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6-month-old girl is killed by a neighbor's dog

[NORTH SPORTS FINAL, C Edition]

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Abstract (Document Summary)

A Morgan Park infant was killed Wednesday night when she was attacked by a neighbor's dog which police described as a pit bull terrier. The 6-month-old girl, Tionna Kenny, of 1339 W. 112th St. died after being transferred from Roseland Community Hospital to the trauma unit of Cook County Hospital, according to hospital officials.
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Sleeping Infant Killed by Pit Bull Dog

CHICAGO (AP) — A 6-month-old girl was killed by a neighbor's pit bull terrier as the infant slept in her bedroom, police say.

Tionna Kenny was bitten on the head, neck and arms by the dog, whose owner apparently was caring for the child at the time of the attack Wednesday, police said.

The dog's owner, Tyrone Hardy, told police he heard the dog growling and the child cry out. Hardy said he could not free the child from the dog's grip, according to police officer Ed Barkowski.

The dog will be destroyed, said Peter Poholik, director of the city's Animal Care and Control Commission.

Dog Brings Home Feet; Bodies Found

SOUTHPORT, Fla. (AP) — Divers found the bodies of two people in a submerged car after a neighborhood dog brought home shoes with decomposing human feet in them, authorities said.

The bodies found Wednesday were believed to be those of two people reported missing May 5, Lt. Ralph Dyer of the Bay County Sheriff's Department said Thursday.

The names were withheld pending

confirmation by the medical examiner, he said.

Honey, a golden retriever-Labrador mix, brought a soggy old shoe to her owner Monday in this Florida Panhandle community north of Panama City.

"I thought it was my neighbor's, so I went over and looked at it and there was an ankle bone sticking up," said Tammy Quick, the dog's owner.

Immigrants Cause Measles Outbreaks

ATLANTA (AP) — A measles epidemic in Washington state was spread in large part by unvaccinated immigrants who brought the virus from Mexico, federal health officials said Thursday.

At least 26 percent of the 266 measles cases reported in Washington state so far this year were acquired

ported last year were acquired outside the United States, it said.

Across the country, measles continue to be spread in medical settings, especially hospital emergency rooms, because cases often are not diagnosed and isolated promptly and because many medical workers are not immune, the CDC said.

Killing of child by pit bull increases outcry for curbs on lethal animals

KNIGHT-RIDDER NEWS SERVICE

CHICAGO — Yolanda Applewhite was outraged and defiant upon learning that no charges would be filed against the owner of a 55-pound pit bull that had mauled her 6-month-old daughter to death.

"I will press charges against him," she vowed.

The attack on Ms. Applewhite's daughter, Tionna Kenny, occurred as she slept Wednesday night in the dog owner's apartment. It and another fatal attack by a mixed-breed pit bull last month in suburban Dolton have renewed the debate locally over the powerful dogs, and how best to deal with them.

But the debate has taken on a different focus than in the past.

Like Ms. Applewhite, concerned citizens, lawmakers, and animal-care experts are looking to affix more responsibility for destructive actions to the owners of pit bulls and other potentially dangerous animals.

Although a series of attacks by pit bulls in 1987 led to calls for banning the animals, the latest incidents of violence linked to the dog have spurred demands for new legislation aimed at animal owners.

On Friday, state Sen. Aldo DeAngelis, a Republican representing Olympica Fields and the Republican candidate for Cook County Board president, said he would introduce a state law making it a felony to own an aggressive animal that causes injury to a person.

Currently, owners are for the most part limited to civil liability, Mr. DeAngelis said. The law he will propose "would certainly increase diligence for people who own such animals," he said.

The measure would not be aimed at pit bulls specifically, but at all animals capable of harming people, Mr. DeAngelis said.

The proposed law marks an evolution in thinking among local lawmakers, who at one time considered legislation banning pit bulls from Chicago and other municipalities.

Such laws and ordinances, which were adopted in several cities, are widely believed by animal-care experts to be ineffective. One of the main obstacles to implementing such a ban is the difficulty of defining a pit bull, which is often a mixture of several breeds.

Joining Mr. DeAngelis in his call for tougher owner-oriented restrictions is Peter Poholik, executive director of the city's Commission on

Animal Care and Control.

"If you are in possession of a large dog, an aggressive dog, you should be held increasingly responsible for the animal's actions," Mr. Poholik said. "I don't care if a cocker spaniel weighing 10 pounds causes damage to your neighbor's kid; the owner of that dog has got to be held more responsible than now."

Under new or amended laws, the owner of the pit bull that killed Tionna could be charged in connection with the attack, authorities said.

That pit bull, which was owned by Tyrone Harding, had bitten a resident of his street this year and had allegedly killed another animal. The dog was destroyed by injection Thursday.

"The animal killed another animal, had been impounded, and was known in the neighborhood as a dangerous dog," said Randy Lockwood, vice president of the Humane Society of the United States, based in Washington. "It should have been locked up in a cage or destroyed long ago."

After living within earshot of Mr. Harding's vicious dog, some of his neighbors said they believe that all pit bulls should be kept away from human beings.

"I love animals," said one neighbor who asked that her name not be printed. "I have three cats and I had four dogs. But I feel pit bulls should not be allowed in a city."

That sentiment, though, is not accepted by many animal experts, who insisted that any dog — not just a pit bull — can be turned by its master into a violence-prone animal through abuse and mistreatment.

"I could take any dog in the city and make it mean," said Sgt. James Brown, a police department dog breeder and trainer. "But too many

bad people have these dogs. Too many people who have read how tough these dogs are have gone out and made them mean. All they're doing is abusing an animal."

Although the American pit bull terrier, the dog most commonly referred to as a pit bull, was bred as a fighting dog, the breed is not inherently aggressive to people, Sergeant Brown said.

The problem with pit bulls surfaced within the last 10 years, when the dog was bred by amateurs and sold to drug dealers and gang members interested in using them as weapons. The animals were frequently tortured to turn them into attack dogs, Sergeant Brown said.

According to national statistics kept by the Humane Society, half of the 14 fatal attacks on humans, primarily children, so far this year have involved dogs that were at least part pit bull.

"Most animals involved in attacks are themselves the victims of negligence and abuse or at least irresponsible ownership," Mr. Lockwood said.

In addition, the percentage of pit bulls involved in fatal attacks has decreased since 1987, when they accounted for 10 of the 12 fatalities, Mr. Lockwood said.

Last week's fatality was believed to be the first involving a pit bull in Chicago. Since 1982, there have been three other fatal attacks, one each by a doberman, a golden retriever, and a black labrador. Several fatal attacks involving pit bulls have occurred in the suburbs.

No matter what laws are passed, authorities insisted, common sense will have to play a part in preventing further tragedies.

"Any time you have a big dog together with a small baby, you have big trouble," Mr. Poholik said.



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