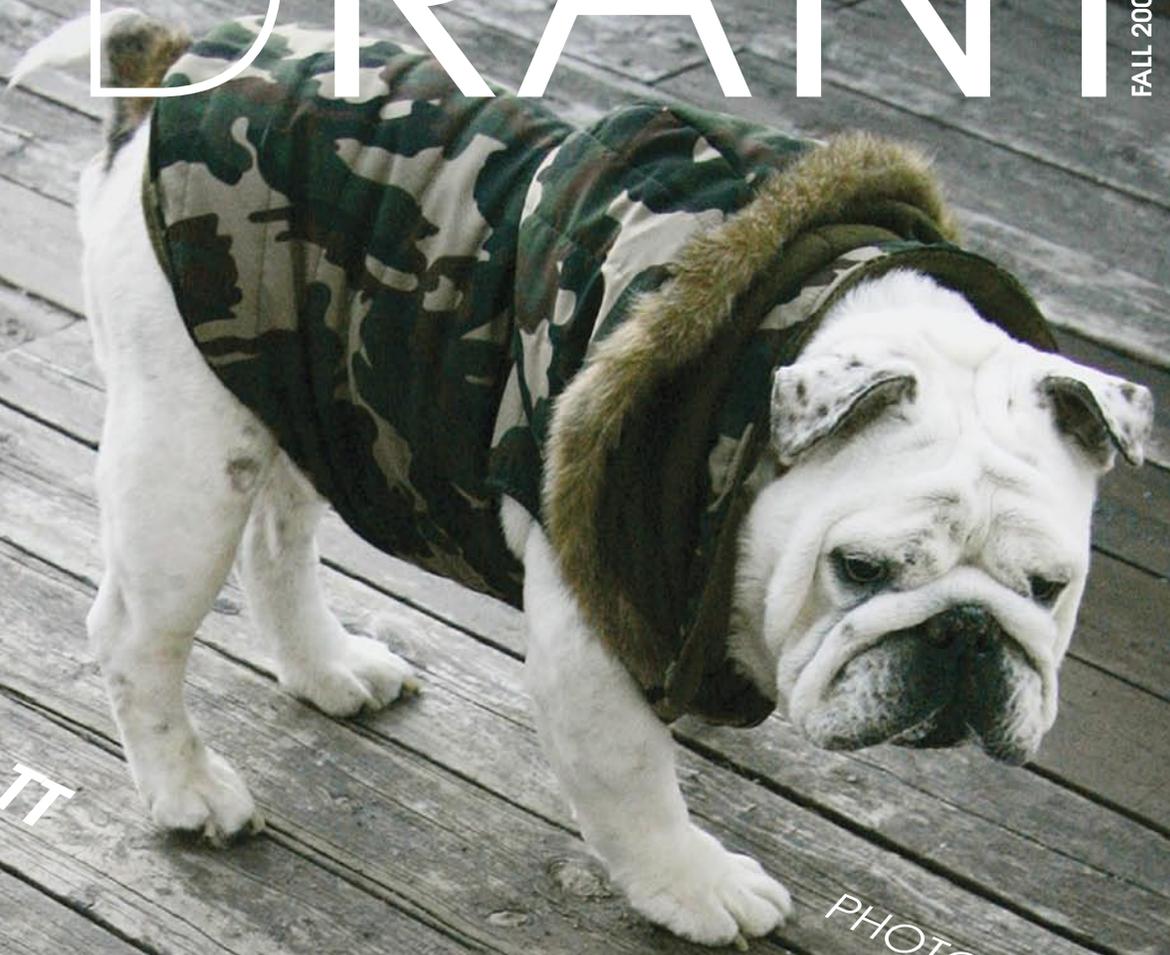


THE HYDRANT

FALL 2007



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BUSTING BOWSER'S BACK-TO-SCHOOL BLUES

- By Susan T. Lennon

Instead of barking “bow wow,” your dogs might be crying “ow ow” when the kids go back to school. After a luxurious summer of playing with their favourite people, the suddenly-quiet household can come as a shock. Dogs love routines, schedules, and predictability. And, since they're pack animals, they can have a tough time being alone. Ease Tanner's transition, keep Sparky safe, and help Cody cope with these tips.

TAMING THE TRANSITION

If you have a super-attached “Velcro dog,” start prepping for the parting early. If the kids usually walk and feed the dog at a certain time, ask someone else to do it at a different hour, advises Susan McCullough, author of *Housetraining For Dummies (Wiley, 2002)*.

If your pup's apprehension spikes as soon as the keys come out or the kids pick up their packs, do a fakeroo. Rattle the keys and pull out the gear, but stay put. Reward your dog with a tasty treat for calm behaviour. Repeat and walk toward the door, but don't actually leave. Do this several times a day, gradually working up to stepping outside, and then staying out increasingly longer. When you come back in, briefly greet your pup, but don't make a big deal about it. Teach your dog some independence, and as his tolerance for separation increases, he'll learn that the kids' absence is a matter-of-fact event that even comes with a treat. And you'll be rewarded too – with a content, confident, comfortable companion.

SAFE@HOME

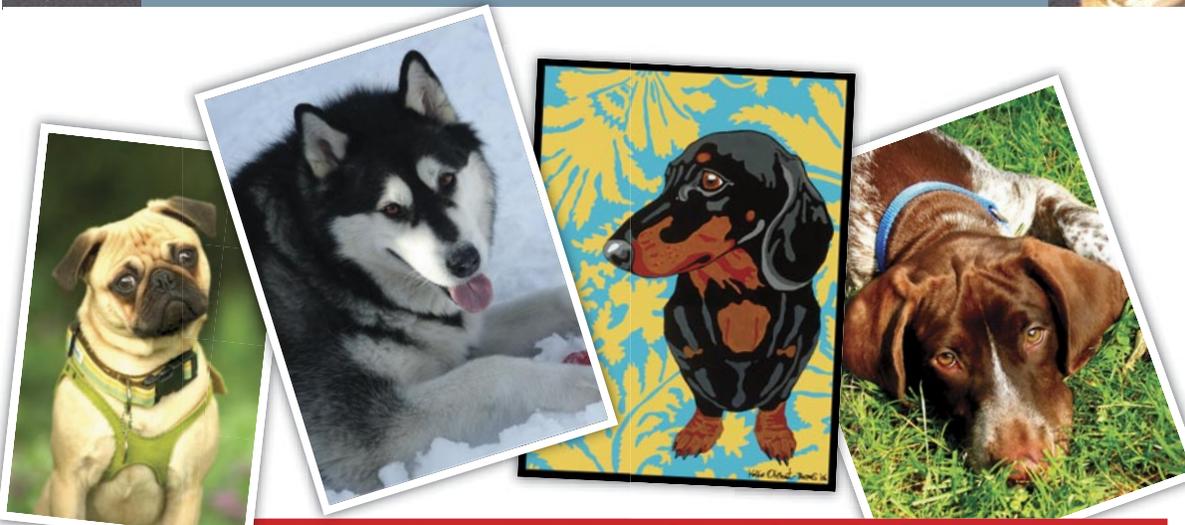
Fido may want to follow the kids to school, but don't let him. Dangers lurk for loose dogs: they can get hit by a car, cause problems for other kids and dogs, or get lost. Be sure to always keep a collar and identifying tags on your canine, walk him with a leash, and consider microchipping in case the worst happens. And, teach a “wait” command to help prevent your pooch from bolting out after the kids.

CANINE COPING

To help prepare for the additional alone-time, step up your training, advises McCullough, who is also the Family Life columnist for *Dog Fancy* magazine. If you don't already, feed your dog twice a day. If Fluffy has a full tummy when you leave, she'll feel less stressed. Give her a good workout in the morning and she'll sleep more during the day. Leave her some interactive toys: a Kong, Roll-A-Treat Ball or Buster Cube stuffed with peanut butter and treats will keep her occupied and entertained. Consider doggie day-care or hiring a dog-walker to come in during the day.

Sometimes, despite careful planning, dogs miss their humans so much that they develop “separation anxiety,” a devastating condition for four- and two-footed family members alike. If your dog destroys the house, barks excessively or shows signs of extreme distress while you're gone, don't discipline him when you get back. Canines live in the moment and will link punishment with whatever they're doing when you express your anger. Instead, talk to your vet, or seek advice from a positive trainer. Be aware that crating is not generally recommended for dogs with severe cases. And sometimes medication can ease symptoms.

HELP YOUR DOG OVERCOME HIS ANXIETY WITH LOVING CONCERN AND PROFESSIONAL HELP IF NECESSARY.



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