

MEDIATE THIS !

THE UNLEASHED DOBERMAN AND THE HEEDLESS OWNER

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Dear Mediator,

I walk our dogs every morning in our neighborhood. They are leashed, as are most other dogs we see. I don't mind unleashed dogs if they stay close to their owners. But a neighbor down the street is training his young Doberman to obey "off-leash." When that dog sees us, he runs at us and frightens my dogs. I've asked the owner to leash his dog, but he ignores me. Other dog owners are worried. And the Doberman is getting bigger. How do we solve this?

*Coming Unhinged
in Clairemont*

Dear Coming Unhinged,

Wouldn't it be great if we could train unruly dog owners to obey cues, curb impulses and behave well with others?

Some humans are as clueless (or choose to be as clueless) as the animals they love. When their antisocial behavior causes problems, the best response employs tactics used in dog training.

The key to that training, according to canine experts, is a spirit of cooperation and positive reinforcement.

"Techniques that create a confrontational relationship ... are

outdated," says the Association of Dog Training Professionals. "Modern scientifically-based dog training should emphasize teamwork and a harmonious relationship" between dogs and people.

Like many neighborhood disputes, this situation involves a clear transgression. Except for officially designated leash-free zones, dog owners are required by law to tether their pets while on sidewalks or in other public spaces.

You and your neighbors always have the option of filing a formal complaint about this unleashed dog. Aside from the attack risk he poses to humans and other dogs, this animal is himself at risk of darting off the sidewalk and into the path of a moving car.

For now, let's set aside law enforcement and look at more congenial strategies borrowed from human conflict resolution and canine behavioral training.

Socialization is the first step. At some point, approach this owner (without your dog in tow) in a friendly manner and introduce yourself.

Learn his name and the name of his Doberman. Express admiration for the dog, and ask if you can pet him. Then glance at your watch and say, "Oh, look at the time, gotta go, nice talking to you."



GETTY IMAGES

This week's question asks how to deal with a neighbor who is training his young dog to run off-leash.

This brief encounter will serve as an icebreaker. The owner will expect you to confront him about his dog running loose. Instead, you will signal to him that, like any cooperative pack animal, you would prefer to be on good terms.

Prepare for your second meeting by getting information on the nearest leash-free area. The next time you see him (with your dog in

tow), hand him the material and mention that all the neighborhood dogs really enjoy visiting that park.

Don't feel stymied if this new overture doesn't work. Consistent reinforcement over time is the key to behavior modification.

The Doberman's owner is fully aware his dog should be leashed. Like most outliers, he may persist

in thinking he deserves a pass because he is exceptional. If he feels challenged or goaded, he will instinctively respond with a counterattack.

Your neighborhood pack can bring him around by acting together to shepherd him. The other dog owners and parents of small children would be your natural allies in this effort.

You all need to deliver the same message. Compose an amicable group letter explaining that everyone is genuinely concerned about the ongoing risk to neighborhood kids and pets, especially his.

Mail the letter to his home with a copy of the pertinent leash law (San Diego County Code 62.669). And keep up the positive reinforcement. The packet should include two peace offerings: a gift chew toy for the dog and an invitation to a dog play date at the leash-free park.

Steven P. Dinkin is a professional mediator who has served as president of the San-Diego based National Conflict Resolution Center since 2003. **Do you have a conflict that needs a resolution?** Share your story with The Mediator via email at mediatethis@ncrconline.com or as an online submission by visiting www.ncrconline.com/MediateThis. All submissions will be kept anonymous.

NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

ERNIE COWAN: OUTDOORS

Sourgrass brings back days of youth

Youngsters who have never experienced the joy of lying in a field of wild spring grass, surrounded by the happy faces of tiny wood sorrel flowers have missed one of the best experiences of youth.

Included in that experience would be munching on the sour but refreshing stems of these tiny flowers.

The experience ranks right up there with watching puffy clouds change shape in a bright blue spring sky.

As a kid who spent more time outdoors than inside, it was an event of spring that I only came to truly appreciate in my adult years. And I would never have called these flowers wood sorrel.

To our ragtag army of rascals, those dime-sized bright yellow flowers were just sourgrass.

With tall, bare stalks that stood above the fresh grass, they were topped with bright flowers that dappled the shaded green fields. The leaves at the base are clover-like in shape.

Sourgrass was the first thing to show up after those miserable, cold and wet days that kept us cooped up for what seemed like forever. As we enjoyed the return of San Diego sunshine, the bright yellow flowers of sourgrass greeted us like splashed drops of spilled sunlight.

I rediscovered sourgrass while hiking along a damp path next to a flowing winter creek last week and it brought back such wonderful memories of my carefree youth.

I included a mention of wood sorrel in my column, and a few readers wrote to ask more about this common little opportunist.

While just about every kid who plays outdoors has enjoyed the novelty of chewing on the sour stems of this wild native grass, that's probably as far as it goes.

This is one plant, however, where flowers, stems and leaves can be eaten. Fortunately, sourgrass is easy to identify and confirmed by a quick nibble on the stem to discover the sharp, sour taste.

Having said that, I must caution about eating anything gathered outdoors unless you are absolutely sure of what it is.

Even though they are fun to chew on and can be eaten, ethnobotanists warn that the oxalic acid that makes this plant sour is an antinutrient and can affect the absorption of calcium. For that reason, it is recommended that only small amounts be consumed.

Most often, sourgrass is added to salads for color and decoration or to add delicate flavoring.

The leaves have also been used to mix with



ERNIE COWAN

Sourgrass is most often found in meadows, lawns or open fields.

water and honey and boiled to make a lemonade-type drink. A juicer can also be used to blend a cup of sourgrass flowers and stems with sweet apples and sparkling water to make a spritzer that is high in vitamin C and loved by kids.

Native Americans reportedly used the raw bulbs of the plant to control tapeworms, and there are accounts of it being cooked with sugar as a dessert. It was considered by some Native Americans to be an aphrodisiac, help with sore throat or mouth sores and alleviate cramps, fever and nausea. The petals were also used to make yellow dye.

For years, hikers who know the plant have chewed the leaves as a thirst quencher. Call it one of nature's electrolytes.

Sourgrass, also known as common yellow oxalis and lemon clover, is a North American native plant that is most often found in meadows, lawns or open fields, growing in both sunny places and open shade. They tend to pop up quickly after good amounts of rainfall, often in gardens along sidewalks, but also in damp grassy areas under the canopy of oaks or along trails following shaded stream beds of San Diego County.

Once you've learned to spot them, you will have no problem finding lemon clover this spring.

On my drive home today, I noticed the bright yellow flowers of sourgrass standing above the fresh wild grass next to the road to my home on Mt. Whoville.

I just may have to go and find a soft patch of new grass dotted with wood sorrel and chew on a sour stem while watching the spring clouds change shape overhead.

None of us are too old for that.

Email ernie@packtrain.com.

THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

How local B section comes together

Readers consistently rank local news as one of their top subjects of interest.

Local news appears throughout the print edition, but the A section, Business, Sports and Arts also contain news from around the state, nation and world. Except for some news service obituaries and the "Today in History" feature from The Associated Press, the news content in the B section is almost all generated by U-T staffers. A few stories are written by freelancers or City News Service.

How does this print section that ranks high on readers' interests get assembled daily? It begins at 9 a.m. when editors gather to discuss the stories their reporters plan to cover and ends at 5:30 p.m., when the section needs to be sent to the press in Los Angeles.

This is the working time frame for the B section. News is being reported and placed online from early morning to late at night. Many of those online stories will find their way to print.

Sunday's B section is completed Friday night, as is most of Monday's. The Monday B section is updated Sunday, usually with story and photo from that day and coverage of public safety news that occurred late Saturday or during the day Sunday. Let's focus on the Tuesday through Saturday B sections.

Budgets

Six team editors, including the Business and Arts editors, are among about a dozen editors who meet at 9 a.m. to discuss that day's coverage plans. Later those six team editors email to the newsroom budgets — lists of stories their reporters plan to file that day. The budgets are primarily used by those who will produce the local print section. They note the story name, estimated lengths and whether the stories contain a graphic or photo. The budget items also include the reporter's and editor's last names. They send the emails anytime from 11 a.m. to about 12:30 p.m. Below is a budget line from Thursday for a story that ran in print Friday:

sd-me-sweetwater-audit-contract. The County Office of Education has finalized its contract with a state fiscal agency about the impending audit of Sweetwater school district's finances. Taketa/Young - 13 inches

Choosing the stories

The U-T publishes metro and North County B sections for Wednesdays through Sundays. One common countywide B edition is published for Mondays and Tuesdays. (Full disclosure — I'm the metro B-section editor. Amanda Selvidio is the north section editor.)

The metro and north section editors choose the stories that will appear on the front and inside. The managing editor, Lora Cicalo, who chooses the A-section stories, and the team editors will often be consulted.

The B-section front follows a general format. Most days, columnists Diane Bell and Michael Smolens will run down the left side. The page usually has a story placed across the top of the page. The story stripped across the top is almost always the newest local story that is not appearing on A1.

The page also needs a large dominant photo and a smaller photo, or a graphic, at the bottom.

Choosing where the stories run is largely based on how "newsy" the day is. Some days have lots of news, but others are slow. A B1-type story could wind up inside on a heavy news day, and an inside-type story might run on the front on a slow day. Also, location of the news plays a big role. The North County B front will naturally lean toward news from that region's cities.

The B-section production comes together through the team effort of photo editor Alma Cesena; a page designer, who lays out the section and assigns headline sizes; and copy editors, who write headlines and captions and, if necessary, trim stories so they fit within the physical confines of a page.

Page B2

B2 features the most variety of any B section page. It's a home for short stories from reporters' beats. It also is the page for a countywide roundup of public safety news and "From the Archives." "Today in History" from The Associated Press also could wind up there.

Adjustments

Changes can occur throughout the day. News breaks, and a story must appear in the next day's B section; a story might need more reporting and it has to hold; a story rises off B1 and goes to A1; a public safety brief turns out to be a longer article and must move out of the roundup; a reporter files a story at a longer or shorter length than anticipated. It's rare for adjustments to not happen.

A typical time for the final page to be transmitted to the press in Los Angeles is between 5:25 and 5:30 p.m.

If any local news breaks after this time, coverage for print will appear in the A section, usually on A2, under the label "Late Local News."

At times, the print edition does indeed live up to its nickname of "the daily miracle."

FROM THE ARCHIVES

BARRON HILTON'S CHARGERS COME TO SAN DIEGO IN 1961

It's a bittersweet anniversary. On Feb. 10, 1961, the American Football League gave Barron Hilton formal approval to move his Los Angeles Chargers to San Diego.

The City Council and Hilton, the owner of the Hilton Hotel chain and the newly formed AFL football team, had reached a five-year deal for San Diego to spend about \$700,000 to renovate and expand Balboa Stadium at San Diego High School in order to bring the Chargers here.

After 56 seasons in San Diego, the Chargers opted in 2017 to move back north to play in a 27,000-seat soccer stadium in Carson and eventually join the Los Angeles Rams in their planned multi-billion dollar stadium in Inglewood.

From The San Diego Union, Feb. 10, 1961:

A TREAT FOR SAN DIEGO: CHARGERS TO PLAY IN A FIRST-CLASS ARENA

*By Jack Murphy,
The San Diego Union's Sports Editor*

I wouldn't have believed it possible for San Diego to acquire a major league football team and a first-class playing facility in one fell swoop, but that's the happy result of yesterday's proceedings at Civic Center.

Thanks to a 5-2 vote by the City Council, San Diego not only has buttoned up the Chargers but found means of converting Balboa Stadium to a playground that will be on par with the best in the American Football League.

It was an inspired and ingenious idea — this business of double-decking the stadium (at a cost of \$370,000) and the city snapped it

up promptly once it was hatched by engineer Stanley J. French.

This will give San Diego a thoroughly adequate and respectable athletic facility, and the Chargers — who will use it only 10 dates of each season — will be merely one of the beneficiaries. This opens the door to a number of exciting possibilities, including the staging of the National AAU track meet, the Olympic Trials and championship fights.

Archie Moore, for example could do a lot worse than defend the tattered remnants of his title in an arena seating 34,000. And it will be a bonanza to the Navy Relief Fund and Community Chest, organizations which received a total of \$22,000 from the Leather-



neck Bowl game last season. That contest attracted 20,000. Now Maj. Gen. victor Krulak, commanding general of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, can count on a much bigger house and a correspondingly larger check for his charities.

The one sure winner of this remodeling program is the paying customer at the stadium. With a total of 18,000 seats between the goal lines, a lot of people are assured of prime locations. The upper deck means the addition of 13,000 permanent seats, including 8,000 between the goal lines.

Stadium An Asset To The City

That's a far better solution than the original proposal which called for lowering the field and installing temporary bleachers. It's significant, incidentally, that the City Coun-

cil was unanimous in its thinking on this point, even though Ross Tharp and Bill Hartley voted against approving the contract.

There was agreement that Balboa Stadium is sorely in need of repairs and remodeling, and the plan submitted by city parks and recreation superintendent Les Earnest won rapid approval. Some doubted the wisdom of granting the Chargers use of the stadium rent-free for one year, and Hartley protested that Barron Hilton should assume part of the remodeling expenses.

Tharp described it as a "lopsided contract" favoring the Chargers, and Hartley shared his viewpoint. Councilman Justin Evenson, speaking for the majority, declared, "The contract as written seems fair to me; it's to our mutual advantage."

Mayor Charles C. Dail, who has championed and led the move to bring the Chargers here from the start, once again demonstrated his faith in both the football team and San Diego as a big league city.

"We recognized that this proposal had merit, that it was in the public interest," said the mayor. "We're developing a stadium that will be of major use. It will be a real plant."

Councilman George Kerrigan expressed agreement and touched upon an important theme. "The remodeled stadium should be recognized as an asset to the city," said Kerrigan. "It's a key that starts a different appraisal to some of the assets the city has. I think we'll be in the black regarding our future investment."

HISTORICAL PHOTOS AND ARTICLES FROM THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE ARCHIVES ARE COMPILED BY MERRIE.MONTEAGUDO@SDUNIONTRIBUNE.COM. SEARCH THE U-T HISTORIC ARCHIVES AT NEWSLIBRARY.COM/SITES/SDUB