

It's a dog eat leg world for Eugene mail carriers

By David Brown
Of the Emerald

"I went up there to deliver the mail and the gal opened the door and the dog — a big looking albino sheperd — came running out," says letter carrier Greg Redick. "Of course, I was away from my cart and didn't have the spray."

He demonstrates how he stood in place doing something like a high speed jig while the shepard attempted a clamp hold on his legs.

Three men burst from the house. It seemed like a few minutes before they finally got the dog called off, says Redick.

Luckily, Redick escaped injury. "I was still angry," he says. "I think your first emotion is fear... your second is anger."

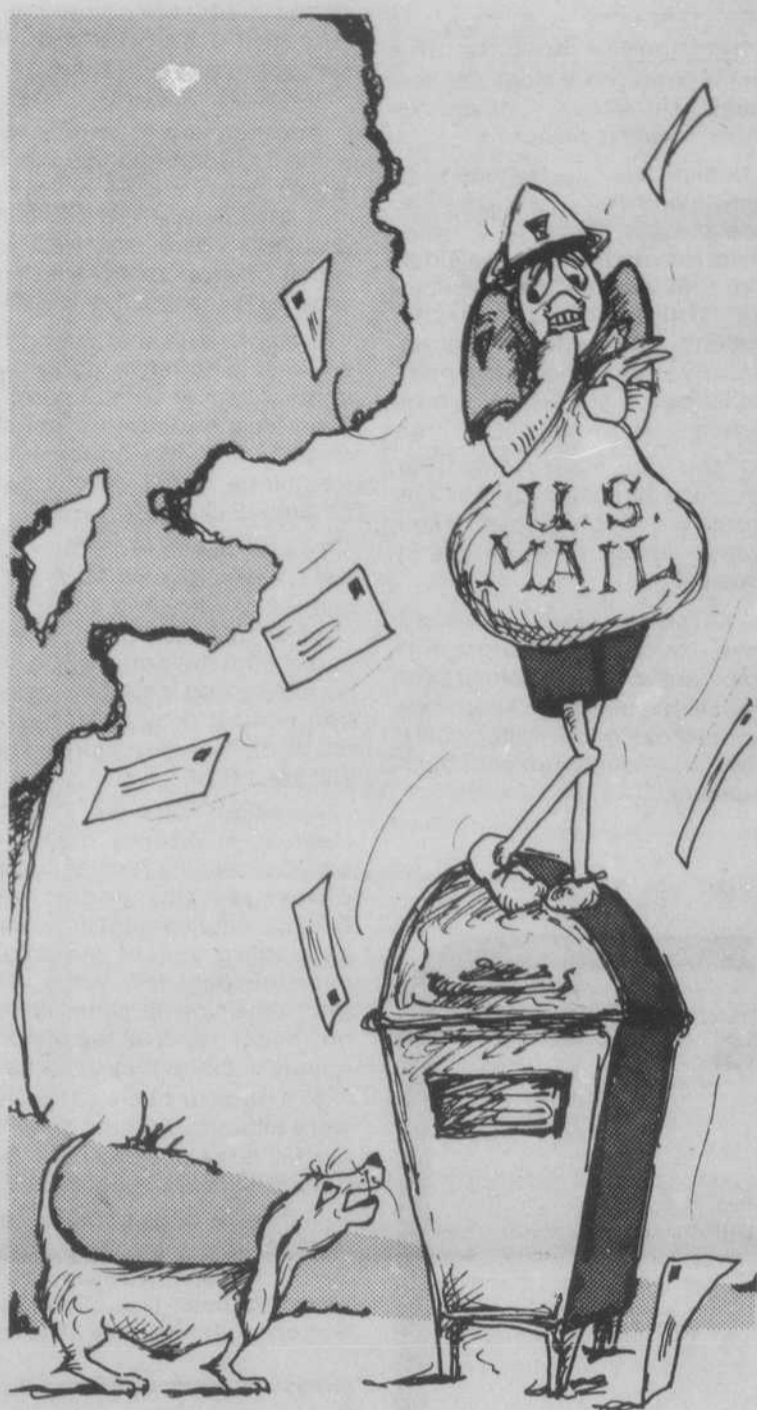
Dogs bit 14 Eugene letter carriers this year — an increase from only four dog bites last year. That rate equals about one dog bite injury for every five mail routes in Eugene a year.

This prompted the Eugene Post Office to begin a dog bite prevention campaign this summer. The Post Office now urges customers to keep their dogs restrained during delivery hours. A carrier doesn't have to deliver mail if there is a threat of injury by an unrestrained animal.

"If we sense that a dog is running at large and is any danger at all to the carrier, the carrier just doesn't go by there," says Al Bradford, postmaster at the Eugene post office.

The office now encourages personnel to pursue legal claims against any party responsible for a dog bite injury. In one recent case a carrier

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