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collected nearly \$1,600 for traumatic damages.

Donald Robinson, Post Office supervisor, says he noticed a "bad" dog that lives across the street from him. He warned both carriers that deliver to his house, "you can go down to my

house but if you see that black dog out, don't go any farther."

Letter carriers often joke about the frequently heard, "Don't worry, he doesn't bite," says Redick. "I usually say... Why? Doesn't he have any teeth? Well, how does he eat then?" He smiles. "Maybe he doesn't bite his owner."

Redick, a tall, husky man with curly blond hair, has a gentle face custom made for a lively smile. His route covers the Alder and 13th Avenue area next to the University. University students frequently exchange friendly comments with him. Sometimes their dogs are less friendly.

"You can't ever feel like you're not going to have a problem," Redick says. "You always get bit when you least expect it."

"All of our bites," Bradford says, "have been dogs that come around from behind. We try to teach people to keep their eye on the dog. No matter where a dog is... don't turn your back on a dog."

Bradford had just received a dog bite report. The attack took place in the South Side Station area, around 29th and Willamette Street. The dog "chewed up" the carrier's arm. According to Bradford, the greatest number of bites occur in the south side area.

Another, more serious, bite recently took place also in the South Side area. As a result of the attack the carrier's leg swelled so badly she has been either off-work or working part-time for two and a half weeks.

Bradford says that during the summer kids leave gates and doors open or lose control of their dogs. And owners often let dogs out of the house more frequently in dry weather, according to Bradford.

"A lot of the time it's the same dogs," says Gordon Mart, manager of delivery and collection. "Before, the county would take some kind of action and impound the dog in a lot of cases. I don't think they're doing as much of that any more. They just can't do it."

A Lane County Animal Regulation Agency employee says not a single Animal Control officer remains under Lane County employment following successive budget reductions over the past few years. The four remaining Eugene officers no longer receive the kind of county back-up they once had.

In a number of cases carriers were bitten by friendly dogs the carrier knew for "four or five, ten years," says Mart.

"I think as dogs get older they tend to lose their sight," says Harold Hansen, instructor from "Heeling Free" Dog Obedience School. "It may be that the

mailman surprised the dog. If somebody comes up and taps you on the shoulder, you don't turn around and punch them. But some dogs will tend to do that if they're surprised. They don't say, 'Oh, I wonder who's surprising me.'"

He explains that dogs are territorial animals. "Every day, your dog goes through a mini-guard-dog session. Basically the mailman walks up, or the paperboy, the dog barks, and the person leaves. The dog thinks, 'A-ha, I did it again!' After a while that false confidence becomes real confidence."

Concerning the carrier's uniform, dogs tend to generalize. If a carrier once kicked the dog, the next carrier to come along may get the blame. Also, "a good protective dog" may feel that a uniform is unnatural, says Hansen.

"I think a lot of it is just that daily repetition of 'here he comes and ruff ruff ruff, there he goes.'" Some may eventually "push one" to biting.

But, "It's not hopeless." Whoever said you can't teach an old dog new tricks has never trained dogs, says Hansen.

Redick agrees with the uniform theory. His own dog sometimes gives him problems about the uniform when he gets home from work.

A fiesty spark and an affectionate smile come to his face. "I go, 'KNOCK it off. You got a lot of guts growling at ME buddy.'"

He points at an open porch door. One suddenly realizes there may be a dog in there. "It's always in the back of your mind," says Redick.

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