



October 2010

Misperceptions vs. Reality

By Barbara Axel

For many years after I was introduced to the dog game my peers advised me to keep away from a certain breed of dog. People who should have known better told me that breed started out just fine, but as it grew to adulthood the brain did not stop enlarging, and when it broke through the skull the dog "turned" and attacked the first person who approached. I had never seen this happen and asked all the informants whether they had witnessed such behavior themselves. They had not, but they told me that everyone knew it was true.

Haven't you heard similar unsubstantiated facts about other breeds too? Entire countries seem to catch the misperception disease since German Shepherd Dogs, for instance were renamed Alsatians in Britain during the world war. Different dog? No. It is just a different name for the same dog because the original name had a bad connotation. So too it is with any dog that currently has bull as part of its name. The dog that was the greatest family dog of the past is now the breed most feared. Because of this it is imperative to review some history.



FORAGING.—[SEE "A BOY'S TOWN," ON PAGE 610.]

And that is not all. Below is some information gleaned from my research on the web:

"Buster Brown, his sister Mary Jane, and his dog Tige, an American Pit Bull Terrier, were well known to the American public in the early 20th century. Tige is thought to be the first talking pet to appear in American comics, and, like that of many of his successors, his speech goes unnoticed by adults.

A series of live-action short subjects were produced in the mid-to-late 1920s by the Stern Bros. Pete the Pup (who played Tige) and director Gus Meins were both later associated with the popular Our Gang (Little Rascals) comedies. The original Pete (sired by Earl Tudor's "Black Jack") was an American Pit Bull Terrier named "Pal the Wonder Dog", and had a natural ring almost completely around his eye; dye was used to finish it off.

Trainer and owner Lt. Harry Lucenay used one of Pal's offspring as Pete in the series after Pal died. This dog, named "Lucenay's Peter", was registered as an AKC American Staffordshire Terrier.[2] Lucenay's Peter was born September 6, 1929 in New York City, bred by A. A. Keller. A few other dogs played Petey, but Lucenay's Peter was the best known.

After being fired from the Our Gang series in 1932, Harry Lucenay retired Peter to Atlantic City, where he was photographed with children at the Steel Pier. Roach used a number of unrelated Pit Bulls to portray Pete in Our Gang until 1938. [2] Pete became as recognizable and popular as the kids in the gang. Pal the Wonder Dog appeared in Our Gang comedies until he died in 1930. Lucenay's Peter continued on and died of old age, not poison, on January 28, 1946 in Los Angeles, California at aged 16, two years after the Our Gang series ended. [3]

In the 1994 remake of The Little Rascals, the new Pete is an American Bulldog." Buster Brown and Pete's photos are readily available by clicking on the websites."

My group, Council on Pet Education sponsored C.O.P.E.'s Canine Capers to promote responsible ownership and training by demonstrating with our dogs prior to a question and answer period and petting session. The dogs attending had to be friendly, unflappable, experienced in crowds and eager to meet and greet audiences of all ages before they would be considered qualified to participate. Dogs of many breeds and some all-Americans worked with their owners.

One of the "Capers" dogs was a darling Bull Terrier named Bandit, who came in costume and introduced our program by encouraging the audience to guess her name. Subsequent to the correct guess she was disrobed and continued with the rest of our gang to enthuse and amuse the spectators with especially planned obedience routines.

So why has the dog who was the best family dog become the most feared in the nation? Misperception again.

But this time it is worse, because the past has been forgotten and misperception once again rules. The danger is that misperception has created ordinances that threaten the very life of special breeds of dogs. Not only bully breeds are involved. Across the United States multiple breeds are being identified as dangerous. They and cross breeds that might resemble them are being banned and killed because of rumors attached to their names.

Misperception is becoming an epidemic. We can stop this nonsense by challenging the rumors every time we hear or read them.

The statement, "It is the deed, not the breed," should become our mantra.

Barbara Axel, breeder/ trainer/exhibitor, Board Member of North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance (NCRAOA), has organized and participated in programs promoting responsible pet ownership since the late '60's. Positive interactions between dogs and children under the supervision of adults has been a primary goal.

Developing Treatment for Dogs With Cancer

Columbia, MO - infoZine - A cancer drug that benefits people may soon benefit man's best friend.

Cancer is one of the most common causes of death in dogs. This study is important because most chemotherapy drugs available to people can be used in dogs, except for the highly successful taxanes that can keep cancer from proliferating throughout the body.

The University of Missouri's College of Veterinary Medicine has entered an agreement with CritiTech, a Lawrence, Kan.-based pharmaceutical firm, to determine whether a human cancer drug called Nanotax has potential for treating dogs with cancer. University veterinarians will conduct the clinical part of the study and assess cancer response in the dogs involved in the study. Data from an earlier safety study was used to establish a starting dose, and this second study will consist of an escalation phase to determine the optimal dose, followed by an extended treatment. CritiTech scientists will analyze blood samples to determine plasma levels of the drug during the course of treatment. Enrollment of dogs in the study is set to start in mid October, and it is anticipated that the study will take about two years to complete.

The Scott Endowed Program in Veterinary Oncology at MU is one of the largest veterinary oncology programs in the country and actively initiates and participates in clinical trials, as well as provides routine treatment of animals with cancer, including chemotherapy, cancer surgery and radiation therapy.

The Morris Animal Foundation provided funding for the study with a two-year grant.

Source: <http://www.infozine.com/news/>

Neutering Status as a Risk Factor for Canine Prostate Cancer

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Prostate cancer has been reported to occur more commonly in neutered than intact male dogs in several case series. This study was undertaken to evaluate risk of prostate cancer in a large population database. The hypothesis was that castration is a risk factor for prostate cancer in male companion dogs.

METHODS: Data were derived from recorded visits to North American veterinary teaching hospitals. The Veterinary Medical Databases (VMDB) were queried to yield male dogs with urinary bladder transitional cell carcinoma (TCC), prostate adenocarcinoma (ACA), prostate TCC, prostate carcinoma (CA), and prostate tumors. A second query yielded all male dogs over the age of 4 years without a diagnosis of urinary tract cancer. These populations were compared to determine relative risks for developing each disease, singly and collectively, associated with neutering status. Odds ratios were calculated for breed as a risk factor.

RESULTS: Neutered males had a significantly increased risk for each form of cancer. Neutered males had an odds ratio of 3.56 (3.02-4.21) for urinary bladder TCC, 8.00 (5.60-11.42) for prostate TCC, 2.12 (1.80-2.49) for prostate adenocarcinoma, 3.86 (3.13-4.16) for prostate carcinoma, and 2.84 (2.57-3.14) for all

prostate cancers. Relative risks were highly similar when cases were limited to those with a histologically confirmed diagnosis.

CONCLUSIONS: Breed predisposition suggests that genetic factors play a role in the development of prostate cancer. The risk associated with being neutered is highest for TCC, supporting previous work identifying the urothelium and ductular rather than acinar epithelium as the source of these tumors.

PMID: 17516571 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17516571>

Unwanted horses:

The role of non-profit equine rescue and sanctuary organizations

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Abstract

Closure of United States equine slaughter facilities in 2007 along with the concomitant economic recession have contributed to a sharp increase in the number of unwanted horses throughout the US, with estimates totaling 100,000 horses per year. The objective of the study was to obtain comprehensive data regarding non-profit organizations caring for unwanted horses, along with the characteristics and outcome of horses relinquished to these organizations. Non-profit organizations that accept relinquished equines were contacted to participate in a 90-question survey. Responding organizations (144 of 236 eligible) in 37 states provided information on 280 cases representative of the 7,990 horses relinquished between 2007 and 2009. Data collected characterized these organizations as being in existence for 6 yr, financially supported through donations and personal funds, dedicated to the care of only 10 to 20 horses on a property of just over 30 acres, and reliant on volunteers for help. Funding was the greatest challenge to continued operation of non-profit equine organizations, with maintenance costs for the care of a relinquished horse averaging \$3,648 per year. Financial hardship, physical inability or lack of time to care for the horses by owners were the most common reasons for relinquishment, followed by seizure through law enforcement agencies for alleged neglect or abuse. Relinquished horses consisted of mostly light horse breeds (79.3%), with Thoroughbreds and Quarter Horses as the most represented breeds. The age of relinquished horses ranged from 3 d to 42 yr old (12.4 +/- 0.5 yr). About half of the horses entered in the survey were considered unhealthy due to illness, injury, lameness, or low body condition. For every 4 horses relinquished to a non-profit organization, only 3 horses were adopted or sold between 2006 and 2009, and many organizations had refused to accept additional horses for lack of resources. The estimated maximum capacity for the 326 eligible registered non-profit equine rescue facilities of 13,400 is well below the widely-published estimate of 100,000 horses that become unwanted in the US every year. Non-profit equine rescue and sanctuary facilities have historically played an important role in safeguarding the welfare of horses in society, but funding and capacity are limiting factors to their potential expansion in continuing to care for the current population of unwanted and neglected horses in the US.

PMID: 20709875 [PubMed - as supplied by publisher]

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20709875>

USDA Supporting CVM Salmonella Research

Food borne pathogens remain a leading public health concern in the U.S. and throughout the world. One of the scientists interested in the “farm to fork” safety of food is [Dr. Siddhartha \(Sid\) Thakur](#) with the NC State University College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM).

Dr. Thakur, an assistant professor of swine health and reproduction in the CVM Department of Population Health and Pathobiology, seeks to understand the molecular epidemiology of drug-resistant pathogens. His current research into the occurrence of Salmonella in pigs is recognized with two grants from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). One grant of \$592,000 is part of the National Integrated Food Safety Initiative. The second grant, a \$389,000 “New Investigator Award,” is provided by the USDA National Research Initiative.

The funding supports an ongoing investigation into how often pigs that have not been given anti-microbial drugs harbor antimicrobial-resistant Salmonella. This is an important question with the increase in demand for “naturally grown” pork from untreated pigs. The results will be compared to those from commercial pigs where antimicrobials are used. The research involves taking samples from pig populations, their environments, and pork processing plants to determine the strains of the Salmonella pathogen that these pigs may be exposed to, as well as the sources of transmission in these various environments.

Salmonella is responsible for causing the most number of bacterial food-borne illnesses in the U.S., affecting up to 1.5 million people annually. Dr. Thakur believes that the information from the study will help protect the general population from food-borne illness, and enable pork producers to better prevent and control outbreaks.

“It's vital that we protect our food supply from Salmonella contamination,” Dr. Thakur says. “The results of this study will be a win-win situation for the farmers of North Carolina, who will receive information vital to the health of their farm animals, and for the consumers who can be certain that their food supply is safe.”

Dr. Thakur's [Molecular Epidemiology Laboratory](#) is part of the CVM [Center for Comparative Medicine and Translational Research](#). The CCMTR is a community of more than 100 scientists from five NC State University colleges. These investigators are involved in collaborative “One Health” studies with government, private, and other academic researchers to advance knowledge and practical applications that improve the health of animals and humans.

Posted Oct. 5, 2010 <http://www.cvm.ncsu.edu/news/>

More Meat Eaters Will Require Doubling Of World Livestock

BUENOS AIRES — With meat eating on the increase, livestock producers will have to double their output when the world population hits nine billion, experts attending the World Meat Congress said Monday in Buenos Aires. The challenge is how to reach sustainable production of 460 million tons (per year) by 2050 when the current world population of 6.0 billion increases by 50 percent.

Beside the rise in world population, meat eating is becoming more popular. The Chinese, for example, now consume four times as much meat than 30 years ago -- up to 59.5 kilograms (131 pounds) per year from 13.7 kilograms (30.2 pounds), according to the UN World Food Program figures disclosed at the congress. In some developing countries meat consumption is as high as 80 kilograms (176 pounds) per year, it added.

Source: AFP newswire

About Tethering

Animal activists would have the general public believe that tethering is inherently cruel. This is due in part to a desire to humanize dogs and convince the public that it is impossible for any dog to be happy unless it lives in the house.

Activists use only the worst examples of chained dogs in heart wrenching, emotional displays, posters, websites, and lobbying materials for anti-chaining campaigns. The physical act of chaining or tethering itself is not cruel. Rather it is the deliberate and uncaring act of the owner chaining the dog improperly and failing to provide necessary shelter and sustenance that is the cruel act. Anyone capable of such cruelty does not even need a chain, but can inflict misery on a dog locked in a shed, crated inside the house, or penned and forgotten.

The goal of the anti-tethering lobby is to spread enough misinformation about tethering until all people automatically believe that tethering in any form is animal cruelty.

The more restrictions these animal rights lobbying groups, such as the Coalition to Unchain Dogs, PETA, and HSUS, can devise to upset animal management practices the more difficult it becomes for professionals, hobbyists, hunters, and dog owners in general to continue their activities.

Learn more about tethering at the NCRAOA website <http://www.ncraoa.com/miscdoglaw.html>

“Show Me” the Money

The Humane Society of the United States has its [factory fundraising operation](#) in full gear again. (Yes, yes ... we were shocked too.)

Wayne Pacelle sent out [a desperate plea for money](#) this week to HSUS "constituents" all across America. He says HSUS needs \$200,000 to run ads in Missouri in support of its “Proposition B” ballot initiative. [We're telling Fox News viewers today](#) that Prop B is a sucker bet that will take the idea of limiting how many animals a person can own and eventually apply it to farmers. But there's an even better reason to *not* help HSUS pay for its political advertising in Missouri: The group has more money than it needs already. HSUS reported in its 2009 Annual Report that as of just nine months ago it [had \\$27 million in “cash and cash equivalents”](#) in the bank. What’s going on here? Two possibilities come to mind. One option is that HSUS's leaders are just shameless money grubbers. (Never discount the obvious.)

Despite having tons of dough in various bank accounts, HSUS may not want to dip into its \$151 million in investments. Or [the \\$1.5 million parked in the "Ohioans for Humane Farms" account](#)—money that's not needed for a ballot campaign in the Buckeye State ([at least not this year](#)).

The second possibility is that HSUS really *is* short on cash. A year before reporting (in December 2009) that it had \$27 million in cash on hand, HSUS put that number for December 2008 at \$50.7 million. In other words, HSUS went through nearly half its cash in 2009. Has HSUS blown through the other half in 2010? Are more and more donors becoming *former* donors after they’ve learned the truth? Could HSUS’s [reckless fundraising practices](#) and its habit of [outspending the White House on payroll](#) finally caught up with Wayne Pacelle?

Perhaps it’s a little of both. Stay tuned. We'll keep watching.

Source: HumaneWatch.org October 7, 2010 <http://humanewatch.org>

Green Group Accused of Sinking Ship for a Stunt

The New Zealand anti-whaling activist Pete Bethune has resigned from the Sea Shepherd environmental group, accusing it of deliberately sinking one of its own protest ships as a publicity stunt.

Mr Bethune labeled Sea Shepherd's leadership "morally bankrupt" for allegedly ordering the high-tech trimaran *Ady Gil* to be scuttled after it collided with a Japanese whaling vessel in the Southern Ocean this year.

Mr Bethune, the *Ady Gil*'s skipper, said the Sea Shepherd founder, Paul Watson, ordered the sinking to "garner sympathy with the public and to create better TV" in the battle against Japan's Antarctic whaling program.

"It was definitely salvageable, it was still rock solid from the engine room back," he told Radio New Zealand yesterday.

Mr Bethune - who spent five months in custody in Japan this year after illegally boarding the same ship, the *Shonan Maru No. 2*, a month after the high-seas collision - said he had cut ties with Sea Shepherd.

"I think an organization that relies on public money and public generosity to survive has an obligation to be honest," he said.

Mr Watson told the New Zealand Press Association that he felt betrayed and denied all the allegations, which he said were made because Mr Bethune was angry at being sacked. "No one ordered him to scuttle it. Pete Bethune was captain of the *Ady Gil*; all decisions on the *Ady Gil* were his. And that's all on camera."

However, the American businessman who donated \$US1 million (\$1.02 million) towards the high-speed boat which bore his name, *Ady Gil*, has backed Mr Bethune's claims, telling Radio New Zealand that Mr Bethune was pushed into agreeing to sink the vessel.

Mr Gil said Mr Watson used publicity stunts to get funding for the organization.

Mr Bethune was at the helm of the *Ady Gil* when its bow was shorn off in January. The New Zealander later boarded the ship to confront the captain and was detained by the crew.

He was arrested and tried on trespassing, assault and other charges. He was convicted and received a suspended prison sentence in July, then deported.

Before Mr Bethune he was sentenced, Sea Shepherd said he had no future place with the organization. However, it later said it was a tactical move in the hope of securing Mr Bethune a lighter sentence.

Source: <http://www.smh.com.au/>

Winn Feline Foundation seeks grant proposals

The Winn Feline Foundation is seeking grant proposals for studies involving medical problems affecting cats. Winn encourages proposals for research applicable to all cats, but the foundation also has an interest in projects that address problems in individual breeds. The foundation has specific funds for research on feline infectious peritonitis and hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

The deadline for receipt of applications is Dec. 13. The maximum grant amount is \$25,000. Winn will not consider multiple-year proposals totaling more than \$25,000, but investigators who received grants for 2010 can apply to have those grants continued in 2011. Information about grant requirements is available at www.winnfelinehealth.org

Dog Parks Harbor Risks as Well as Fun

Oct. 7 /PRNewswire/ -- Ever witness a dogfight at the OK-9 Corral? Maybe your local dog park doesn't have that reputation, but there are hidden dangers that dog owners should watch out for, the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) cautions. "Dog parks are fun places to exercise and socialize your dog," says CVMA president Dean Henricks, DVM. "However, they can also harbor health risks. It's important for dog owners to take a few precautions."

The CVMA has these tips for keeping your pet safe when visiting dog parks:

- Keep your dog's vaccinations current. Other dogs may not be up-to-date on vaccinations, and your dog could be exposed to diseases.
- Socialize your dog – to other dogs and people – before going to dog parks.
- Keep an eye on your dog to prevent it from getting into fights.
- Small dogs should go to dog parks that have separate areas for smaller breeds. Untrained larger dogs may perceive them as prey or engage in rough play.
- Bring water for your dog to drink. Water stations at the park have been used by other dogs and wildlife and may be a source of disease.
- Clean your dog's paws when you leave the park to minimize the risk of parasites or diseases from the soil.
- Have your veterinarian check your dog regularly for parasites.
- Talk to your veterinarian about any precautions you should take with your dog.
- Follow the dog park rules. They generally include licensing requirements, leash laws and a minimum-age requirement for children.
- Remember, you are personally and legally responsible for your dog.

Source: California Veterinary Medical Association <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases>

Protecting your right to responsibly own and breed animals.

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