

Attack: Defoor Road area resident tells of dog case

FROM A1

BY J. TODD TRUELOVE
THE TOCCOA RECORD

Shawn Willard moved to Stephens County from the midwest in 2017. He says he might be moving again soon due to what he described as a lack of communication from governmental entities after he was bitten by a dog on Friday, March 16, in the Defoor Road area of Stephens County.

Willard said the dog bite came while he was walking his two dogs — Mimi, a great Pyranees Lab mix, and Lucy, a terrier/poodle mix.

"We were out walking and two pit bulls came across the yard and targeted my smallest dog," Willard said.

Lucy took off running

back toward the house while Willard and Mimi fended off the pit bulls.

Willard sustained a puncture wound on his hand and later drove to Urgent Med for treatment.

Mimi's injuries were more severe and had to have 25 stitches to close the wound.

"One dog bit at me and just nicked me," Willard said. "One ate a section of (Mimi's) leg."

He said that both of the canine attackers wore collars and were "well-cared for."

It's what happened after the attack that Willard said has him frustrated.

Although he said the Stephens County Sheriff's Department and animal control both responded quickly to the incident, Willard said that he was

"basically told by the deputy sheriff to start my own investigation." So he did.

"These dogs have run around our neighborhood before," Willard said.

Toccoa-Stephens County Humane Shelter director Jeff Roberts said that the animal control truck, a 1999 model, was broken down from March 21-22, but that the animal control officer was using his personal vehicle to work out of during that time.

"Animal control and the sheriff's deputy spent 30 minutes looking for (the aggressive dogs) but were not able to locate them," Roberts said, adding that daily sweeps also were done through the area.

Roberts said that ani-

mal control is looking at putting some dog traps out to catch the roaming dogs — an action he said usually is not taken because the traps can catch other wildlife than their intended targets.

"Sometimes catching these stray dogs will take us a period of time, Roberts said.

"We make every effort to get any animal that's showing aggression," Roberts said.

Willard also was frustrated with the Stephens County Health Department and was informed on the day of the attack that he would be contacted about potential rabies and sent a letter about what should be done.

After six days passed with no letter, Willard said he went to the health

department to inquire about the letter and that the environmental health specialist told him that he had been busy and hadn't gotten around to it.

The letter was hand-delivered to him later that evening.

"Without the benefit of the 10-day observation period or specimen for testing, there is no way to conclude that this animal did not have rabies," wrote environmental specialist Shad Slocum on the March 22 dated letter.

"The nomal proce-

dure would be to either quarantine the animal to observe it for a 10-day period for clinical signs of rabies or to euthanize and test the animal for rabies," Slocum wrote.

However, Willard said that the letter was inaccurate stating the animals were "stray" and that they were obviously owned by someone in the area.

Dave Palmer, District 2 health department public information officer said Williams had spoken with Slocum over the phone on March 16 and was advised to see a physician,

Barracks: Going up near Currahee

FROM A1

BY TOM LAW
THE TOCCOA RECORD

Wooden panels of a U.S. airborne training barracks that had not been used for their original purpose for some 65 years, returned to the base of Currahee Mountain last Thursday morning.

The panels – or sections – were nailed into place by members of the Camp Toccoa at Currahee Project and their allies, Roesch Construction.

The panels are being used to re-construct four barracks buildings at the former Camp Toccoa training site just off Dick's Hill Parkway about five miles south of Toccoa.

When finished, the restored barracks can be used by groups to spend the night at Camp Toccoa and provide visitors a glimpse into what life must have been like at the training camp where, during World War II, some 16,000 to 18,000 paratroopers received training before entering action in Europe and the Pacific.

When the camp was dismantled in the early 1950s, the panels of the barracks buildings went to Steve Lathan's grandfather who used them to construct poultry houses.

"Once Steve realized what the chicken houses were made of, he contacted us and said we could have them," Gary Bellamy of Camp Toccoa at Currhee volunteer said.

Then came the work of measuring and numbering each panel to instill some sort of order in the reconstruction, according to Patrick Hall, also a Camp Toccoa at Currahee volunteer.

Hall spearheaded that organizational effort.

Bellamy and Hall were on site last Thursday along with Seth Roesch and Jeffrey Meeks of



Volunteers Gary Bellamy and Patrick Hall hold a wall panel in place while Jeffrey Meeks nails it into the floor.

Fire rating: Lowered in Stephens

FROM A1

BY J. TODD TRUELOVE
THE TOCCOA RECORD

Stephens County's ISO (Insurance Service Office) rating was lowered from 5 to 4 earlier this year.

The lower rating means local property owners should see a savings in their insurance policy rates.

"There was improvement across the board,"

Stephens County fire department coordinator Jamey Gettys said. "They rate you on the water system, the fire department,