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## Dog Piece

### Scary Times for Dog Owners

The state of New York is considering a bill that would require all dog owners to carry liability insurance on their dogs. The premium would be based on the breed of the dog, and would be greater for "dangerous breeds".

Breeds, and mixed breeds, would be determined to be dangerous if they were shown to "statistically have an increased incidence of attacks upon persons, domestic animals and other dogs". This statistic is essentially unattainable, but that's a whole other article! If the bill is passed, people who can't afford the insurance will be prevented from owning dogs.

The state of Colorado is set to pass a law that will make dog owners liable for damages if their dog bites someone, regardless of whether the owner knew the dog had "dangerous propensities". The goal of this legislation was to eliminate the so-called "one-bite" allowance, which maintained that if a dog hadn't bitten previously, the owner could have no way of knowing it was dangerous and so couldn't be held liable.

This of course was a fallacy all along. Dogs can demonstrate "dangerous propensities" in the form of threatening behaviors, without biting. What this law does mean however, is that the owner is liable if a dog who has never before shown any threatening or aggressive behavior bites someone.

These kinds of developments should put us dog owners on notice of the importance of creating friendly dogs. These days, encouraging or passively allowing protective or territorial behavior is asking for trouble. Our dogs must have the attitude that everyone they meet is a new friend - not a territorial

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## Our Piece

### MEMORALIZING MOCHA

On Monday, March 29, our 13 year old Dalmatian Mocha passed to the Rainbow Bridge. We wrote about Mocha last month, and how we knew his time was coming. It was a difficult decision for us, because it came down to Mocha's quality of life.

Mocha didn't have a terminal disease or any major organ failure, but his ability to get around and enjoy life had declined dramatically. We held him as he was euthanized at home, on our bed, one of his favorite places to be.

We've received lots of support and good wishes from close friends and family, which has helped us through this very painful time. People suggested different ways to memorialize Mocha, and we decided to pass three of our favorites along to you.

The first is "[My Personal Pet Remembrance Journal](#)", which was sent to us by our good friend and colleague [Pia Silvani](#), who teaches our [Becoming a Great Dog Training Instructor](#) telecourse. [The Journal](#) prompts us to write down events, thoughts and feelings from the time we first saw Mocha, all the way up to the day he died.

There are sections for Beginnings, Our Special Bond, The End of Your Life, Regrets, and many more. There are spaces for photos and other

intruder to be threatened. Dog owners can encourage this attitude by providing every new person the dog meets with either a tidbit for the dog, or a favorite toy to toss.

We can help our dogs be friendly by telling people how to greet them. The person-on-the-street generally doesn't know how to greet an unfamiliar dog. Many dog bites could be prevented if people presented themselves to dogs using non-threatening postures and gestures. Use these instructions to tell people how to greet your dog:

#### **HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH MY DOG©**

1. Allow my dog to approach you rather than you approaching my dog. By not invading my dog's personal space, my dog is much less likely to react defensively.
2. Position yourself so the side of your body is turned toward my dog. If you face my dog, you appear much more threatening.
3. Look straight ahead, off to the side or down. Don't stare at my dog. My dog might interpret eye contact from you as a threat.
4. Stand up straight (for larger dogs), bend at the knees (for smaller dogs, and if your knees are young enough!) or sit down. Avoid bending at the waist and leaning over my dog, which is another threatening posture.
5. Keep your hands at your side and allow my dog to come up and sniff. Don't hold your hand out for my dog to sniff. My dog could take exception to your hands reaching toward him and over his head.
6. I'll give you a treat to offer my dog from your open palm, or you may toss one on the ground. Avoid trying to feed my dog a treat from your fingers.
7. If I tell you it's OK to pet my dog, scratch him under the chin. Avoid reaching over his head.
8. We'll let my dog decide if he wants further contact with you. Don't insist on trying to "make friends" with him. If he walks away, leave him alone.

As a dog owner, you must take any growling, showing of teeth, lunging or snapping seriously. Don't try to rationalize these behaviors away as something your dog will never do again. Chances are he will unless you help him learn how to respond differently.

If you need help, please [contact us](#), and we'd be happy to schedule a behavior consultation with you.

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## **Cat Piece**

### **NEW INFORMATION ON CAT DOMESTICATION**

A new archeological study, reported in Science, found a young cat buried with a person in Cyprus that dates to about 9,500 years ago. This ritual burial suggests that the cat was important to the person and also suggests the cat was domesticated. This new evidence points to the fact that cats have been a part of people's lives much longer than we thought.

remembrances as well. The Journal not only facilitates grieving, but allows us to capture memories of Mocha to cherish forever.

We found out about a second item because its creator was interested in our tips booklets. [Dog and Cat Plaques](#) are custom made from walnut or marble. You can order a plaque with just a picture, or a picture and a written tribute. Ours will include one of our favorite photos of Mocha, as well as whatever prose we want next to it - we'll probably use the Rainbow Bridge story. The [Plaques](#) are beautiful, not only to memorialize pets who have died, but also to celebrate our friends while they are alive.

Our last remembrance is a [Claw Paws™](#). We've known about [Claw Paws™](#) for many years, because Suzanne and one of the company's owners co-founded the grief support program at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at Colorado State University.

Our veterinarians made a clay print of Mocha's paw that we'll receive when we pick up his ashes. We've done a [Clay Paw™](#) for other pets we've lost, and have decided for our next dog we'll do one when she joins our family as well.

As pet parents, all of us have to say goodbye at one time or another. We hope these ideas will be useful to you and others when their times inevitably come.

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## **What's New at ABA**

### **UPDATE ON OUR TELECOURSES AND CONSULTATIONS**

The schedule for our next session of telecourses is complete and will be posted on our website by Thursday, April 15. New sessions of [Canine Behavior](#), [Animal Learning](#), [Becoming a Great Dog Training Instructor](#), [What Your Cat Wants You to Know](#), [Just Behave](#), and [Managing Chaos at the Door](#) are all coming up in April and May. Click on the course titles above, or go to the Services sections on our website for complete class information and to register.

Our [email consultations](#) are now available. We are already working on

Previous to this study scientists believed cats were domesticated in Egypt around 4,000 years ago.

When you compare the domestication of dogs with that of cats, it is clear that the process has created greater diversity in dog anatomy and behavior than in cats'. The physical and behavioral differences between Chihuahuas and mastiffs for example, are much greater than those between Abyssinians and Siamese.

Cats have also remained far more successful returning to the wild and living away from humans than have dogs. Feral cats are far more numerous than feral dogs.

Scientists had always assumed that these differences between dogs and cats were due, at least in part, to the longer time that dogs had been domesticated (14,000 years) compared to cats (4,000 years). The new evidence challenges this assumption.

Now we have to think that the differences aren't so much due to the length of domestication as to the different selection pressures that we have imposed upon cats and dogs. We have asked dogs to do very different jobs for us, from pulling sleds and carts to hunting other animals, to being lap companions. This led to the diversity of appearance and behavior we see in dogs.

Clearly we have asked a lot less from our cats. Through most of their domestication we either worshipped them as religious icons or kept them to protect our grain and other foods from rats and mice. We asked them to be our companions, but haven't asked them to perform specific tasks.

The next time you think about why cats and dogs are so different, remember that it isn't so much that we have had longer to make dogs the way we wanted them, but that we started with very different kinds of animals and we have asked different things from them.

If you want to read more about cat domestication and cats through history, look at *Cats: Ancient and Modern* by Juliet Clutton-Brock and *The Domestic Cat: The Biology of Its Behaviour, 2nd Ed.* by Dennis Turner and Patrick Bateson. Both are available from Amazon.com

To learn more about your cat's behavior, take our [What Your Cat Wants You to Know](#) two-session telecourse, starting on April 21.

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several case consultations, and the process is going well. Email consultations are an alternative to telephone consults and are appropriate for certain types of problems. [Go here](#) to learn more.

Suzanne just returned from a three-day conference in Las Vegas on creating informational products. She came back bursting with great ideas for ways we can provide you with helpful, up to date information about pet behavior, no matter where you are in the world. We know for example that we have subscribers from Brazil, Ireland, the U.K. and Canada.

If you have suggestions or ideas for products or services you'd like to see from us, just drop us a note at [ezine@AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com](mailto:ezine@AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com). Your feedback and ideas are very important to us!

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### About Our Services

#### WATCH FOR OUR NEW PRODUCTS

Look for our new audio and multi-media products we'll be releasing within the next few months.

We'll have audio lectures, notes and/or Power Point presentations you can listen to on any CD player or view on your computer. We already have a list of topics we'll be producing but would love your input on what you want information about. Drop us an [email](#) and let us know what subjects you are most interested in.

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