EXERCISE 56  NAME _______________________

Assignment 1. Identify the nut graf in this story.

Assignment 2. Edit the story for grammar, style, wordiness, conciseness, punctuation and so on.

Nicole Barton can't forget last shrill scream of her tiny Pomeranian.

Barton had taken her dog Poetess for their nightly stroll seven weeks ago when they were attacked by a pair of Bulldogs a block from her Northern City home.

The two bulldogs charged out of a house on S. 9th St. Barton picked up her six year old dog to protect it. But the bulldogs leaped on Barton, knocking her done. Both dogs grabbed Poetess who was so severely injured that she needed to be euthanized.

Barton received a concussion and was treated at Northern City Hospital for bites and scratches on her arms and breasts.

"My body is healing," she said Tuesday. But the memories of the attack and the screams of the dog she had owned since it was puppy are still with her. I have trouble sleeping and I panic when I see a big dog. I don't think I could ever have another pet. My life is now miserable in so many ways."

Barton is now leading a fight against dangerous dogs. She wants County Commissioners to protect people from dangerous dogs by passing a zero-tolerance rule. The law would require any dog be muzzled and leashed in public after the first time it attacks without provocation.

"We can't continue to allow dangerous dogs to attack people on the street," Barton said. "If I had been carrying a baby instead of Poetess, they would have killed the child. People need to take responsibility for their dogs."

In the past, County officials had said that state law limits what local governments can do to regulate pets.

But Barton and her group Protect Everyone Today convinced Commission Ben Knight to ask county attorneys to find a way to increase regulations. County attorneys believe the proposed muzzle requirement will satisfy state regulations and still protects dogowners rights.
Current county laws requires owners of dogs deemed dangerous to be kept indoors or in a locked enclosure. But the process of getting a judge to rule that a dog is dangerous can take several days, and owners can appeal the judge's decision to a county court.

"Right now I know of a case of a severely bitten child," Wilma Bowles, an attorney who has volunteered to help PET. "The vicious dogs are still roaming loose three months after the attack and animal control officers can't do a thing about it until those dogs attack again."

Knight's proposal requires any dog that has attacked a person or animal to be muzzled until a judge or court declares the dog safe. Dangerous dog proceedings also would begin immediately against any dog responsible for at least two such attacks.

"This is an urban environment with people living closer and closer together, and this would at least give us a way to eliminate repeat attacks by an animal," Knight said. "We're stricter with human criminals than we are with animal criminals. With this, everyone will realize there is a price to pay if their dog attacks."

More than 650 dog bites are reported each year to county animal control officers. The largest number of complaints of bites are filed against Pit Bulls, Rottweilers and German Shepherds.

Knight said the state legislature passed a measure ten years ago that prohibit county's from having laws against particular species of dogs.

Dr. Howard Colley, a northern City vet, said he will speak against the measure when it comes before the County commission.

"If this passes and they just muzzle the dogs, they are missing the boat," Colley said. "Muzzling will not give them the answer they are looking for. It's a behavioral problem that needs to be addressed. Muzzles only make dogs madder." He would require owners to take their dogs to pet training and obedience classes.