

# ROBERT "BOB" BRANDT

TRUSTEE – VILLAGE OF WOODRIDGE

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WWW.ROBERTBRANDT.ORG

July 18, 2003

John Perry  
Woodridge, Village of  
5 Plaza Dr.  
Woodridge, IL 60517

Dear John:

Every week there is another news story about someone being attacked by dogs running at large. I believe it's time to toughen our ordinances to avoid such incidents here in Woodridge.

The bottom line is that residents should be able to walk down the public sidewalk or enjoy their own private property without the fear of being confronted by dogs. Current Woodridge ordinances do not adequately address this concern.

I would like to propose changes to Woodridge Ordinance 5-6A-3 "Running At Large Prohibited" that essentially state that dogs must be leashed at all times, even while on an owner's private property, unless they are confined by an actual fence, not an electronic fence, or some other type of structure like a dwelling or a cage.

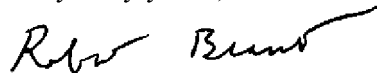
Current ordinances allow dogs to run un-leashed on private property. However, the notion that a dog will stop at their property line and not disturb someone in the next yard or on the public sidewalk is a fallacy.

I would also like to propose changes to Ordinance 5-6A-5 "Dangerous, Vicious Dogs" (please see attached). I have enclosed a newspaper article for your review.

These proposals will undoubtedly need to be fine-tuned but something should be done to make our community safer.

Thank you. For more information, please go to [WWW.ROBERTBRANDT.ORG](http://WWW.ROBERTBRANDT.ORG).

Very truly yours,



Robert "Bob" Brandt  
Trustee – Village of Woodridge

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WOODRIDGE VILLAGE HALL • FIVE PLAZA DRIVE • WOODRIDGE, IL 60517 • 630-719-4706

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: POST OFFICE BOX 5284 • WOODRIDGE, IL 60517 • 630-477-0310

WEBSITE: [WWW.ROBERTBRANDT.ORG](http://WWW.ROBERTBRANDT.ORG) • E-MAIL: [ROBERT@ROBERTBRANDT.ORG](mailto:ROBERT@ROBERTBRANDT.ORG)

5-6A-3: RUNNING AT LARGE PROHIBITED:

It shall be unlawful for any dog or cat to run at large. For the purposes of this Section, any dog or cat ~~not upon the premises of its owner or such other person having custody, possession or control over any such dog or cat~~ ***not confined within an area bordered by a physical fence*** which is not on a leash and under the control of a person physically able to control it, shall be deemed to be running at large. All dogs or cats found to be running at large shall be promptly impounded by the Chief of Police, or any person authorized by him for this purpose.

Any person owning, having custody, possession or control over any dog or cat which violates any provisions of this Section shall be guilty of an unlawful act. Any person who violates this Section may, in lieu of prosecution for a violation hereof, make payment in accordance with Section 1-4-2 of this Code. (1976 Code §4-24)

**Citations:**

Section 1.4.2(G)(4)

Permitting a dog or cat to run at large ~~or on property other than that of the owner~~ (5-6A-3)  
**\$50.00**

Permitting a dog or cat to run at large a second time within a 12 month period (5-6A-3) **\$100.00**

Permitting a dog or cat to run at large a third or subsequent time within a 12 month period (5-6A-3) **\$200.00**

*suggested additions in bold italics*

5-6A-5: DANGEROUS, VICIOUS DOGS:

A. Nuisance Declared: 4-1-1 of this Code. Each vicious or dangerous dog is hereby declared to be a public nuisance and shall only be kept, harbored, maintained, owned or possessed within the corporate limits of the Village in strict conformance with the provisions of this Section.

B. Dangerous Dogs:

1. Requirements and Prohibitions:

a. It shall be unlawful for any dangerous dog to leave the premises of the owner, unless such dog is securely muzzled, restrained on a leash ***no longer than three feet in length*** and under the direct control and supervision of the owner; provided that, in no event, shall such dog be under the direct control or supervision of any person under the age of eighteen (18) years.

***d. The name and address of the owner of any dangerous dog shall be posted on the Village of Woodridge website.***

C. Vicious Dogs:

1. Requirements and Prohibitions:

a. It shall be unlawful to keep, harbor, maintain, own or in any way possess within the corporate limits of the Village any vicious dog unless such dog is at all times kept in a confinement structure.

b. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection C1a above, a vicious dog may be allowed out of a confinement structure if it is necessary in order to obtain veterinary care for the vicious dog or to comply with the order of a court of competent jurisdiction. At any time that a vicious dog is outside of a confinement structure, it shall be securely muzzled, restrained on a leash ***no longer than 3 feet in length*** and under the direct control and supervision of the owner; provided, that in no event shall such dog be under the direct control or supervision of any person under the age of eighteen (18) years.

c. No owner of a vicious dog shall sell, otherwise transfer, set free, abandon or give any vicious dog to any person who resides in the Village.

d. All vicious dogs kept, harbored, maintained, owned or in any way possessed in the Village shall be spayed or neutered.

***e. Owners of vicious dogs shall be required to maintain \$100,000 in liability insurance that covers any personal injury caused by the vicious dog.***

***f. The name and address of the owner of any vicious dog shall be posted on the Village of Woodridge website.***

# Bad dog Web site draws ire

## Lake County plan for mean canines raising a howl

By Susan Kuczka  
Tribune staff reporter

August 18, 2002

Animal lovers are growling over an unusual plan in Lake County to publish on the Internet the names and addresses of dogs that bite, a display normally reserved for convicted sex offenders.

"My dog's a sweetie," said Elke Weinbrenner, whose 145-pound Great Dane is the kind of animal that would be pilloried. Last year the dog, Herten, nipped a Mundelein boy who had placed a treat in his mouth for the dog to retrieve. County animal-control officers labeled the animal "vicious."

Weinbrenner has since moved out of the state, but other dogs on the county's watch list--and their owners--would be identified on the Web site proposed by Len Hackl, Lake County's chief animal warden. He said he got the idea from the Sheriff's Office's sex-offender Web site.

"Right now, people living right next door might not know that an animal in their neighborhood has been cited for being dangerous or vicious. We think they should know," Hackl said. "We have a lot of pictures of kids who've been bitten, and it's not a pleasant thing."

The county has identified about two dozen dogs that would be listed. Hackl said the Lake County state's attorney's office is reviewing an ordinance that would authorize the Web site, and he hopes the County Board will act on it within a few months.

The canine-offender site is the latest proposal to emerge after recent high-profile dog-mauling cases. Dogs killed two people in Chicago last year, and in San Francisco, two dog owners were sentenced to 4 years in prison after their pets killed a neighbor.

Hackl also has proposed requiring implanted microchips in dangerous dogs for identification, and to force their owners to take out \$100,000 liability insurance policies.

Although the measures are geared toward discouraging people from keeping dangerous dogs, some people think it's not fair to treat family pets like criminals.

Weinbrenner, for example, said her dog "should have never been classified as vicious." She has moved to Maryland and removed the muzzle Lake County officials required her dog to wear. If she ever returns to Lake County, though, Herten could end up in the cyber doghouse.

Connie Freking, a Wauconda resident whose dog never has been in trouble, said the public embarrassment created by the site could cause more harm than good.

"If someone has a dog they're keeping controlled, maybe spreading the word that they have a vicious dog wouldn't be such a good thing," Freking said.

Others said they would be happy to have the warning, however.

Carol Divis of Grayslake said she would use the Web site to map out her route when she goes on her daily walk.

"I like to walk at all times of the day, and I've had several incidents of dogs lunging out at me," Divis said. "I think anything you can do to make people aware of where these dogs are would be helpful. It only takes one attack to be maimed or disfigured."

Under Lake County's rules, an animal-control officer may declare a dog vicious if it bites someone, or dangerous if it attacks someone without biting. Among the county's 65,000 licensed dogs, 13 have been labeled vicious, and 12 are considered dangerous.

Such designations are a life sentence for the dogs in Lake County. The only way to overturn them is to go to court.

Vicious dogs are required to wear a muzzle, be kept on a 3-foot chain when outdoors, and be caged when unsupervised. Dangerous dogs must be kept on a 6-foot chain. Dogs not kept properly restrained can be destroyed.

Either label would be enough to land a dog on Hackl's proposed Web site. Besides names and addresses, the site would include dog descriptions.

"If someone is moving into Lake County, it's in their best interest to know that these dogs live close by," Hackl said.

Not all dog owners oppose the measure.

Bart Harris, 55, of Mundelein, who owns two 100-plus-pound Russian mountain dogs, said he would use the information to avoid trouble when he's walking his dogs.

"I'd want to know if I have a neighbor who has a dog that's bitten someone or is really aggressive," Harris said. "It's the same way with sex offenders, or anyone else who's served time for aggression."

But others worry that their pets could be railroaded.

Susan Prefontaine, the owner of a 3-year-old, 75-pound Rottweiler, said her dog was wrongly accused of attacking another dog. Although the alleged offense didn't result in the dog, Codie, being labeled as vicious or dangerous, Prefontaine said the accusation against her pet demonstrates that the Web site could be abused.

"The dog owned by the lady who complained about Codie was worse than mine," she said. "Her dog was bothering five other dogs, and mine came up, and her dog was trying to get up on Codie."

The site also could prompt more people to abandon their animals, placing an additional burden on shelters that already are overcrowded, said Nancy Gorman, executive director of the Save-a-Pet

facility in Grayslake, a no-kill shelter for homeless animals.

Lake County regularly takes pets to the shelter when no one claims them at the pound. More than 200 cats and dogs are available for adoption there.

"If that Web site goes up, it could have all sorts of ramifications for us," Gorman said. "We would like to be able to take in every animal brought to us, but sometimes we have capacity issues."

Other animal experts said the Internet site could backfire.

"It's our experience that most of the people who we see with a dog that's been declared dangerous consider it a badge of honor," said Denise Hilton, manager of the Pasco County Animal Control office near Tampa.

Hilton's office recently addressed the problem of canine offenders from a different direction. Under her office's Community Dog Watch Program, green-and-white metal signs are posted in neighborhoods to alert dog owners that residents will report aggressive dogs to authorities.

"We include a graphic of someone walking a dog on a leash to put a little bug in their mind that there are people watching if you let your animal run amok," Hilton said.

Stephanie Shain, director of Outreach for Companion Animals at the Humane Society of the United States, said warning programs that include signs about dangerous dogs are more effective than posting the same information on the Internet, in part because not everyone has access to the Internet.

"Plus, if you have a dog running around at large, I don't know if having a sign posted on the Internet is actually going to protect anyone," Shain said.

Hackl said that the costs of putting up warning signs in neighborhoods would break Lake County Animal Control's budget. His Internet proposal is a less-expensive alternative.

"The bottom line here is we want people to know we're serious about keeping animals from attacking people," Hackl said.

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