

Making Good Neighbors



Susan Casey
Editor

By now you will have noticed that your magazine was delivered without the plastic bag. It is not a mistake. It is one of several cost-cutting measures that your Board of Directors approved recently. Eliminating the poly bag saves \$9,000 a year. That's a lot of money by anyone's measure.

Postal equipment has improved over the years and it is likely that this change will not affect the condition of your magazine. If you should receive a badly torn magazine, let me know and we'll make arrangements to replace it.

Nearly a century ago Robert Frost wrote "Good fences make good neighbours" in a poem called "Mending Wall." Most readers concede that he did not agree with the statement made by the neighbor on the other side. Nevertheless the phrase was adopted by the general public and is oft repeated even today.

As dog lovers and responsible dog owners we likely all agree with that sentiment, but there's an adaptation that I'd like you to consider: Good (written) contracts keep good friends.

Yesterday I spoke to a friend across the country and she related the woes of an understanding gone awry. Seems she had given a young bitch to a friend of hers because the friend just had to have that particular puppy. Notice I said given, not sold. The recipient of this puppy promised to show her. My friend, being the trusting type, didn't give it another thought and promptly transferred ownership of the pup to her friend.

Fast-forward a couple of years. The two run into each other at a party. In idle conversation the owner of the bitch in question mentions that she bred her to Super Stud. My friend had no idea her friend planned on breeding so soon, especially since the dog had only been shown a couple of times. She was extremely disappointed to have been left out of the plans for the dog. This is the classic example of how the lack of a written contract can lead to, at best, misunderstandings, and maybe the loss of a friendship.

Something similar happened to us several years ago. We acquired two new bitches in the same general time frame. One was bought from a long-time friend for some amount of money and a puppy back. When it came time to breed the bitch, we chose an appropriate stud and had a nice litter, completely forgetting about our oral commitment from years ago. I'm guessing that getting two new bitches in the same time frame had something to do with it. Anyway our friend came over to see the puppies and said something about taking her puppy. Puppy? What puppy? Absolutely she could have any puppy from us she ever wanted, but we had no recollection of owing her one. It wasn't until late that night, when the work was done and the house was quiet and sleep was on its way that the memory returned. We HAD bought the bitch for a price that included a puppy back.

So you get the point. It doesn't matter if you get a dog from a family member, a close friend or just an acquaintance, if you have any expectation from the transfer beyond the transfer of this dog from owner to new owner, you really should have a contract. It doesn't have to be formal, but each party should have a copy when the dog moves from one home to the other. Remember -- good written contracts can help you keep a good friendship. ■

Letters, We Get Letters . . .



Editor's Note:

This column is available to all GSDCA members, officers, committee members, anyone associated with the GSDCA. If you receive a letter you'd like to share with the membership, send it our way and we'll get it in. After all, presidents and editors aren't the only people who get interesting or thought-provoking letters.

To the Editor:

After rejoining the parent club recently I was pleased to read Didi Ardoin's interview of James Moses. Mr. Moses' long tenure and success in all phases of the purebred dog sport make him a person whose thoughts deserve serious consideration. The one area I would like to comment on is his thoughts regarding gaiting speed.

When I started judging forty-odd years ago the procedure I used was that of Lloyd Brackett: observe side-gait with the handler at a brisk walk and the dog trotting. When Ernest Loeb judged locally he proceeded the same way. I like to think that I've never changed.

In the years I've judged I believe I've said "walk please" or "you walk so the dog trots" at least 792 times. One thing of Mr. Brackett's that I didn't copy, (but only because my hearing was ok): he told me that when he was confronted by an angry exhibitor he would turn off his hearing aid and say "Thank you, I'm glad you enjoyed my judging."

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