



Woman says she needed 29 stitches after canine trio latched onto her

## Dog owner cited after boxer attack

**DIANE COCHRAN Of The Gazette Staff | Posted: Wednesday, July 22, 2009 11:25 pm**

A woman recovering from an attack by her neighbor's dogs, including one that apparently was not vaccinated against rabies, says other people in her Billings Heights neighborhood could be at risk.

Laurah Peron was preparing to spray her front stoop for bugs on the evening of July 6 when, she said, three boxers owned by her next-door neighbor attacked her. Peron lives on the 300 block of Laurie Lane.

She had her back turned when the animals charged. Two latched onto her left leg and one onto her right hand, she said.

"All of a sudden they were just on me," she said. "I was screaming at the top of my lungs."

Peron was standing at her front door but could not get inside because the door was locked. She had gone into her yard through an attached garage.

Her pair of sheltie dogs and a neighbor heard her screaming. The neighbor helped her into the garage as the three boxers attacked one of the shelties.

"If he wouldn't have come over, they would have killed me," Peron said.

After several false starts - the dogs kept tripping the automatic garage door's laser sensor, preventing it from closing - Peron and the neighbor managed to shut the animals out of the garage.

A second neighbor took her to the hospital, where she received 29 stitches in her leg and began undergoing a series of preventive rabies shots. Rabies cannot be detected until symptoms appear. By then, it is fatal.

Peron didn't realize until almost a week later that her dog had also been wounded. The wound had abscessed and needed attention from a veterinarian.

An animal control officer wrote nine tickets to the owner of the boxers, Leon Garcia. Garcia is scheduled to appear in Billings Municipal Court July 30.

Three of the tickets were for having a potentially dangerous dog. Each of those citations carries a maximum penalty of six months in jail and a \$500 fine.

Three more tickets were for having a dog at large, two were for having an unlicensed dog and one was for failing to vaccinate a dog against rabies. Each of those citations carries a maximum \$40 fine.

Animal Control also quarantined the dogs for 10 days to ensure they were not infected with rabies. Several rabid skunks have been captured or killed in the Heights this year.

All three dogs are back in the neighborhood, where children and older people live and could be at risk, Peron said.

Animal Control does not have the authority to confiscate or destroy pets, said the agency's supervisor, Dave Klein. Only a judge can order an animal to be destroyed, Klein said.

But Peron, who has nightmares about the attack and now carries bear spray with her when she leaves her house, doesn't want the boxers to be killed. She hopes their owner will build a more secure fence and maintain the animals' rabies vaccinations.

"I don't want to traumatize their kids," she said. "The dogs are part of their family just like my dogs are."

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