



Bulldog Club of Greater San Diego

Member BCA Division III

www.sdbulldogs.org

August 2008

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President's Message

Dear Friends and Fellow Club Members,

It is with regret that I announce the resignation of Naomi Bell as a Board Member at Large and Sarah Grant as our Club Secretary. Naomi Bell has resigned for personal reasons. She has done so many things for the Club during the past 4 years and her service is very much appreciated. She will continue to serve as the Newsletter Editor. Sarah has been transferred to Las Vegas by her employer with a nice promotion. We wish her the very best in all her future endeavors and appreciate all the hard work she has done for the Club over the last few years. The service of both Sarah and Naomi is very much appreciated and we will miss them on the Board.

At our last board meeting the following individuals were nominated and elected to fill the following vacancies on the board: Marie Weir as Club secretary, and Olivia Franklin and Amber Ferreira -Vallejo as board members at large. Marie Weir's change from the position of board member at large to secretary necessitated the need for an additional board member at large. We welcome Olivia and Amber to the board and look forward to working with them in the future.

Every year we have the opportunity to participate in a program of providing information to the public and educating them on our wonderful Bulldog breed. This year, on the 4th of July a hardy group of Club volunteers spent 10 hours, at the San Diego County Fair, staffing our Bulldog Club Education Booth. Cindy and I had the opportunity to work with each group of volunteers throughout the day and enjoyed the great fun and camaraderie that existed at that event. There was constant activity with interested crowds around the booth all day long. Lots of toddlers and infants, older siblings, and parents expressed interest in the booth and in the breed. The bullies were thrilled to get so much attention and they put on quite a show for the public.

I would like to extend a special thanks to Carl and Netanya Dayzie, Jane Boehrer, Joy Green, Cindy and John Sheppard, Jeff and Ellen Fuller, Ryan and Corina Cauldren, Roy Bost and Elizabeth Matthews, and Cindy Rasmussen for their participation.

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Upcoming Events

**August 23, 2008 Summer Picnic 11:00am at Dusty Rhodes Park in Ocean Beach.
Picnic will be catered.**

October 18, 2008 Annual Halloween Picnic

December 20, 2008 Annual Holiday Party & Business Mtg.

New Members

"A great big bullie hug to our new members"

Michelle and Art Sandoval and Bully of Encinitas.
Mentor Marie

Kudos for the**Stars** of the show go out to *Precious*, *Winston*, *Frosty*, *Sugar*, *Sophie*, *Theo*, *Spike*, *Tank*, *Trouble*, and *Filet*. They were so!!! patient with the kids and wonderful examples of the breed.

After the Fair our next club activity will be at 11:00 am on Saturday the 23rd of August at the Dusty Rhodes Park in Ocean Beach. The picnic will be catered. Further information will come to members through an email invitation. Visitors and those interested in joining the Club are invited to attend. If there are any of you that would be interested in working on this activity, please contact me. I look forward to seeing many of you and your bullies at the Picnic in the Park. On behalf of the officers and Board, I thank you all for your support and encourage you to get involved in club activities. There is a lot more we could do with more involvement. We appreciate your input and encourage your questions and suggestions for club improvement.

Derek Rasmussen

TIDBITS
from the editor

Do you use mulch in your gardens? Cocoa mulch, which is sold by Home Depot and other garden supply stores, contains a lethal ingredient called "theobromine" which is lethal to dogs and cats. It smells like chocolate. It really attracts dogs; they will ingest it and die. Several deaths have already occurred.

Just a word of caution, check what you are using in your gardens, and beware of what your gardeners are using in your gardens.

Cocoa mulch, which consists mainly of cacao bean shells, contains a much higher concentration of theobromine than chocolate processed for human consumption. Dogs are attracted to the scent and in documented cases have eaten the stuff, leading to vomiting, diarrhea, trembling, seizures and, in some instances, death.

If you suspect your dog may have eaten cocoa mulch, the ASPCA recommends contacting your veterinarian immediately or calling the Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435 for expert advice.

July 13, 2008 Board Meeting Minutes Bulldog Club of Greater San Diego

Introduction of Guests and New Members

Roll Call - Derek, Janice, Marie, Corina, Jamie, Olivia and Jim Franklin present.

Reading of Minutes-Unfinished business and tabled items reviewed.

General Business

Officers Reports:

Membership Report-Membership is down from last year.

Treasurer's Report-Club is operating in the black. American Dog Owner Association dues discussed. Derek will check on that association and our status with them.

Board Member/ Committee Reports:

Newsletter & Website Coordinator – Nothing to Report

Social & Events Coordinator –E-vites for August picnic will be sent out at the end of July.

Amber Ferreira-Vallejo has been assigned to be the activities coordinator.

Fund Raising Coordinator- No Report

Show Report – The May shows were a success with judges and exhibitors. Financially we operated in the black.

Education & Training Coordinator –The BCGSD Booth at the San Diego County Fair was very busy. Both the participants and the visitors had a good time. It was an outstanding educational opportunity.

Rescue Liaison from SDBR- 40 dogs went through

rescue from July 07 through June 08. Follow up with rescue to obtain list of adoptees to treasurer.

Unfinished Business

New Business

New Membership approved contingent on attendance at a Club activity – Art and Michelle Sandoval who live in Encinitas with their dog Bully who is 7 months old.

New Club Secretary elected – Marie Weir. Two new Board Members at Large elected – Olivia Franklin and Amber Ferreira-Vallejo

Derek Rasmussen will be the Show Chairman for the 2008 Shows. Winery location critiqued and other possible venues discussed. Further research to be done by Jamie Kimball Invite Amber Ferreira-Vallejo to Chair Summer Picnic

Summer Picnic : August 23rd, 2008

Halloween Party : October 18th, 2008 (Change)

Annual Business Meeting/Holiday Party : December 20th, 2008 (Change)

Future Board Meeting Dates and Times
Sept 13th at Marie Weir's house

Nov 8th

Adjournment

Bulldog Club of Greater San Diego Public Education Booth San Diego County Fair - July 4th 2008

One of the requirements for membership in the American Kennel Club and the Bulldog Club of America is to participate in activities that educate the public and other interested organizations about the Bulldog Breed. Each year, the Bulldog Club of Greater San Diego has the opportunity to put on at least two different activities that inform and educate members of our community about the Bulldog standard and general information about the breed. In the spring, we sponsor a "Meet the Breed" booth at the Silver Bay Kennel Club Dog Show and in the summer, we have a booth as part of the San Diego County Fair at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. This year we had 10 dogs and their owners participate in what was one of the busiest days at the Fair. Handouts on the breed were distributed and the general public has an opportunity to have a hands-on experience with our bullies. Many questions were answered and a fun time was had by all.

Knee Ligament Injuries in Dogs

Geoffrey N. Clark, DVM

The most commonly seen injury in active dogs is a torn ligament in the knee. Dogs have the same bones and ligaments forming their knee joint as people do and they can suffer the same type of injuries. One of these ligaments, the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is the structure that is most frequently damaged. This is a common injury in football players, skiers, and other human athletes. Damage to the ligament occurs when the knee is twisted during weight-bearing or when the knee is hyper extended. In dogs, the mechanism of injury is similar and this can occur during strenuous activity. Dogs may also suffer a torn knee ligament during routine activities such as retrieving a ball or chasing a squirrel. An injured dog may vocalize and will usually hold up the affected hind leg. This type of response is typical of a complete tear of the ligament. A partial ACL injury can also occur as the ligament becomes damaged over a more prolonged time without a major traumatic event. These dogs tend to experience a more chronic, episodic lameness that worsens after exercise. In both acute and chronic injuries to

the ligament, the result is instability within the knee joint. This instability results in pain and lameness, with the possibility of arthritis in the future. In fact, injury to the ACL is the major cause of arthritis in the canine knee joint.

Diagnosis of ACL Injuries

Examination of a dog with a torn ACL will often reveal a swollen, painful knee joint. In acute cases, the knee may have fluid swelling within the joint, termed joint effusion, or more commonly referred to as “water on the knee”. Dogs with chronic knee instability tend to develop scar tissue, which appears as a firm swelling on the inside of the affected knee. X-rays are used to support the diagnosis and to document the extent of arthritic changes in the joint. The most reliable diagnostic finding, however, is evidence of instability in the knee (known as the “anterior drawer sign”). When a veterinarian elicits a positive drawer sign, the lower bone of the knee joint, or tibia, is moved forward relative to the upper bone, or femur. In some large or heavily muscled dogs, it may be necessary to use sedation or anesthesia in order to relax the joint enough to demonstrate the drawer sign.

Treatment of ACL Injuries

Active dogs require surgical stabilization of the knee in order to have any chance of

returning to their previous level of activity. It is advisable to have the surgery performed within a few weeks of the injury to reduce the chance of secondary arthritis in the joint. Veterinary surgeons have employed a large number of surgical procedures to stabilize the knees of dogs with ACL injuries. Many different techniques have been reported with varying success. The actual technique used will be determined by the dog’s age and size, whether the injury is acute or chronic, and most importantly, by the surgeon’s preference and experience. The repair should be performed by an experienced veterinary surgeon. The two major categories of surgical repairs used for canine knee injuries are those where stabilization is achieved inside the joint (intra-articular) and those done outside the joint (extra-articular). Satisfactory results have been reported for both forms of repair. The knee joint is explored in most cases with both types of surgical procedures in order to remove remnants of the torn ligament and to inspect for torn cartilage. One of the knee cartilages, referred to as the medial meniscus, is commonly damaged along with the ACL. Treatment of the torn cartilage is necessary to prevent continued pain after surgery.

Postoperative Care

External support of the knee is common following surgery in

order to protect the repair during the early healing process. A padded bandage or light splint is used for no more than a week or two after surgery. Following removal of the external support, physical therapy is begun on the knee joint to help restore muscle tone and range of motion. During the recovery period, the dog's exercise must be restricted in order to prevent damage to the surgical repair. Only brief leash walks are permitted and the dog is not allowed to run, jump or play for a minimum of 8 weeks. This is a difficult time for most dogs that are accustomed to a high level of activity. Most veterinary surgeons allow a gradual increase in exercise, with the majority of dogs returning to full activity within 3 to 4 months after surgery. Results are generally quite good when the injury is treated soon after it occurs. Chronic cases with more advanced arthritic changes

at the time of surgery will tend to have less satisfactory results. These dogs frequently exhibit stiffness or lameness after rigorous exercise and may require medication for their arthritis. In colder climates, some dogs may exhibit a more pronounced lameness during the winter months.

The only realistic means of preventing a knee ligament injury is to keep your dog as fit as possible. Dogs that are too heavy and those with other orthopedic problems, such as hip dysplasia, are at increased risk for a torn knee ligament. As with any athlete, training programs should begin with less strenuous activity that is increased in regular intervals until peak performance is achieved. If a serious injury occurs, consult your veterinarian as soon as possible. Prompt treatment of an injury will improve the dog's chances for a satisfactory recovery.



San Diego County Fair





Coordinator

619-501-0219

Tracey LeVeque

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Hello from San Diego Bulldog Rescue! We are looking forward to the summer picnic to visit with all the bulldogs and owners:-)

SDBR has a video on youtube.com! Please go to <http://youtube.com/sdbr1> to see our past and present rescue dogs. Be sure to turn your volume up!

We have had a very busy year, with 41 bulldogs coming through our rescue program from July 1, 2007- June 30, 2008. Many people are losing their homes, and need to surrender their bullies to us. Some people simply can not afford the care and upkeep of their dogs. We have seen everything from dogs almost completely bald and very ill from demodectic mange, to dogs with epilepsy and severe behavior problems. Aggression in bulldogs is something none of us want to think about, but it is very real. Bad breeding, bad genetics, lack of early socialization, and neglect/abuse are the causes of aggression in our wonderful breed. Please be very careful and do your research before thinking about buying a bulldog. Many people want a bulldog, but not everyone should have a bulldog.

Current dogs in rescue:

Precious: 5 year old female with limp from untreated injury, too late to fix. Was used for breeding, and now needs a wonderful home to give her the love she deserves.

Kylie: 3 year old female that came in with bilateral cherry eyes so severe she couldn't close her eyes to sleep. Also had ear hematoma and infected, swollen leg from bite wounds. Sweet girl that wants love and some peace and quiet.

Rocco: 2 year old male with epilepsy, being treated with medication. A wonderful boy with lots of love to give!

Yoshi: 6 year old female that was left at a shelter when her owners lost their home. She is a sweetheart and is dreaming of a wonderful family.

Pumpkin: 18 month old female, in great health, loves to play! Her owners couldn't keep her due to a divorce. Pumpkin is a fabulous girl!

Bertha: 3 year old female with bilateral cherry eyes, lived in a garage her whole life. She is coming out of her shell and loving her new freedom!

Molly: 4 year old female that has had entropic and cherry eye surgery. Sweet little girl loves her wading pool.

Congratulations to our most recent placements!

Tank II is in a great home with a fabulous family of bulldog lovers. We love you Tank II!!

Fiona is a lucky girl with her own special home! Good going, Fiona!

Buttercup has found her forever family. Hugs to you Buttercup!

Rupert is in heaven with his new family. You go, Rupert!

Bella now has a bullie brother and lots of love and hugs. We are so proud of you Bella!

**A column to address common training problems for pet owners.
You are welcome to send in your questions or problems to
Betty Fisher by phone (559-689-3551, bfisher@sti.net or
P.O. Box 93, Raymond, CA 93653**



Fang would like to hear from you about problems you may be having with your Bulldog. You can reach him at the above addresses.

My Mom gets phone calls from new Bulldog owners all the time. Lots of time they are having behavior problems with their young dogs. Bulldogs are a lot more active than people think and they also play very roughly and can be hard to control.

One thing my Mom tells people is to write down exactly what their problems are and what kind of behavior they want their dog to do. It is important to write positive behaviors. In other words, don't say, "my dog shouldn't jump on people" or "my dog should not run out the door". Instead you need to find the behavior you want them to have. "I want my dog to sit and greet people" or "My dog should stay when the front door is opened."

You can train positive behaviors but you cannot train negative behaviors. Once you have your list then you can come up with a strategy to train the behaviors you want.

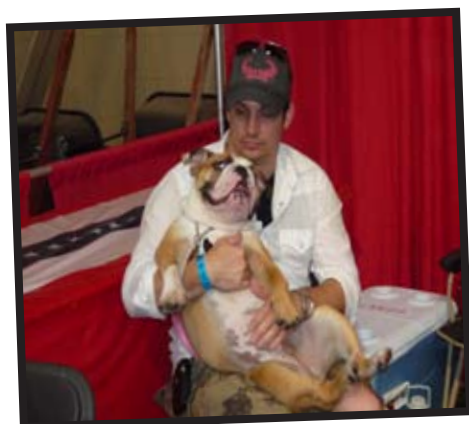
In the case of jumping up you will want to teach your dog to sit quietly when another person comes up to them. Teach the sit and stay by itself without another person trying to pet the dog. Put your dog on lead, ask for the sit, tell them to stay and let another person quietly walk up to you and your dog. If he gets excited and stands or jumps the other person should turn and walk away and you put the dog back into his sit. At first the other person may just be able to walk by or stop and stand quietly talking to you while ignoring the dog. Progress in very small increments and reward your dog with bits of good food treats.

To teach your dog to stay when the outside door is opened you must first teach a stay command away from the door. When your dog understands "Stay" you begin to introduce distractions such as opening the door. You can do this with an inside door first for safety. Put your dog on lead and have him sit before you even touch the door. When you reach for the door handle take your hand away immediately if he starts to move. Don't hesitate to shut the door, replace the dog in a sit and start again. When you can do this off-lead go back to on lead and try it with a door opening to the outside.

All behaviors can be taught if you break them down into small steps, reward lavishly and be consistent and demand the correct behavior every time. You may need to enroll in an obedience class for help with these behaviors.

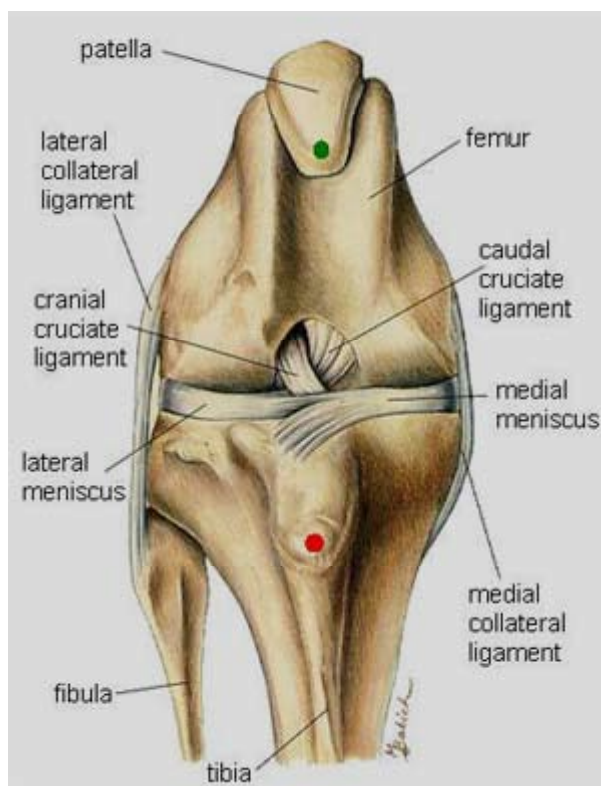
Betty Fisher

Betty Fisher has owned and trained Bulldogs to more than twenty obedience, carting and agility titles. She is the author of "So Your Dog's Not Lassie" an award winning book on training independent dogs and "Caninestein", both recommended by the Bulldog Club of America. Betty writes a regular performance column for the Bulldogger, magazine of the Bulldog Club of America.



Tibial Tuberosity Advancement (TTA) Surgery...Possibly the BEST Surgery for your dog's Knee

The most common knee injury in the dog is rupture of the Cranial Cruciate Ligament (CCL), also frequently called the Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL). This injury can occur at any age and in any breed, but most frequently occurs in middle aged, overweight, medium to large breed dogs. This ligament frequently can suffer a partial tear, leading to slight instability of the knee. If this damage goes untreated, it most commonly leads to complete rupture and possibly damage to the medial meniscus of the knee. The meniscus acts as a cushion in the knee. Complete rupture results in front-to-back instability, commonly called Tibial Thrust, and internal rotation of the lower leg, commonly called Pivot Shift. Untreated legs usually become very arthritic and painful from the instability.



An injured Cruciate Ligament can only be corrected by surgery. There are numerous surgical corrections currently being performed. The most common are 1) External Capsular Repair, 2) Tibial Plateau Leveling Operation (TPLO), and 3) Tibial Tuberosity Advancement (TTA). This article will focus on the TTA, which is the newest procedure, and probably the best repair for most dogs. The forces within the knee are very complicated and change as the knee is rotated through its range of motion. In a normal standing position there is a tendency for the lower end of the Femur to slide backwards on the tilted Tibial Plateau, this is called Tibial Thrust. This force can be corrected by either cutting the Tibial Plateau and rotating it into a more flat position (TPLO) or by counteracting this force by changing the angle of pull of the very strong Patellar Tendon by advancing the Tibial Tuberosity (TTA). It has been shown that the TPLO procedure can still allow rotational instability (Pivot Shift) and this may lead to the progression of arthritis as the dog ages. This Pivot Shift does not seem to be a problem with the TTA procedure because it results in more control of rotation by the large quadriceps muscle, which pulls on the Patellar Tendon. The following pages will describe the anatomy, the surgical procedure, and answer the most common questions concerning TTA Surgery.

For more about this procedure, go to http://www.mvah.us/tibial_tuberosity_advancement_TTA_surgery.nxg

Is Your Dog Happy?

What is Pet Happiness?

According to the English dictionary, happiness is a feeling of contentedness, well-being, pleasure, or good fortune. It is not, as curmudgeon Ambrose Bierce once said, an agreeable sensation arising from contemplating the misery of another [though some humans do seem to derive pleasure in that way].

With dogs, who essentially wear their hearts on their sleeves, contentedness and well-being is a far less complicated affair and is plain for all to see - as long as you know what you are looking for.

Signs of Happiness

Content dogs sleep for about 8 to 10 hours per day, mostly at night. They wake up early and set out in search of food. Breakfast, if you will! They appear bright, alert, active, and solicit attention from their owners. They also interact positively with each other in the case of multi-pet homes.

Through the morning, they enjoy walks, play, and social activities, perhaps resting briefly between events. In the afternoon, dogs may spend some time chewing on a toy, exploring in the yard, or socializing with other dogs or people. Increased activity becomes apparent as the late afternoon approaches and into early evening, with the excitement of returning family members and mealtimes. The various actions and interactions that occur at this time are engaged in with interest and joy. Eyes are bright, ears are swiveling, and tails are high. A quieter late evening period ensues with contented animals enjoying each others' company or seeking out and staying close to their human caregivers for company. Many dogs nuzzle to solicit petting. All the world is at peace.

Unhappiness

Unhappy dogs are created by adverse experiences, inconsistent interactions with their owners,

lack of exercise, an unstable routine, in appropriate social interactions, and by underemployment. What owners have to remember is that while their homes are set up to please them, with all "mod cons" like telephones, VCR's, computers, furniture, and elegant décor, none of these things is really appreciated by the dog. For owners to keep their dogs happy, they have to think like a dog. Think "how would I like it if" and then work their way through their dog's 24-hour day. How would I like it if my owner didn't protect my interests?



How would I like it if my owner never exercised me or barely communicated with me in any way? How would I like it if my life was totally unpredictable, uncontrollable, and was punctuated by

adverse social interactions? How would I like it if I had nothing to do all day long?

When things go wrong, aspects of the "unhappy dog syndrome" start to emerge. Unhappy dogs often sleep more in a 24-hour period, entering a state bordering on depression or learned helplessness. On the other hand, they may sleep more fitfully at night as they are not in a proper routine. Lack of gainful employment leads to any number of behavior problems that arise as diversions. These sometimes take the form of barking or destructive behavior, annoying attention-seeking behaviors, or overeating. Dogs with social issues may become involved in confrontations with each other or with their owners, do not pay attention to their owners, are difficult to control, and may either become aloof or [paradoxically] over-attached. Their eyes don't shine with excitement but rather appear dull and vacuous. Such dogs may adopt hunkered, cowed postures and may show a lack of alertness and curiosity.

(continued page 10)

Many are anti-social and some act out their negative feelings toward others. Many times, attention to the basics can turn an animal like this around. The following is a list of items that may need attention:

Steps to a Happy Dog

Most animals are happier if they have a set routine and know what to expect.

Exercise is a great stress reliever and should be encouraged. Dogs should be exercised aerobically for at least 20-30 minutes each day.

Food should be healthful and supplied on a regular basis at mealtimes. It is probably a good idea to change flavors from time to time to prevent boredom of a certain type of food from setting in.

Clear communication with dogs is helpful as a means of building a strong bond between owner and dog and as a way of alleviating stress. Dogs should be taught the meaning of one new word each month and it can be expected to develop a vocabulary of some hundreds of words. The better communication, the less confusion.

Medical matters that are bothering the dog should be addressed.

Parasites should be controlled, endocrine disturbances should be addressed, pain should be alle-

viated, and allergies should be attended to. You can't be happy as a dog when you're in pain or discomfort.

For dogs that are withdrawn, they should be coaxed out of themselves and encouraged to join in and be more social. You can do this by playing with them and encouraging them to interact with you or other dogs. Their involvement should be rewarded in no uncertain terms.

For dogs that are over attached and are unhappy or distressed when they are separated from their owners, they should be encouraged to develop independence and, literally, to stand on their own four feet.

Summary

The happy dog that arises as a result of the aforementioned adjustments will sleep well at night and look forward to and enjoy each day and the entertainment that it brings. Aggressive behavior should melt away, fears will be quelled, and annoying habits will be replaced by constructive alternatives. Once this happy Utopian state has been achieved, an owner will enjoy his or her dog even more and, perhaps more importantly, the dog will look up to its owner as it positively radiates appreciation and, what else, happiness.



American Kennel Club News Article CA AB 1634 - Same Number, New Bill

Date of Article: June 19, 2008

The American Kennel Club Government Relations Department is pleased to report that California Assembly Bill 1634, which formerly attempted to impose the mandatory spay/neuter of all dogs six months of age or older with little exception, has been vastly amended. Now entitled "Dog and cats: nonspayed or unneutered: civil penalties.", this is an entirely new bill with a familiar bill number. The bill, now co-authored by Senators Gloria Negrete McLeod and Alex Padilla, mandates a range of civil penalties in conjunction with animal control violations.

AB 1634 will be considered by the Senate Local Government Committee on Wednesday, June 25th, at 9:30AM.

Instead of the mandatory spay/neuter provisions it once provided, AB 1634 now:

- Increases civil fines for intact impounded dogs, to \$50 for the first occurrence, \$100 for the second occurrence, and required owner-paid sterilization of the dog for the third occurrence.
- Increases civil fines for intact impounded cats, to \$50 for the first occurrence, and required owner-paid sterilization of the cat for the second occurrence.
- Establishes a new section of law that would set the same fines as above for any complaint, defined as any oral or written complaint that alleges the dog or owner has violated any provision of state or local animal control law. The bill does not require that the complaint be made under oath, nor is it clear whether a complaint can be anonymous. The bill further defines "complaint" as an observation of violation by a local animal control officer. This section will NOT apply to noise or barking dog complaints.

However, the American Kennel Club remains concerned that under this new bill localities are still permitted to enact mandatory spay/neuter laws, as well as the potential for abuse of enforcement.

The American Kennel Club opposes the concept of breeding permits, breeding bans, or mandatory spay/neuter of purebred dogs. Instead, we support reasonable and enforceable laws that protect the health and welfare of purebred dogs and do not restrict the rights of breeders and owners who take their responsibility seriously. However, the American Kennel Club recognizes the special obligation of dog owners, not only to their pets but also to their neighbors. The AKC supports "curbing" and clean-up ordinances, leash laws, nuisance laws, and other reasonable regulations designed to ensure that dogs and their owners remain respected members of their communities.

American Kennel Club News Article CA AB 1634 Moves to Senate Floor

Date of Article: July 11, 2008

[Wednesday, July 09, 2008]

The Senate Appropriations Committee will hear AB 1634 at 10am on Monday July 14th in Room 4203 of the State Capitol. The American Kennel Club has been working to amend the second section of the bill pertaining to complaints, but our issues have not been addressed and we are therefore asking the members of the Appropriations Committee to oppose the bill as currently written when it comes before them on Monday.

Contact Information for the Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Appropriations Committee
ATTN: Mark McKenzie
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

For more information go to: http://www.akc.org/news/index.cfm?article_id=3545

Should I breed my Bulldog?

First of all, I wish more people would ask this question before they jump into breeding!

My male just turned four years old in April, and he has been used for stud service twice so far. He is an American & Canadian champion, and I have had complete health screenings performed on him. Being a responsible breeder involves time and research, as your main purpose for breeding should be to improve the breed according to the standard.

First, I suggest reading and studying the bulldog standard. This is available in pretty much every bulldog book, on the Bulldog Club of America website (<http://www.thebca.org>), and the American Kennel Club website (<http://www.akc.org>), among other places. The breed standard is very detailed about what the perfect bulldog should be, however it is often interpreted differently depending on whom you talk to.

Once you have read and re-read the standard, try to make an honest assessment of your dog according to the standard. The perfect bulldog does not exist. Every bulldog has a fault of some kind. The purpose for breeding is to try to produce the most perfect bulldog possible. For this reason, you would only want to breed dogs that compliment each other's strengths and weaknesses. Never breed two dogs together that have the same faults.

Health is also an extremely important factor. As you probably know, the bulldog breed is generally prone to many health problems. Obviously, an unhealthy dog should not be used in a breeding program. If your dog is healthy, always receiving a clean bill of health during his general vet checks, he may be a good breeding prospect (health-wise). Most bulldog breeders don't do further health screening prior to breeding, but if you are familiar with any other dog breeds, you'll

know that many other breeds screen for dys

plasia problems (hip, elbow, etc), eye problems, heart problems, etc. There are a few bulldog breeders that do some screening, but I can only think of a handful nation-wide.

I feel that health screening is extremely important. The health screenings that I have performed on my dogs are much more detailed than you would get during a regular vet check. I want to be sure that my dogs are completely healthy, and be able to prove it. I recommend a complete set of x-rays to determine that there are no structural problems (hips, elbows, spine, trachea). I have the hip & elbow x-rays submitted to the OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) for evaluation and certification. I have the spine x-ray evaluated by a radiologist. The trachea x-ray is evaluated for size and general structure. Bulldogs are known to have small tracheas for their size. I like to be sure that my dogs' tracheas are at least average or better (size 7+). I also have a patellar exam done by my vet, and I submit the results to OFA. I also highly recommend an eye exam by a canine ophthalmologist. I have the exam results submitted to CERF (Canine Eye Registration Foundation) for evaluation and certification.

I also have my dogs' hearts examined by a canine cardiologist. The OFA (above) also has a heart registry. A complete thyroid panel should also be completed, and results may be sent to OFA for registration and certification. With some of these health screenings, the dog must be at least 2 years of age for the results to be certified with OFA. This means that you'll need to wait until your dog is at least 2 years old, then have the health screenings completed, then make a decision of whether or not he is "breeding-material".

Aside from physical conformation and health,

temperament is also extremely important. In the recent years, I've seen more and more dogs come through rescue programs due to temperament issues. Some of the problems include aggression towards other dogs/animals, shy/timid behaviors, obsessive behaviors to toys or other objects, etc. Many of these issues can be solved with training, but it would be better if more breeders took more responsibility by only breeding dogs with proper bulldog temperament. As quoted from the breed standard: "The disposition should be equitable and kind, resolute and courageous (not vicious or aggressive), and demeanor should be pacific and dignified."

You'll also want to study everything you can about your dog's ancestry. This is where a good relationship with your breeder comes in handy. Find out about the conformation strengths and weaknesses of your dog's ancestors, their health (ask about any problems, surgeries, etc), and their temperament. If you have trouble researching the dogs in your pedigree, I would be willing to help you. It's important to know about your dog's ancestry, as it is a helpful tool in breeding. Just about everything is inherited somehow, and it's nice to know what traits are behind your dog.

To assist you in your research and in making an assessment of your dog, it's very helpful to have at least one mentor who is knowledgeable and experienced in the breed. In ideal cases, this should be your dog's breeder. If your breeder is not a convenient choice for various reasons, then hopefully you will find a mentor via your local bulldog club. I actually have many mentors in the breed, depending on what kinds of information I'm seeking. The most important thing you can do is to keep your mind open and always strive to educate yourself further. It's true that you may learn something new every day. I still do!

Another great way to assess your dog is by showing him. I always recommend showing to anyone that has a possible interest in breeding. The original history of dog shows was to exhibit breeding stock. The idea still exists today, though it's obvious that not all show dogs should be

bred. And, not all dog show exhibitors are interested in breeding. Most exhibitors are out there because they enjoy spending time with their

dogs and showing them off, in hopes of someday earning a championship title. When I bought my first bulldog, I had no intentions of showing him. However, his breeder encouraged me to try it because she said he had a lot of potential. Turns out, she was right! He did a lot of winning, and it wasn't long before I was completely hooked.

With conformation showing, your dog is judged according to the breed standard. The judge should be knowledgeable of the standard, with a picture of the perfect bulldog in his mind. By showing your dog, you'll receive the opinions of various judges. Dog shows also provide a great opportunity to develop relationships with other breeders and owners. You'll meet a lot of people and hopefully get their advice as well!

Even if you're not sure about showing right now, I highly recommend attending some local dog shows. It's a great way to see a variety of dogs and meet other bulldog owners in your area. Also, if you think you may be interested in showing, definitely ask the other bulldog exhibitors about it. Dogs must be at least 6 months old to begin showing. I would be glad to help you if you have more questions about how to get started.

Even if you determine that your dog has great conformation, health, and temperament, you must then ask yourself what your goals are for using your dog in a breeding program? Also remember that it is generally the bitch owners that seek out stud service, and it is usually those dogs that are actively shown (further, those that are champions) that receive the most inquiries.

Please feel free to contact me anytime if you have further questions about anything!

[Melanie Trichler](#)
MnM's Bulldogs



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Next Board Meeting
Saturday
Sept 13th at
Marie Weir
house