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Dog bites man, owner fights ticket

ROBINS A Robins woman is fighting a ticket issued to her after her dog bit a man walking on the Cedar Valley Nature Trail and crushed part of his hand.

Shannon L. Homewood, 22, was ticketed for "dog at large" in the March 29 incident by Robins police Officer Mike Skaggs. According to Skaggs' report, Homewood said her 10-year-old mastiff, Rocky, was chained up on the north side of her house on Robins Road when the dog broke the chain and started running after Andrew Hansen, who was on the trail.

Hansen, 47, of Cedar Rapids, said he didn't see the dog before it charged through the bushes and onto the trail in front of him. It circled him before biting his left hand, he said, cutting it and crushing the ligaments through the leather glove he was wearing.

"I thought he was literally going to rip apart my hand," Hansen said.

Before the dog attempted to bite him again, Hansen said, Homewood came running out to the trail yelling for the dog to stop, which he did. Hansen said he walked home and drove himself to the hospital, where he was treated and released. The incident disabled his hand for several days, and his medical bills total about \$1,100.

Homewood was allowed to keep Rocky after his veterinarian confirmed he was up-to-date on shots, according to the report.

I believe "a larger, heavier chain is needed to secure the dog," Skaggs wrote in his report, adding that he did "not believe he is a vicious dog."

However, Homewood pleaded not guilty to the ticket and is set to appear in court June 10. She said her attorney advised her not to comment on the case before the trial.

Hansen said the situation is an issue of public safety, and that people should be aware there are dangers along the trail.

"This trail is used heavily by people smaller than me," Hansen said. "Its head was at the level of my hand. ... All I can think of is what it would have done to a child." He said he plans to file a lawsuit against Homewood to recoup his losses.

Homewood said she and her boyfriend are in the process of finding affordable fencing to put up along the trail, according to the police report.

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