



Meet LENKA (Siberian Husky)

The SENSE-ible Solution

A no-nonsense answer for dogs who insist on pulling you off your feet

by Tina Pohlman (LENKA)

Lenka, my Siberian Husky, and I were making our way to the dog run when a man stopped us and said, "Those dogs have 200% energy!" I'm certainly learning that is true.

I recently adopted Lenka from a breed rescue group called Husky House. Barbara Lukowski, the patron saint of homeless Huskies in NYC, gave me a stern lecture about the independent, exploratory, and mischievous nature of the breed. She even required me to sign a contract stipulating that I would never let Lenka off leash except in an enclosed run. Yet even there Lenka proved herself quite capable. I soon found myself joining the First Run newsgroup to ask if we could make the fence higher. Lenka had immediately learned to jump it.

The AKC places Siberian Huskies in the working group. They are one of the smaller breeds in the group, yet Siberian Huskies can generate hundreds of pounds of force. They were specifically bred to run -- usually while pulling sleds in arctic climates -- so when you take them

out for a stroll they pull. And they pull hard.

Faced with the potentially overpowering nature of the Siberian Husky, I considered a vast array of harnesses, gentle leaders, and training collars without much satisfaction. Then I met dog trainer Denise Herman at empireofthedog.com. Denise suggested a newfangled, no-pull harness called the **SENSE-ation®** which has been taking the world of positive reinforcement trainers by storm. (Available online at www.softtouchconcepts.com, \$20)

At first I didn't trust it. It looked too skimpy and simple to control my formidable dog. But the designers of the SENSE-ation® knew what they were doing and explained that they have created "a new kind of harness that applies horse training concepts to teach dogs not to jump, lunge, forge, or pull."

Whole Dog Journal's Pat Miller explains the principle a bit more clearly. **The SENSE-ation Harness** attaches at the chest plate of the dog instead of on the back which "allows for a strong reorienting effect." In addition, "the side straps are lower, so if the dog pulls the pressure against his shoulders turns him around towards the handler." WDJ was so impressed with the SENSE-ation Harness that they awarded it their "**Product of the Year.**"

Pat Miller also points out that "the SENSE-ation harness does not trigger much resistance from dogs." It's true. The first time I used it I had only planned a short test run but was so mesmerized by the SENSE-ation that I could not stop walking. I kept waiting for her to pull me off my feet but she didn't.

However, it's worth noting that the streets were quiet that night. When Lenka encounters a squirrel -- or people eating pizza! -- she does manage to push the SENSE-ation to its limit. But with 200% energy sled-dogs as her ancestors what do you expect? As far as I'm concerned, the SENSE-ation lives up to its name, and I highly recommend it.

Please Donate to FIRST RUN

It's spring again and time to dig deep into our pockets to help pay for some long needed repairs for the dog run.

The temporary fence between the large and small dog areas needs to be replaced with a permanent chain-link fence that complies with Parks Dept. code. We also need to replace the wobbly back gates.

A contractor is schedule to begin work in the next few weeks. However we need to raise a minimum of \$1400 since we no longer receive funding from the city.

Here's 3 easy ways to donate:

1. You can donate online at www.firstrunfriends.org/donate
2. You can hand a check or cash donation to Charlie, Garrett, Gunnar, Heather or Lyle
3. Or clip out this coupon and mail it to the address below

YES! I would like to contribute to the dog run. Please accept my donation for:

\$50 \$100 \$200 \$_____

Your Name: _____

Your Dog's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Please make checks payable to:

The Friends of The First Run
503 East 6th Street -- Apt. 3R
New York, N.Y. 10009

(Currently contributions are not tax deductible, but will be in the near future.)

 **Friends of First Run**



Animal Rights or Animal Welfare?

By Garrett Rosso (JAVA & KAI)

When folks tuned in last month to watch the National and Westminster dog shows few had any idea of the bitter war brewing between the American Kennel Club and the animal rights movement. One dog show participant, Walter Hutchens, is so alarmed that he addressed the board of the AKC in an open letter proclaiming TEN YEARS! "No need to buy show or dog sport equipment that will last longer than that," Hutchen explains, "because the entire purebred dog fancy will be gone by then."

The war is being fought on a battlefield where dog show enthusiasts and animal rights extremists brandish a dizzying array of slogans and exaggerations. Activists claim there is no reason for anyone to breed a dog. Kennel owners claim that activists want to destroy the pedigree gene pool before moving onto their darker mission -- an end to the keeping of pets. (See sidebar on next page)

The soldiers in this war tend to divide themselves into two camps. The first is the ANIMAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (AR.) This includes **PETA, THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE U.S.** as well as **IN DEFENSE OF ANIMALS** which is actively campaigning to replace the word pet "owner" with "guardian."

The opposing camp is the ANIMAL WELFARE INTEREST (AW) which includes a broad range of organizations promoting responsible pet "ownership" such as the

AVMA, the ASPCA and the AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB.

The weapon of choice is CANINE LEGISLATION. Log onto your state legislature's website and you'll find dozens of new measures chipping away at your right to own a dog. Here's a sampling:

- Pet Limits Laws
- Mandatory spay/neutering ordinances
- Anti-Breeding Laws
- Breed Specific Legislation (BSL)
- Pit Bull and Rotweiler Bans
- Breeder & Kennel Licensing

Walt Hutchen warns that "one area of the country after another is being placed under severe anti-breeding restrictions." Last year's prestigious Nation Dog Show was held in Long Beach County where the municipal code forbids any person "from establishing or maintaining a dog or kennel for breeding purposes."

Beth Gallucci has dedicated her life to the improvement of her favorite breed, the dachshund. Now Gallucci worries "some twit on a soybean diet is trying to make that illegal."

Kelly Wichman is president of the Dog Federation of Wisconsin. She reports that AR activists are currently petitioning for kennel and breeder licensing. The general public tends to support such measures because they want to see puppy mills legislated out of existence. But the AKC claims that licensing won't work and that purebred kennels are simply the latest target of animal rights extremists.

Currently there is not a single federal agency properly empowered to legislate the difference between a puppy mill and an ethical breeder. Thus standards for

licensing rely on USDA and Department of Agriculture guidelines which require all livestock environments to be impervious to moisture. Wichman questions, "How can we comply with that?" Most purebred kennels -- as well as rescue organizations -- operate out of people's homes where dogs receive more humane treatment and individualized care. Meanwhile the mills are made legitimate through licensing because they banish dogs to cages inside of concrete bunkers where they are inhumanely hosed down.

Melanie Roos is a San Francisco based dog trainer who fears that the campaign against purebred kennels are dividing dog owners. "Clients apologize now when they bring a purebred puppy in for training."

Is the attack against purebreds justified? Consider the AVMA's 1998 statistics. There are 52.9 million dogs in the United States. Puppy mills churn out 20% the total number of dogs. Less than 10% come from breeders registered with the AKC whose members ascribe to a strict code of ethics. That means 70% percent of puppies are being whelped annually in backyards and backstreets outside the grasp of enforceable regulations.

Get activists and the purebred dog fancy into the same room and the war rages on. However both sides have refused to pursue alternatives that would create workable license-ships for breeding. And with no government authority properly empowered to broker a truce, the rights of animal owners are being gradually eroded. Meanwhile animal welfare is getting lost in the shuffle while the proliferation of puppy mills -- and unethical breeding -- continues unimpeded.

All of the organizations mentioned in this article have contributed immeasurably to the well being of animals worldwide. The purpose of this article is not to criticize these organizations but to report on the growing rift between the Animal Rights Movement and pet owners. --garrett

Who is your dog's keeper?

IN DEFENSE OF ANIMALS promotes the benefits of referring to ourselves as our pet's "guardian" rather than "owner." To that end, they have introduced guardianship language into pet legislation across all 50 states.

Yet Jonathan Katz, author of *The New Work Of Dogs*, asks "why can't we shut down puppy mills, end some cruel animal research, save the lives of dogs and cats in shelters, prosecute animal abuse, and still call ourselves owners?" He, and others like him, believe IDA is up to something more than just warm, fuzzy language.

Rather than promoting responsible ownership, IDA wants the state to grant equal rights to your dog. Pet ownership -- as it has existed for centuries -- gives citizens the right to make decisions on behalf of their pets; guardianship would transfer those decisions to the state.

IDA has raised concern for a variety of worthy causes but dog lovers are correct to question what happens once the state grants your dog equality? Does it become servitude to put an hunting, farm, or service dog to work? IDA believes it is slavery. Also dog trainers are already plagued with enough overfed and anxious pets whose owners fail to understand the difference between human and animal needs.

Nor does Roy Copinger, the world's leading authority on canine genetics, believe dogs want emancipation from human society. "When dogs exchanged their ancestral wolf packs for humans about 15,000 years ago, they began down one of the most successful evolutionary paths in history. Dogs now outnumbered wolves at a ratio of 10,000:1."

What is the work of the Humane Society?

Perhaps no two animal rights organizations raise more money and share a closer alliance than **PETA** and **THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES** (HSUS).

HSUS has over \$85 million in assets and a \$38 million annual budget yet it does not operate a single animal shelter. In 1973, the Humane Society shifted its focus away from animal welfare to the animal rights campaign. Their website states that "the cost of running local animal control operations [was] drawing off funds needed elsewhere". By 1990, HSUS was not affiliated with any local humane societies but it had assimilated dozens of PETA staffers and chief operating officers.

Unlike the Humane Society, PETA is run like a network of terrorist cells with many

individual groups championing their own cause. It's highly likely that most PETA supporters sign on to one of the group's specific appeals without realizing the extent of PETA's extremist philosophy. Listen to what PETA's founder and president has to say about dog ownership.

"Pet ownership is an absolutely abysmal situation. . . if people [must have] companion animals in their homes, these animals would have to be refugees from animal shelters and the streets...but as the surplus of cats and dogs declined, eventually companion animals would be phased out."

-- Ingrid Newkirk, President of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animal (*Harpers*, August, 1988)

Newkirk's biggest supporter is Wayne Pacelle, Vice President of the Humane Society of the United States. He continues her rant by adding:

"One generation and out. We have no problems with the extinction of domestic animals."

-- Wayne Pacelle, Vice President of The Human Society of the U.S. (*Animal People*, May 1993.)



By Joy Parisi (MR. PRESIDENT)

Where can you find 302 dogs with the word 'butt' in their names, 48 dogs called 'booger' and 4 pure 'boogerbutts'?

Introducing Dogster (think friendster for dogs.) Its the online site where every dog has a web page. The collaboration of a self-proclaimed group of dog freaks and computer geeks in San Francisco, Dogster offers dogs (and their owners) a way to network with thousands of other dogs throughout the world.

Dogster pages include your pet's photos,

bios, favorite foods, pet peeves, and of course, Pup Pals -- your dog's accrued network of dog friends.

Dogster's popularity has been growing by leaps and bounds, far beyond the expectation of Ted Rheingold, the site's founder. Rheingold, a 33-year old web application developer, wanted to create a site where it was easy for dog owners to create a web page for their dog and share it with other people. Which is exactly what he's done. In January the site launch with 100 dogs. At last count, there were over 15,000 dogs online.

So what are you waiting for? Log online and see how many of your dog pals from First Run have their own page
www.dogster.com



Mister President

Home: New York

Likes: Anything edible and some things that are not

Favorite Walk: Tompkins Square Dog Run

