



PAWPRINTS



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Welcome to the second year of PAWPRINTS. I am grateful to our sponsor, Merial, and also to the American Veterinary Medical Association for the ongoing determined commitment to reach people who have pets. I hope you find PAWPRINTS interesting and informative.

Our PAWPRINTS guarantee: Love your pets, and they will love you back

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Steve Dale – Editor-in-Chief. The 2002 AVMA Humane Award winner. Steve is a contributing editor for *USA Weekend*, and the author of *My Pet World*, syndicated in over 100 newspapers by Tribune Media Services. He is heard on *Pet Central* Saturday nights, 7:30 p.m. heard on WGN radio (or www.wgnradio.com). His syndicated radio shows are *Steve Dale's Pet World* and *The Pet Minute* with Steve Dale. Steve is also a TV regular appearing on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *National Geographic Explorer* and various Animal Planet shows. He lives with his Devon Rex cat Roxy; Lucy, a miniature Australian Shepherd; Chaser, a Brittany, and Cosette, a Northern blue-tongue skink. Steve's website is www.stevedalepetworld.com.

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What We Do Know About Pit Bulls, Bans Don't Work



By Steve Dale

Maybe the problem isn't the breed of dog, but rather the circumstances which causes any dog to bite in the first place. At least that's a realization that the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA came to a few years back. Research in conjunction with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) confirmed what they suspected, banning or restricting "rights" of targeted breeds doesn't solve problems.

"Besides the breed suspected of being guilty is sometimes misidentified," says Janis Bradley, author of *Dogs Bite*

But Balloons And Slippers Are More Dangerous (James & Kenneth, Berkeley, CA, 2005; \$14.95). "What's a pit bull?" As an example, she points to the cover of her own book. "People tell me it's a Great Dane, or a Lab-mix or a pit bull, you name it," she says.

"Just because a dog has a general kind of pit bull look doesn't tell you anything about its actual genetic make up," says Bradley who is an instructor for the Academy of Dog Trainers at the San Francisco SPCA.

In fact, the genetic make-up of any individual dog may predispose that animal to having a nasty disposition. But according to the CDC, HSUS, AVMA research, the common conditions which prompt the most

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MERIAL MUSINGS The Tooth of the Matter



People respond differently when their told pets need dental care - some are amused, some don't believe it, and a few (the smart ones) take it to heart.

The truth is that pets actually have a higher incidence of dental disease than humans. Of all pets over two-years old, 85 per cent have some form of dental disease.

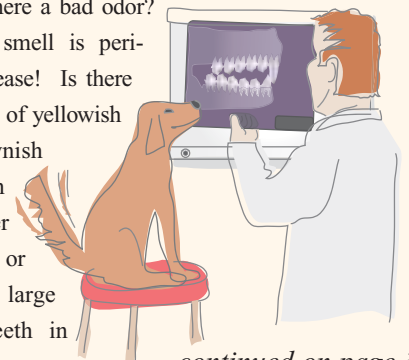
Human dental care has rapidly progressed to largely cosmetic work - straight, white, attractive teeth. However, most pets aren't particularly fussy about whether they have straight teeth or not, and most owners aren't either. But we do want them to have better breath, right?

Periodontal Disease is a progressive, gradual destruction of the gums caused by bacteria. This dental disease can

be life threatening because dangerous bacteria can enter the bloodstream and wreak havoc in your pet's internal organs. The fact is that dental disease can kill. Who knew?

Still skeptical? Let's give another sniff to your dog's breath. Is there a bad odor? What you smell is periodontal disease! Is there

any buildup of yellowish or brownish material on the upper large teeth or on the large chewing teeth in the back?



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Creature Comfort and Safety during Winter Months

Images of cats snuggled up in your lap while you read in front of a roaring fire and dogs romping through snowdrifts are the stuff of greeting cards and perfect winter days. While our pets provide us with creature comfort and bright happy moments during the long dark days of winter, winter poses specific threats to their health and safety.

The American Veterinary Medical Association offers the following suggestions for winter safety:

- **Housing:** It is best to keep pets indoors during the winter months, but if this is not possible, outdoor pets must be provided with shelter. Their home should be elevated off the ground to prevent moisture accumulation. It must also have a door of some kind to keep out winter winds, sleet and snow. Shelters should be insulated or heated. Water sources may be heated to permit constant access to unfrozen water;



thermal units designed specifically for this purpose are readily available. Outdoor pets require extra calories to keep warm. Feed pets according to their needs when the tem-

perature drops. In severely cold or inclement weather, pets should not be kept outside. Indoor pets should have sleeping quarters in a draft-free, warm area with their bed or mattress elevated slightly off the floor.

- **Roaming cats:** Roaming cats, as well as house pets and wildlife, may climb onto vehicle engines for warmth during cold weather. Be sure to check under the hood before starting your vehicle and honk the horn to startle any animals seeking shelter inside.

- **Frostbite and snow removal salt:** Frostbitten skin is red or gray and may slough. Apply warm, moist towels to thaw out frostbitten areas slowly until the skin appears flushed. Contact your veterinarian as soon as possible for further care. Snow removal products should be stored out of the reach of pets and small children

as their toxicity varies considerably. Snow and salt should be removed from your pets' paws immediately.

Many anti-freeze products are highly toxic and a very small amount can be rapidly fatal to pets.

Dogs on TV

If you've heard of using TiVo, instead consider another technology, FiDo. Why not? Let your dog record programs for the family.

If there's a must see season for dog shows on TV, this is it! The venerable *129th Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show* is up next on Feb. 13 and 14 at Madison Square Garden (live on the USA Network, 8 to 11 p.m.).

At the *AKC/Eukanuba National Championship* in January, the winner was an Alaskan Malamute named Champion Nanuke's Snoklassic No Boundaries. Over 156,000 viewers voted online at www.animalplanet.com and agreed with the Best in Show judge.

Pin Up Pets

Keep tabs of your schedule with the cute and smiling face of a kitty or puppy, or the other ends of a donkey or pig. Here are an assortment of wall calendars featuring pets.

Jeanne Carley's: Ferret Calendar 2006 www.ferretcompany.com or call 650-851-5775, \$14.95.

How can you go wrong with babies, in this case, kits, or baby ferrets. There are ferrets riding the bus to school, mom pushing a kit in a baby buggy and one teething on a pacifier. www.ferretcompany.com or call 650-851-5775. The 2006 calendar is \$14.95.

Ronnie Sellers Productions Inc. Calendars www.makefun.com, 800-625-3386, \$12.99.

And now the award for the most creative calendar ever: *Cats In Hats*. What can be cuter than kittens adorned in a chapeau for no particular reason?

Pet Print Calendars, www.petprints.com, 800-738-2257, \$11.95.

Dogs in over 100 breeds, from the popular Labrador to lesser known breeds, for example, the Chinese Crested and Dogue de Bordeaux. Each calendar highlights at least one puppy.

Design Tyme Calendars. <http://www.design-tyme.com/animalden/2006calendars.html>, 706-783-4563, \$12.99 to \$13.99.

Pedigreed cat calendars can be challenging to find. Included here are Abyssinian, Himalayan, Maine Coon, Persian, Siamese and the trendiest of all breeds, the Ragdoll. Who says black cats are bad luck? Black cats can now charm you every month, they too have their own calendar.

Gingrich Fund Raises Money to Research Fatal Disease

By Steve Dale

San Mateo, CA. "I've always loved animals, all kinds; after all I wanted to be a zoo director," says Newt Gingrich, former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. "I felt so bad when I had heard that Susan's kitten died."

He's speaking about his sister Susan Gingrich's Birman cat, named Bria who succumbed to feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) last April.

Dr. Susan Little, president of the Winn Feline Foundation announced the formation of Bria's Fund at the Cat Fanciers' Association International Cat Show and Cat and Dog Writers' Association Conference, November 19 in San Mateo, CA. The Winn Feline Foundation funds research to study health issues in cats.

Gingrich's Center for Health Transformation Foundation kicked off the fund with an initial contribution. "There's no question that pets influence human health," says Nancy Desmond, the Foundation's president. She ought to know, she has five cats.

During a phone conversation, Newt agreed, having just seen his own grand child's kitten die. Talk about a bizarre coincidence, that cat also likely died of FIP.

The Tooth *Cont'd from pg.1*

That is calculus, tartar or plaque - all signs of periodontal disease.

The good news is your veterinarian can offer products and services to help get your pet's mouth healthy by slowing the progression of gum disease.

You can begin with a dental cleaning and polishing. Anesthesia is required since Fluffy won't hold still and open wide on command. And yes, modern anesthetic techniques are safe, even for older pets.

Your pet may require fewer cleanings and enjoy good breath (or at least better breath) with daily brushing using toothpaste and toothbrush made for pets. Another way to prevent plaque is to use a chemical barrier sealant Called Oravet™. At first, the veterinarian applies it while your pet's teeth are being cleaned and then you maintain the teeth by applying Oravet™ weekly. This system is the first method used by veterinarians to create a physical



Bria

FIP is always fatal and has no effective treatment. "I had heard of FIP, but I've didn't know much about it," says Susan Gingrich, who is a nurse. "I've never experienced anything so devastating with an animal. Bria was just a baby (9 months old). The poor thing never had a chance."

She continues, "As I began to educate myself about FIP, I learned quickly that so few people are out there researching, and funds are so limited. My goal is to never have a family go through what we did. Mostly, to never have another kitten go through what Bria did."

While she now has a new kitty, Susan Gingrich adds, "Bria will now never be forgotten and never truly be replaced. She was so funny. She was a little hellion, a feisty little thing. She also begged at the table and retrieved. I think she thought she was a puppy." She pauses and takes a breath, "We miss Bria and very sad about all the cats who will never have a life. We can make a difference."

To that end, you can contribute to Bria's Fund through the Winn Feline Foundation, www.winnfelinehealth.org or call, (732) 528-9797.

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barrier that reduces bacterial plaque adhesion above and under the gum lines. Oravet™ will reduce plaque and tartar build up, and gingivitis, and the result is a healthier mouth for longer periods between dental cleanings.

Marlene King has a 14-year old American cocker spaniel, and has learned how to easily clean Toby's mouth on a regular basis to keep him healthy and to prevent his mouth from getting infected again. She began using the new plaque prevention system. "It's not that expensive, it's easy to do and Toby likes the attention," she says. "And he gets special treats that actually help clean his teeth as well."

Dr. Jonathon R. Dodd, DVM, DAVDC of the Animal Dental Clinic in Austin, TX is a proponent of dental health awareness. "The bottom line is that periodontal disease is extremely aggressive...it is a disease of neglect," he says.

-- Scott Vande Griend, DVM

What We Do Know *cont'd from pg. 1*

serious dog attacks (regardless of breed or mix of breeds) are, in fact:

- Gang members or other criminals (who sometimes even use dogs as dangerous weapons or in dog fights).
- Dogs who continue roaming even though the community complains and animal control and officials don't respond until something bad happens.
- Unsocialized dogs who are raised to be aggressive.
- Unaltered dogs, mostly male (who are most likely to want to roam).
- Dogs that are tethered (causing what's called barrier aggression and/or they get teased).



Instead of targeting specific breeds, experts agree laws that identify and seriously deal with owners of any breed or mix deemed vicious, combined with ample animal control staff to reply to resident complaints and perhaps anti-tethering laws may effectively lessen dog bites. Most of all, preventing gang members and other bad guys from "using" dogs would make a profound impact as would appropriately socializing dogs from a young age.

"The other issue about banning and restricting breeds - even if you could accurately identify what pit bulls are - are the problems such bans cause," says Bradley. Examples include people going underground with their dogs, which in fact, prevents appropriate socialization or veterinary care; or good citizens taking their well behaved pit bull-type dogs and their incomes out of communities with breed specific laws. "Blaming an individual breed [for attacks or bad behavior] - even if you could identify the breed is just wrong," she says.

There are nearly 300 million people America, and 74 million dogs, the instances of serious attacks requiring hospitalization are unusual, let alone exceedingly rare fatal attacks. "That's why the serious attacks make headlines, they're very rare events, and therefore newsworthy," adds Bradley. "Certainly any time a person is bitten, it's a tragedy.

(To learn more about pit bulls, and community bans see the list of featured websites on page 4)

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Margaret H. Bonham – Editor. An award winning pet book author; her current titles include The Complete Guide to Mutts, The Complete Idiot's Guide to Labrador Retrievers and Introduction to Dog Agility. She lives in Colorado, where she is owned by several Alaskan Malamutes, Alaskan Huskies, a German Shepherd dog and a cat. Margaret's website: www.shadowhelm.net

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FEATURED WEBSITES:

American Kennel Club

www.akc.org

American Veterinary Medical Association:

www.avma.org

Feline Health: Dr. Susan Little

www.catvet.homestead.com

Dog Writer's Association of America

www.dwaa.org

Good News for Pets

www.goodnewforpets.com

Humane Society of the United States

www.hsus.org

Pit Bulls truths

www.pitbullsontheweb.com/petbull/

www.happypitbull.com

www.pbrc.net/breedspecific.html

www.pbrc.net/misc/PBRC_presspack.pdf

www.goodpooch.com/BSL/failedBSL.htm

Play Find the Pit Bull

www.pitbullsontheweb.com/petbull/findpit.html

Veterinary Dentists

www.vetinfo.com

Westminster Kennel Club

www.westminsterkennelclub.org

Winn Feline Foundation (Bria Fund)

www.winnfelinehealth.org

Steve Dale

www.stevedalepetworld.com

www.petworldradio.net

Gingrich Fund *cont'd from pg. 3*

Lassie Man

Jon Provost didn't need rescuing, although some expected Lassie to come crashing through the doors at the International Cat Show anyway. Provost, who played Timmy on Lassie from 1957 through 1964,



was videotaping at the show for Purina. "We're looking for crazy fun stuff to shoot for a website," he says.

When he's not at cat shows, Provost says he's writing a tell-all autobiography. "Who knows,

maybe the real truth is that Lassie pushed me into those wells for all the glory," he laughs. Provost is also on the Board of Directors for Canine Companions for Independence and frequently helps shelters to fund raise. "I grew up an animal lover; how could I help it?"

Cat Show Champ

A black Exotic cat named One-O-One Mascalzone Latino from Finale Ligure, Italy was named Best of the Best surpassing a field of 823 pedigreed cats, representing 41 breeds at the Cat Fanciers' Association 18th Annual International Cat Show at the San Mateo County Expo Center. This is the first time a cat from outside the U.S. has won what can now truly be called an International Show. The cat is owned by Marcella Marengo.

