung her purse at the dog trying to make it let go," Merritt said. "When he did, she got her into the car and then the chief got in the car to get away from the dogs."

"Thank God for those ladies in the SUV," Whitney said. "They're the real heroes. They stopped and were trying to

get the smaller dog off of her. These dogs weren't trying to settle down by any means. The women all got into the car and, using the big dog as a shield, I was able to back into the passenger seat."

The four of them went to the front of Gouvian's house and started medical treatment. They left for the hospital and were met by an ambulance on the way.

When Blythe Police officers arrived, they learned that Gouvion had already been transported to Palo Verde Hospital, suffering from severe lacerations caused by dog bites to her legs and arms.

Gouvion later told officers that she was walking her dog in the residential area near the golf course when the two dogs attacked. The dogs first began biting Gouvion's Australian Shepherd and when Gouvion attempted to stop the dogs from biting her dog, they began attacking her, causing her to fall to the ground.

Officers were able to find and impound both dogs. The owner of the dogs, George Castro, 37, of Blythe, was cited at the scene. Castro is facing additional felony charges relating to his dogs being a public nuisance. Castro's dogs are being held at the Riverside County Animal Shelter. A decision will be made on a later date regarding the disposition of the animals.

Police ask that anyone with information about this incident, to contact the Blythe Police Department at 922-6111. Information can be given anonymously by calling 921-CARE, (921-2273).

Related Links

Content © 2008 Palo Verde Valley News
Software © 1998-2008 **1up! Software**, All Rights Reserved