

The bark that saved a life

Bill Wundram | Posted: Sunday, September 12, 2010 2:00 am

Kaiser, a highly trained German shepherd, is normally a very docile dog that never barks. He will not yip at a squirrel or another pooch passing by his fenced yard. But on this night, he was agitated. It was twilight, about 8:15 p.m. or so. Getting dark. Kaiser will sometimes fuss when a raccoon is in the neighborhood of his owners, Sherri and Gary Faley, who live in the 2300 block of West 11th St. in northwest Davenport.

On this night, though, Kaiser began to bark. Loud! It was a deep, excited bark. **Vera Cook** says that barking dog, three houses away, saved her life. She had slipped on her patio steps and fell flat on her back onto concrete. Her head was severely injured, a serious situation for an 84-year-old.

“I was in a pool of blood,” says Vera, now recovering and showing a deep wound on her head. “That dog knew something was wrong. He barked to bring help. It saved my life.”

Dogs have inherent senses. Kaiser’s barking is one of those mystic things that Dr. Joe Seng, a Davenport veterinarian, calls, “Some sort of dog ESP. They know when unusual things are happening. I swear to God that is true. I’ve seen these things happen too many times to think that it’s a coincidence.” Vera had never seen Kaiser before. She did not even know the names of the dog’s owners other than that they were “Sherri and Gary.”

Sherri and Gary were in their house that night and were concerned when their usually quiet dog kept barking loudly. They went outside and heard a voice. It was Vera — a neighbor down the street — calling, “Help, help.”

They hurried to her home and found her in bad shape. Firefighters and an ambulance were called. “**She was** bleeding badly,” says Sherri, a nurse in the cardiac catheterization lab of Genesis Medical Center,



East Rusholme Street, Davenport. Says Vera, “I had blood in my eyes and ears, all down my clothes. I couldn’t move. I thought I was done for. They gave me two units of blood. I was in the hospital for 2 1/2 days.” Sherri says, “The injury to her head was serious. There is always the possibility that there could have been problems unless help came soon.” Vera says she is doing “pretty good” these days, assisted by a cane. She repeats, “I wouldn’t be here today without that barking dog.” She is grateful. “I got a box of candy for Sherri, and the dog got some biscuits,” Vera says.