

Family saddened after dog is shot in town

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

We lost a family member to an unjustified shooting a couple of weeks ago.

He was 8 years old. His favorite foods were hamburger and chocolate. His favorite toys were a long-legged green frog that tripped him while going upstairs, an unstuffed fox and his favorite of all was a bluebird that tweeted when pushed just right.

He loved life and enjoyed playing. He was our 8-year-old pit bull and yes, he was a member of our family, as anyone who is a pet lover would understand our pets are members of our family.

He accidentally got out the day the wind was blowing. We had left the garage door open a little to let a stray cat in out of the wind. By doing that, it allowed for a draft to open a door between the house and garage. Our dog managed to lift the door and get out to run free.

Our neighbor's dog runs free with no leash and no fence. He has been allowed to run the alley past our dog's pen. Our dog didn't growl viciously at him at all. He whined and whimpered because he wanted to be free and have a playmate.

That day they were both free and our dog jumped on the neighbor's dog, wanting to play—no teeth bared, no vicious attack, as our neighbor called it.

He said that he and his buddies tried to separate them but couldn't. He went in and got his gun and came out and shot him. "Vicious attack." His dog had no wounds, no blood drawn, no bite marks of any sort. The officer who answered the call said our neighbor's dog had drool on him that dogs get when they play. When he came out, our dog was in the street, not wrestling with his dog, but by himself.

I can see him now, standing there with his tongue hanging out with drool dripping off the tip and panting, because he was a little overweight, just standing there, no nervous growl, no teeth bared. Just standing there facing his executioner. He didn't know he was to be afraid; he trusted everyone. Kids at the park petted him, the other neighbor across the alley gave him bones and

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he never even barked at him. We never had a problem with him in eight years, and the neighbor that shot him had only been in the neighborhood less than six months.

How could you shoot a dog just standing there? He came over to talk to my son, seeming to think everything would be fine between us as neighbors. My son asked, if it was a “vicious attack,” where was the blood on his dog? Where were his wounds? If it was a “vicious attack,” his dog would have wounds and need a vet’s attention. Instead his dog was running the golf course that night, while ours lay dead in a dark, cold pit.

He had no answer as to why no blood—but we know he was only playing, not a “vicious attack.”

He then said, “Well, he was on my property so I shot him.”

When he shot him, he was on public property in the street. He still had no answer. He shot him just because he was a pit bull.

He never hurt anyone or anything, not even our 3-month-old cats. I take that back. He killed a mouse once while playing with it—it accidentally drowned in his mouth. He came trotting into the house with its tail hanging out of his mouth and laid it on the floor as a gift for me.

Pit bulls aren’t born mean and vicious. It’s how they are raised. If you show them love and kindness, they return it. They are no different than any other dog if raised right. Man makes them mean.

My son-in-law’s father has a pit bull, and when my grandson was 6 months old, he lay on the floor with their pit bull and no one worried about it attacking and hurting him. We don’t know what the local officers are going to do, but we have contacted the Colorado Humane Society to see if there can be some justice for “Scrappy.”

He shouldn’t have had to die that way. We will get another pit bull when we can afford it, but in

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the meantime, we will pack up his toys and his favorite blanket as we hold his memory close in our hearts.

Patty Coyne

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