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Pit bull saves owner from attack by two dogs

Dog is woman's best friend

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Pit bull dogs get plenty of bad publicity, but Geraldine Pedersen of Alexandria says her pit bull, Lazer, deserves to be called a hero.

She said Lazer defended her from an attack by two dogs.

Pedersen, who lives at 5210 Sarah St. in the Grundy Cooper subdivision just outside Alexandria, was walking Lazer, her 11-year-old, 80-pound, full-blooded American pit bull terrier, on Wednesday. "I'd just stepped off my drive into the street and heard an awful growling," she said during an interview Thursday.

A big dog and a smaller dog, both of which appeared to be blue heelers, were "running towards me," the 66-year-old woman said. "Not my dog -- me."

The big heeler "growled real loud," but then, Pedersen said, "my dog jumped between me and him ... and the fight was on."

During the dogs' confrontation, Pedersen said, she got pulled down while trying to hold Lazer as he moved forward defending her.

Pedersen displayed where she'd suffered scrapes to her left knee and leg and left elbow and hurt her left foot that had been recovering from a previous surgery.

"I got road rash," Pedersen said, but added she'd rather have the scrapes from the pavement than to have been bitten by the two attacking dogs.

The big dog ran off when a neighbor came out to see what was happening, she said, and the smaller dog followed when Pedersen threw a shoe at it.

"I'm a retired private investigator, and I've been in a lot of tight spots," Pedersen said, but never one like this.

She said the attacking dogs "scared the you-know-what out of me."

Pedersen said many pit bull dogs get a bad rap these days from reports about some people's negative encounters with the breed.

She displayed a framed pedigree on her dog's lineage from the American Dog Breeders Association Inc.

"But it's not the dog's fault, it's the human's fault" if a pit bull is raised to be aggressive toward people,

Pedersen said.

Henry Wimbley, Alexandria Animal Shelter director, said the city passed an ordinance a couple of years ago to deal with the neglect, abuse and breeding of pit bull dogs by irresponsible owners.

"I commend this lady for having this dog come to her aid," Wimbley said.

Close to 100 pit bull dogs are registered with the city of Alexandria, Wimbley said. "It's the No. 1 stolen dog in the city of Alexandria," he said. "Abuse of them is high."

The ordinance was not meant to penalize the breed but instead to get control of the abuse and neglect of the animals before someone got hurt, Wimbley said.

"Most dogs that are bred properly or bought from reputable breeders are not going to have this problem with interbreeding or aggressiveness," Wimbley said.
