



# Dog Talk Weekly

Where we talk about dogs, share stories, solve problems

Issue 10.6.2 – June 12, 2010

What? You haven't visited the blog yet?

<http://dogtalkweekly.com/dogblog/>

**Welcome back to another issue of Dog Talk Weekly.** This week, I will be changing the format a bit. The newsletter is designed to give you a wealth of good advice about raising, caring for and training your dog. Sadly, I have missed the mark slightly.

To ensure that the different areas are covered, I've added new Sections: Dog Nutrition, Dog Care and Dog Training. That ought to do the trick.

AND, I've decided to do a regular Dog of the Week article that focuses on one specific breed, so if you would like to see an article on your dog, just let me know.

Hope you like these improvements.

**I'd also like to make a special request.**

Would you let me know what breed of dog you have, or will be getting? I'd like to focus some articles on specific breeds so that they are more relevant to what you need.

**And...** if you have any questions about dogs that you'd like me to answer, simply send them to me via my contact form here:

<http://sylviadickens.com/contactform/contactus.php>

Thank you.

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## **Feature Article: You, Your Dog and an Emergency**

We all love our dogs. We are thrilled that when danger lurks, they will be there, ready to protect us in a flash.

You've probably heard of cases where dogs have put their lives at risk to save their owners from threatening people and events. It's quite amazing what they will do. They've attacked people carrying dangerous weapons with no concern for anything else but protecting their owners. They've dived into fast flowing rivers to pull out their drowning owners.

When someone comes to your home, they soon let you know to be on the alert. If a stranger stands in your doorway, they will growl, the hair on their backs will rise, and they will lean forward in an aggressive manner.

This is fantastic, especially when you do not know the person or what are their intentions. Often, the dog's presence and state of mind are enough to drive away potential threats.

But what happens when you are in need of emergency services?

People have been delayed treatment because of a defensive dog who really wants the best for you. Emergency personnel are reluctant to approach, and feel helpless as they keep their distance.

What can you do when you have such a dog?

You will not always be able to move around and take care of the dog in all circumstances. If you have fallen, you might have little or no opportunity to remove your dog from the scene.

If you have someone else around, have them secure the dog in another room so that the emergency personnel can do their job. If you have a neighbor who your dog trusts and obeys, contact them right after calling 911. Have them come over and take control of your dog.

When all options are gone, advise the dispatcher at 911 that you have a dog in your home who might be a problem. Let him or her know that they might want to send along someone who can handle the dog safely, such as a member of the local humane society. The local police likely will know who to contact in that regard, if not one of their own personnel in the canine squad.

Anything you can do ahead of time to eliminate this barrier from your getting emergency treatment will help. Remember, when you are injured or are having a life-threatening medical emergency, timing is crucial.

## **Personal Story: Dog Protection Concern**

The other day as I was walking Tyler in a beautiful new nature park beside our Town Hall, I was thrilled to see all that it had to offer. I cannot begin to guess how many acres it encompasses, but it was easily 5-6 football fields or more.

Throughout the area are paved and gravel paths. Along those paths is wild growth with a few trimmed areas so you can wander off the main paths to enjoy nature. This includes many native trees that they have planted and named so you can learn as you go.

I had already walked around 3/4 of the park and was venturing down a small paved path to get back to the path I'd left. While I was busy admiring the scenery and looking to see where the path led, my attention was not on what was beneath me.

Suddenly, I tripped and fell forward on my knee and elbow and then, onto my side. Of course, I was stunned for a second wondering what in the world I tripped over. Looking back towards my feet, I noticed a bulge in the pavement – like when a culvert runs under an area and causes a raised strip. It was a significant size.

In the course of falling, I dropped Tyler's leash to help protect my hand, since the handle is one of those plastic retractable leash cases. My hand was bleeding in 3 places and my knee sure hurt. When I got into the car I discovered a huge bulge on my right elbow.

As this event unfolded, I began to think about what would happen if I needed help. Fortunately, I always carry my cell phone in the event of such an accident. But what about Tyler? He didn't wander off as I thought he might, but instead he came back and waited an arms length away. I didn't really look, but I think he was wagging his tail. Of course he'd think I was playing.

Then, I thought about if emergency responders were needed, what would he have done? Tyler is very friendly with everyone, including the postman, so I didn't anticipate any problem with him trying to protect me. Unless, of course, someone was threatening me. Then, I'm not sure whether he would or not.

And that led to my idea for this issue.

I've had occasion to call the police on several occasions because of unruly tenants. One time when I called the police, they asked if I had a dog. They instructed me to make sure he was secured in another room. I tried to assure her that he was not a threat. But then, I started thinking. Do you ever really know?

And what about the police? They don't know my dog. The police have been known to shoot dogs they thought were dangerous – not here, but I've heard about that sort of thing happening in other cities.

There is a clear lesson here. Basically, don't take the chance. Protect your dog to ensure that there will be no misunderstandings and incidents that you will regret later.

As for me, I'm fine thank you. Tyler and I went into the Town Hall to let them know about the bulging sidewalk that they had built. The staff kindly patched up all my teeny wounds. And one volunteer at the front desk offered to hold onto Tyler while I went up to the second floor – since dogs are not allowed in the building. Seems like I stupid rule to me, but that's another story. Maybe I'll write about it in a later issue or on the blog.

Which reminds me. Have you been there yet? <http://dogtalkweekly.com/dogblog/>



### **Dog of the Week: Staffordshire Bull Terrier**

One of our readers informed me that her dog is part Staffordshire Bull Terrier. The name itself is a bit intimidating, isn't it? But let's take a closer look at this breed.

One very prominent feature of this dog is its powerful muscle structure, strong jaws, large teeth and broad chest. This impressive body is a result of breeding for fighting and bull

baiting. It comes from crossing an English Bulldog with possibly the Black and Tan Terrier. These breeds give the Staffordshire Bull Terrier the strength and determination of a fighting dog plus the agility and quick thinking of the terrier.

Now, just because it is part fighting dog doesn't mean it likes to brawl at the first opportunity. Instead, this breed cool and calculating. It is not intimidated by larger dogs and with those strong jaws and teeth, hold on until the opponent dies. Sadly, this is one of the reasons this breed is popular with those unsavory characters who get a morbid satisfaction out of watching dog fights.

The Staffordshire Bull Terrier, despite these facts, makes a great family pet who makes a devoted and loyal companion. They are fond of children and have a tremendous sense of fun. They love to play games involving chase and fetch. This breed could be the ultimate protector who is quick to keep you safe, and is the ideal choice for women who live alone.

Their size makes them perfect for apartment living as long as you give them plenty of exercise in places where they can romp and play freely.

The Saffie loves companionship and interaction, as well as energetic exercise, so if you are the hands-off kind of owner, this dog is not for you. They need exercise to maintain that muscle strength and tone, and for mental stimulation.

If you have other dogs or pets in the household, you must take care to introduce them properly or a fight could ensue and an ongoing battle for superiority and your attention. The best beginning is to socialize the dog while it is still a young puppy.

The breed is easy to train because it is highly intelligent, but you must be firm or they can become stubborn and uncooperative. The best approach is with lots of praise and encouragement. Focus on the positives and forget the reprimands.

It comes in several colors: red, fawn, white, black, blue or brindle, along with white, and requires a few minutes of grooming a day. This breed loves the water, so don't hesitate to give it a bath.

The Staffordshire Bull Terrier is a relatively healthy breed and appears to have few if any congenital illnesses. The main concerns are tumors, cataracts and kidney stones. It also tends to enjoy a good lifespan of 12-14 years.

## **Regular Sections:**

### **- Dog Nutrition**

There's been a lot of talk lately about poor quality dog foods causing liver disease in dogs. Unfortunately, you will not see any obvious symptoms until it's too late. For this reason, it is important have your dog checked out every year through a blood test to catch any problems early.

The liver has a huge job to detoxify your dog's blood system. It cleans it of drugs and toxins, removes waste from the blood itself, and it stores and disperses important nutrients. It also helps the digestive system, maintain metabolism, and regulate temperature and circulation.

The primary symptom of liver disease is jaundice which you can see in the white's of a dog's eyes and the urine turns tea colored. Other symptoms include an accumulation of

fluid in the abdomen, constipation, diarrhea, bad breath, excessive thirst, lethargy, loss of appetite, skin problems, vomiting and weight loss.

Keep an eye out for any of these symptoms and get your dog to the vet immediately if you spot one.

Liver disease can be caused by hepatitis or it can be a symptom of some other illness such as cancer, intestinal disorder, an infection, a virus or even from drugs. It can be caused by nutrition-absorption problems, nutritional deficiencies. Most often, it is caused by an accumulation of various liver stressors over time.

If your dog has been fed a low-quality diet during its lifetime, there's very little doubt that some liver damage has occurred.

Some of the dogs that are most prone to this disease include: Australian cattle dog, boxer, cairn terrier, Chihuahua, Doberman pinscher, golden retriever, Irish wolfhound, Labrador retriever, Maltese, Miniature schnauzer, Pomeranian, pug, Shetland sheepdog, shih Tzu, toy poodle, West Highland white terrier and the Yorkshire terrier.

### **- Dog Care**

Arthritis is common in many dogs and can be crippling for many. The most common form of arthritis in dogs is osteoarthritis, a degenerative joint disease that attacks the cartilage. The breakdown of the cartilage (which acts as a cushion between two joints) leads to inflammation and pain.

Poor nutrition can contribute to the condition, as can aging and excessive exercise over time. Other contributing factors include an earlier injury to the joint.

No breed is immune to this devastating disease, but larger breeds put more pressure and wear on their joints than smaller ones.

Things to look for that can indicate that your dog has arthritis include getting up slowly, stiffness when walking, and reluctance to climb stairs or get into the car.

Right now, you can help to prevent or minimize the illness by making sure your dog has sufficient Vitamin C in his or her diet. Consider feeding your dog fish for its Omega-3, vitamin E and selenium qualities. The best fish is salmon, sardines and tuna. Provide this to the regular diet 2-3 times per week.

You can give your dog alfalfa, which has great anti-inflammatory qualities. Glucosamine is another excellent product for building cartilage and connective tissue, even after some damage has been done.

Talk to your vet about these treatments to ensure you have the right dose for your dog.

If you give your dog homemade foods, avoid ingredients that can worsen the condition. These include eggplant, peppers, potatoes, tomatoes, cheese, corn, eggs, oats, processed meats and wheat. Make sure the food is of high quality and chemical free.

### **- Dog Training**

Dominant dogs can be difficult to train simply because they want to be in control all the time. They might relinquish some of it to you, but you must strive for more, otherwise you will be in a constant battle with your dog.

Don't stop at basic training: i.e.: sit, stay, lie down. You must maintain control of certain aspects of the dog's life, such as where he sleeps, when he eats and when he gets attention from you or another member of your family.

If your dog sleeps on your bed, eats whenever he demands it, and gets your attention whenever he wants, then you have some work to do.

A dog with these freedoms does not see you as the superior member of the pack. If he sleeps on your level – on your bed – or in your chair, he is treating you like an equal, which cannot happen.

Make sure your dog knows that YOU control all of these things. You control the toys and when he gets to play with them and for how long. You control where he sleeps, which should be on the floor or on his own bed. You control the food. Give him his food at regular feeding times. If he does not eat it within about 30 minutes, take it away until the next feeding time.

He will soon learn that he must follow your rules.

Don't worry about turning him against you. This is not going to happen as long as you avoid using harsh treatment or punishment to get him to obey your commands. You want to reach the point of mutual understanding. You do what I say, and you will get this. This will help you to form a strong bond with your dog because he will begin to respect you.

Although dominant dogs give the impression that they don't really care, believe that they can be very sensitive.

Be persistent. Insist that he obey. And be consistent in how you issue those commands and give rewards for obeying.

A dominant dog usually means that you have to live with these control issues for life of this dog. He might obey you, but he also will continually test you in an effort to take control. That's just the way it is with dominant dogs. Their life's ambition is to be in control. Be ready for those challenges and maintain your status. Work on strengthening the bond between you so that he wants to obey.

### **- Dog Trivia**

Some dogs actually have to be taught how to play with their owners. My dog Kobe didn't know how to play, but that's probably because he was abused in his first home. All he seemed to know was fear. Eventually, I was able to get him to play a little bit. The first challenge was gaining his trust. That took about 10 months. Newcomer, Cindy, my lab/chow puppy, taught him the rest.

Assuming your dog was not abused, it might be that he just needs to see how it's done. Find an opportunity where your dog can watch other dogs play with their owners and with each other. Watching another dog chase a ball can stimulate your dog's excitement to the point that he wants to participate.

Introduce him to a variety of toys until you find one that he likes: squeaky, furry, bouncy, soft rubber, stuffed, etc. Let your dog socialize with those other dogs and in time, they will teach him how to play.

Sometimes, kids can be a great influence on a dog when it comes to play. He'll soon pick up on their high pitched voices, the screams of delight and the high energy.

**- Dog Talk News**

Don't forget that each issue is also available for you to read online. They are in PDF format, and can contain images that are not provided in the email version of the newsletter. You can access the archives here:

<http://dogtalkweekly.com/archives.htm>

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<http://sylviadickens.com/contactform/contactus.php>

Want interesting facts about your dog breed? Let me know what kind of dog you have.

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Do you have an interesting story, or experience involving your dog that you'd like to share with our readers? Send it to me:

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That's it for this issue. I hope you enjoyed it.

Until next week...

Get out there and have fun with your dog. Take some great photos. Collect wonderful memories.

Sylvia

P.S.: Don't forget to send me your stories and ideas for upcoming issues of Dog Talk Weekly. Just send them to me through my contact form here:

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