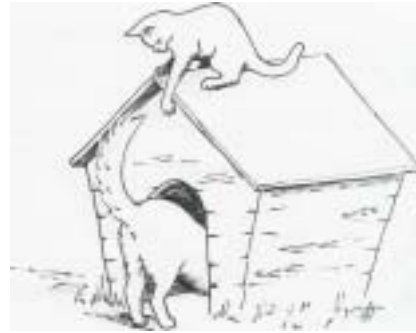


Tails from the Dog House

The Quarterly Newsletter from the
Sardis Animal Hospital

Fall, 2004

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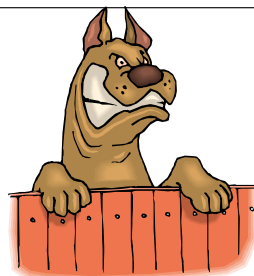
The Keeping of Viscious Dogs and the Psychology of Fear

Ever since I saw Michael Moore's award winning documentary "Bowling for Columbine" which chronicles the psychology of fear that has evolved into the culture of gun ownership in our neighbours south of the border, I have given some thought to the practice of owning large, potentially dangerous dogs as possibly being a variation on the same theme. Mercifully, Canadians are not as likely to own AK-47 assault rifles and pack guns to school as seems to be the case in the USA, but I wonder if we are doing the same thing with owning potentially dangerous dogs. It's my observation that the ownership of such dogs seems to be on the rise.

Ever since the dawn of time saw the domestication of dogs, mankind has effectively used his "best friend" to protect his flocks of sheep, property, family and now his pick-up trucks and "grow-ops". The breeds of dogs that are in vogue for the task seem to change about every decade. The sixties saw the German Shepherd as the guard dog of choice, the seventies the Doberman Pinscher, the eighties, the Pit Bull and in the nineties, the Rottweiler. The current decade is seeing a rise in popularity of breeds that make the previous group look like kittens. The guard dogs are getting bigger and nastier. The current vogue is Mastiffs and related breeds. Dogs that can weigh 180 pounds and more! Mastiff breeds that were at one time known for gentle dispositions, are now being bred for aggression, and finding a following among a segment of society that feels the need to show the world that they have the K-9 version of an AK-47 assault rifle.

Like the previous "fad" breeds, some of the owners are younger people with little experience in dog handling, who underestimate the risks taken by owning such dogs and overestimate their ability to responsibly care for and control them. These are not dogs that just anyone can own. And unfortunately, many are being bred by neophyte "back yard" breeders who are looking to cash in on a fad.

What kind of dog does one really need for protection anyway? With few exceptions anything that will bark at an intruder is all that's needed. Even a motion detector wired to a recording device with the sound of a large dog barking would do the trick. We do not need to keep a loaded shotgun that will go off when the Girl Guides come to the door selling cookies. -ed.



A 7 year US study, which concluded in 2000, found that 33 human deaths were caused by Rottweillers and 27 by Pitbulls.

ed note: the number of non-fatal serious injuries by dogs of any breed are hard to quantify, but some estimates are numbered in the thousands each year.



Staff News

Meet Joyce Fairley, our Business Administrator

You may not have had the opportunity to meet this petite red-head with a trace of a Scottish accent, but Joyce is an indispensable part of our hospital team. She runs the business end of the animal hospital. Joyce does the bookkeeping, payroll, accounts receivable, sees that the bills get paid, does the banking, clerical work, vaccination reminders, runs hospital



errands and numerous other unimaginable tasks that go into running an animal hospital. Prior to joining our staff three years ago, she ran the office of one of the car dealerships in town. Joyce said that coming to work for us was a real eye opener. "I had no idea that an animal hospital was so complex a business to run, and am amazed at the sophistication of the medical and surgical work done at the Sardis Animal Hospital".

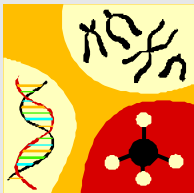
Joyce hails from Aberdeen, Scotland and shares her home with her husband Mark and 2 Border Collies. She has bred and shown dogs and has been actively involved in local dog clubs for many years.

Newly discovered gene predicts drug reactions in dogs

Newly discovered canine gene mutation explains abnormal drug reactions

Hardly a day goes by that something truly amazing doesn't cross our desk. Veterinarians have known for some time that certain breeds of dogs have unusual sensitivities to certain drugs. For example, collies are known to be particularly sensitive to Ivermectin, an antiparasitic drug used most commonly in heartworm control. Dr Katrina Mealey, director of the Clinical Pharmacology Lab at Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine at Pullman Washington, has discovered that such sensitivities are related to a mutation of a gene called MDR1. Furthermore, the gene mutation seems to be inherent in the genetic makeup of certain breeds.

Sensitivities, such as neurotoxicity (nerve and brain damage) to at least three anticancer drugs, ivermectin as well as other prescription and over the counter medications have been proven in long-haired Whippets, Collies, Shelties, Australian shepherds and other herding breeds by researchers around the world. In 2001 Dr. Mealey discovered the mutation of the MDR-1 gene that codes for P-glycoprotein, an important part of the blood-brain barrier. Dogs with the mutation experience sensitivity to ivermectin, while dogs without the mutation can tolerate the drug. Dr Mealey has gone as far as developing a test for the mutation that requires veterinarians to submit a swab from a dog's cheek to be sent to the WSU lab for evaluation.



Doggy Doo Doo

Share the Trail

Leash your dog



Pick up the poop

Chilliwack is blessed indeed with a community resource like the Rotary Trail! Hats off and many thanks to the Rotarians, private land owners, individual donors, service clubs and local governments that have cooperated to build and maintain the trail. It represents a substantial investment in the community's health and welfare. The trail is a recreational treasure that we as residents and visitors alike need to respect. Right in our back yard we have a scenic wonder where we can walk, jog, cycle, picnic, fish, meditate, ride a horse, or walk our dog.

With so many uses and users, consideration must be given for the rights and safety of others. For this reason, rules are posted, but common sense would dictate that other considerations need to be given heed. Consider the following:

1. Leash your dog!!!! Signs are posted and it's the law! Not every one who walks the trail is a "dog lover" or comfortable around dogs. Non dog lovers have a right to enjoy the trail as well. Joggers in particular do not appreciate curious dogs approaching them when running. How is a jogger or a cyclist or a child on a tricycle to know that a strange dog uncontrolled on the trail is friendly and not going to give chase or worse. Your dog may very well be friendly, but stress, fear, surprise or the sneer of another dog can suddenly change the behaviour of the friendliest of dogs to the total shock and dismay of their owner. I'm sure I speak for all local veterinarians when I say that we are pretty tired of patching up the Sunday afternoon dog fight between two "well trained and friendly" dogs off leash on the trail. And their owners always accuse the other dog and how often have we heard "my dog would never start anything like this" Well, the fact that your dog is off leash makes your dog and you at least partly responsible! Don't expect sympathy from us, dog control or the courts if your dog is injured in a fight when off leash.

2. Pick up the poop!! It's just soooooo rude to leave the poop on the trail for all the world to see, step in or cycle through. The trail is our community property. Would you like someone's dog coming to your property and leaving organic "land mines" behind for you to endure for days or weeks? At times it's so bad down there that the trail should be renamed "Dog S__t Trail". The district has made it easy for you, bags are available at several locations and garbage cans are provided. How hard is it to bend over, scoop and tie and toss it in the can? Doggy Doo Doo is not only an esthetic issue but a human and veterinary health concern as well. I know of what I speak. This editor published one of the first studies ever done on the effect of canine fecal pollution in an urban Canadian environment. 30 years ago several colleagues and I did an in depth study quantifying the amount and infectious potential of doggy doo doo lying around in the streets of a major western Canadian city. Our findings surprised even us (published in the Canadian Veterinary Journal, 1975). Parasite eggs and cysts as well as some viruses can lie in the soil and remain infectious for months, even after the visible signs of the stool have dispersed, just waiting for your shoes or your dog's feet to walk through. *Puhleeeze* pick up the poop!

What about the horses you say? Larger amounts yes, esthetic issue for pedestrians and cyclists, yes, public health hazard, some, but not as bad as the dogs. A personal request: perhaps it's time to consider restricting the horses from the part of the trail that is used heavily by pedestrians and cyclists. There are plenty of trails to ride west of Lickman. The trail from the Vedder bridge to Lickman road is heavily used by foot traffic, cyclists, baby buggies, people in wheel chairs and scooters and little children running and riding little bikes with training wheels. I'm a horse lover too, so don't misunderstand me, but a 1000 pound horse upset by a dog off leash with a kid on a trike or a baby in a buggy nearby is a disaster just waiting to happen.



Love yourself, Love your Cat, and Butt out!!

Kitty Capers

The risk of cancer more than doubles in cats exposed to second hand smoke

Cats living in homes where people smoke cigarettes are more than twice as likely to acquire Lymphoma, a deadly form of cancer than are other cats according to a recent article in the American Journal of Epidemiology. Researchers have also shown an increase in certain types of cancer in dogs if their owners smoke, but the new study is the first to show evidence of this effect in cats.

“Smoke has devastating consequences for cats” according to Dr Antony Moore, director of Tufts University Veterinary Oncology program. He says that cats may inhale secondhand smoke or ingest particles from their fur when grooming.

Lymphoma is the most common cancer in cats. Feline Leukemia Virus and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus are known to play a role in triggering the disease. Researchers looked at a number of risk factors, including diet, neuter status, gender, age, breed, grooming, home characteristics, and the use of flea control products, shampoos, and oral medications. Only one factor, smoking was shown to statistically increase the risk of the cancer.

Risk increases with both the duration and the quantity of tobacco smoke exposure. Exposure of five years or more tripled the risk of acquiring the malignancy, exposure to two or more smokers in the house quadrupled the risk. And cats living in households where humans smoked a pack or more of cigarettes a day had more than a three fold increase in risk, compared with cats living in smoke free homes.

The study also provides compelling reasons for studying the relationship between second hand smoke and non-Hodgkins Lymphoma in humans, a cancer similar to lymphoma in cats.



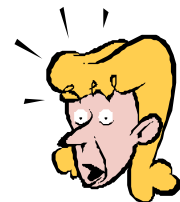
gag!!



If you're going to smoke,
I'm wearing this fish bowl!



I got rid of my husband.
The cat was allergic



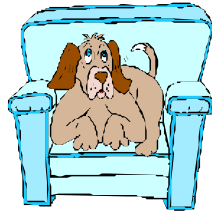


**Animal
Crackers**

A place to
share animal
humour

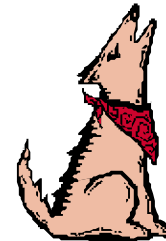
We always enjoy the funny stuff that our clients send us. This is bound to put a smile on your face. It's entitled:

A Dog's Letters to God



Dear God:
When we get to heaven, can we sit on your couch .. or is it going to be the same old story?

Dear God:
If a dog barks his head off in the forest and no human hears him, is he still a bad dog?



Dear God:
Are there mailmen in heaven? If there are, will I have to apologize?

Dear God:
When we get to the Pearly Gates, will we have to shake a paw to get in?



Dear God:
Why are there cars named after the jaguar, the cougar, the mustang, the colt, the stingray, and the rabbit, but not ONE named for a dog? How often do you see a cougar riding around? We dogs love a nice ride! Would it be so hard to rename the 'Chrysler Eagle' the 'Chrysler Beagle'?

Dear God:
We dogs can understand human verbal instructions, hand signals, whistles, horns, clickers, beepers, scent ID's, electromagnetic energy fields and Frisbee flight paths. What do humans understand?

Dear God:
More meatballs, less spaghetti, please.

AND FINALLY

Dear God:
When I get to heaven, can I have my testicles back?





Tularemia in Hamsters

The Public Health Agency of Canada posted a warning about Hamsters in its Oct 2, 2004 Bulletin regarding Dwarf, Pygmy and regular Hamsters. It seems that hamsters carrying the bacterial disease Tularemia have been shipped from a pet distributor in Manitoba to pet stores in Western Canada, including BC. The advisory asks people who have purchased a hamster in the past three months to contact their physician if a family member has become ill after an illness or death of a hamster. The Doctor should be told of this advisory and concerns about the possibility of Tularemia.

The risk to human health is low. Tularemia generally shows mild "flu-like" symptoms, ulcers on the skin or mouth, swollen painful lymph glands, fever, chills, weakness, joint pain and swollen, painful eyes. In rare cases, some forms of tularemia can be fatal in humans.

The Tularemia bacteria is found naturally in wild animals, particularly rodents. It is usually transmitted by contact with infected animals or their cages and bedding. Spread can be through bites or licking, handling and cleaning cages, breathing air contaminated with the bacteria or eating or drinking contaminated food or water.

Public Health Advisory

If you have bought a hamster in the last three months your family may be at risk.



Rabies rears its ugly head again

Keep rabies shots up to date on both cats and dogs.

leash your dog

keep your cat in at night

Rabid Skunks found in Stanley Park



Veterinarians and Public Health officials were stunned when rabid skunks were found in Stanley Park this summer. A total of 4 rabies positive skunks were found carrying the bat strain of rabies. It is the first recorded rabies case in a skunk in BC, where rabies is usually found only in bats. Animals infected with bat strain rabies generally do not spread the disease further, but such cases underscore the importance of taking precautions to protect our pets and ourselves.

Rabies is caused by a virus that affects the nervous system. It is spread through infected body fluids, usually saliva in a bite from an infected animal. Bat urine is also known to be infective. Symptoms include headache, fever, difficulty swallowing, drooling, muscle spasms, weakness and strange behavior. In animals, voice changes, aggression and hind limb paralysis are often seen. Once symptoms start, rabies kills almost all of its victims.

There have been 2 cases of human rabies in BC since 1985 and over 200 people a year are treated for suspected exposure. All bat-associated bites, scratches and physical contact are considered dangerous, including finding a bat in your sleeping quarters or tent if camping.

Prevention is best achieved through avoiding contact with wildlife, especially bats. The BC Center for Disease control recommends keeping rabies vaccinations current in your dog or cat. Keeping your cat in at night and your dog on a leash to avoid unexpected encounters with wildlife is also important.

Each year in the U.S.A., more cats are diagnosed with rabies than are dogs, but fewer cats are vaccinated for rabies than are dogs.



Things We Can Learn From Our Dog



1. When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
2. Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride.
3. Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
4. When it's in your best interest, practice obedience.
5. Let others know when they've invaded your territory.
6. Take naps.
7. Stretch before rising.
8. Run, romp and play daily.
9. Thrive on attention and let people touch you.
10. Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
11. On warm days, stop to lie on your back on the grass.
12. On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.
13. When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.
14. No matter how often you're scolded, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout... run right back and make friends.
15. Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
16. Eat with gusto and enthusiasm. Stop when you have had enough.
17. Be loyal. Never pretend to be something you're not.
18. If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
19. When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by, and nuzzle them gently.