

# Editorial

## Dogs Deserve Better Than Leashing For Long Periods

Many cultures have worshiped animals. Ancient Egyptians thought so much of their cats that they mummified and entombed the animals along with the humans who had owned them. Other cultures, ancient and modern, have venerated horses, elephants, monkeys, snakes, birds, tigers, rats, lizards, leopards, wolves, even mantises and caterpillars. Early people honored animals for having a spiritual life or soul similar to their own. Animals' superior strength, speed and fertility were admired and animals became recognized as symbolizing these powers. Various animals were held sacred by certain peoples because they shared a vital part of their lives, and those peoples recognized their dependence upon the animals.

Alone of all the animals, only the dog has never been deified or venerated. This is especially ironic when one considers that the dog plainly worships man. Dogs have demonstrated their usefulness and loyalty many times over the several millennia that they have shared hearth and home and working lives with humankind. They rush to greet us with unalloyed ecstasy when we get home at the end of a working day, they grieve with us and share our joys and demonstrate unwavering loyalty and unbounded devotion.

Unfortunately, humans do not have a good record for repaying canine affection and loyalty. Incidents of cruelty to dogs, arising from greed, indifference, ignorance or outright malice are the

subject of news reports all too often. One such incidence, that of dogs left tethered in one spot for hours, days, months or even years on end, has become the object of legislation by City Councilmember Peter Vallone Jr. Late last month, Vallone introduced legislation in the City Council that would make leashing dogs for longer than three hours an offense punishable by a fine of up to \$250 for the first infraction and make subsequent violations Class B misdemeanors punishable by up to 90 days in prison.

The proposed law is patterned after similar edicts in California and Connecticut. Connecticut prohibits leashing "for an unreasonable length of time", but the California statute sets an actual time limit. Vallone's legislation does likewise.

The law will not affect pet owners walking their dogs on a leash or who must tie up their dogs for short periods of time. Its object is dog owners who chain their dogs and leave them alone for days and weeks at a time, a practice frequently found at junkyards and auto parts shops in many parts of the city.

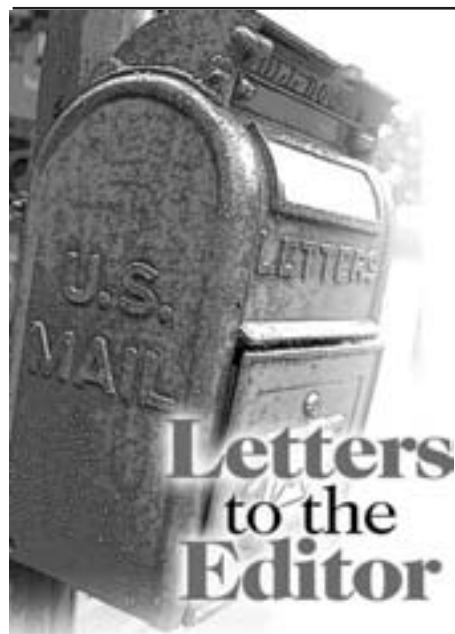
Experts in animal behavior maintain that keeping a dog leashed for protracted periods can cause immense psychological damage. A dog otherwise friendly and docile will become neurotic, unhappy, anxious and, often, aggressive, they point out. The late Jim Croce made this kind of learned aggressive behavior the stuff of leg-

end in his song, "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown". It is reasonable to assume that the dog whose behavior Croce used as the standard which Leroy exceeded—probably only by degree—had been tethered in a junkyard, isolated and bereft of human companionship.

"This type of abuse can turn the nicest pet into an attack dog," Vallone noted. "Chaining a dog and leaving it for hours is fair neither to the dog nor the people that must walk past it. We must send a message that this is no way to care for an animal."

The law is not intended to punish normal, reasonable, caring, responsible dog owners. It is intended to make clear to the individuals who engage in this type of behavior that their unconscionably cruel pet-care practices are unacceptable. "We have no intention of punishing people who run into the grocery store and leave their dog outside," Vallone explained. "We want to stop people who treat dogs cruelly as a way of life."

We heartily endorse Vallone's position. In and of itself an unacceptable practice, cruelty to animals can lead to aggressive, antisocial and even criminal behavior on the part of the owners as well as the dogs. It is time, indeed, past time, to stop leashing of dogs for extended periods, especially when the animals seek only an opportunity to give us their loyalty, affection and devotion.



### Thanks For Info

To the Editor:

I would like to thank Richard Gentilviso for writing the detailed information about SBA programs at the C.B. 7 meeting published on Feb. 28. This will help lots of Queens businesses and start-ups to get assistance from SBA and make Queens a better place in the future.

Man-Li Kuo Lin  
Business Development Specialist  
United States Small Business Administration  
New York District Office

### Inspectors Should Inspect

To The Editor:

As I was reading one of our regional newspapers I saw on their front page this

caption, "Rat Nap", which showed a health inspector napping on the job. It seems to me that a person who takes a job needs to do what is required [to do] that job, and that is to work. Not like this inspector, who was napping and was caught on tape.

What really gets to me is that these health inspectors have a most important priority of this job and that is to properly inspect these restaurants where we all eat. I don't think it should be to let the rats have a grand old time. After seeing this I'm glad to go to my local diner, which is the Scobee Grill in Little Neck, where the food is great and the place is clean and free from vermin and where there's good company and friendly conversation.

Sincerely,  
Frederick R. Bedell Jr.  
Bellerose

### Civil War In Iraq

To The Editor:

The toll of American fatalities in Iraq reached 3,000 as the year 2006 ended. More are dying every day. Another grim statistic shows that, during the single year of 2006, more than 22,000 Iraqi civilians and police officers died violently. More than two-thirds of these perished during the second half of the year. The problem obviously is getting worse, not better. Many ordinary Iraqis blame the American invasion for the immense loss of life and widespread damage to property befalling their nation. America has become the enemy, not only in Iraq, but throughout the Muslim world.

President [George W.] Bush continues to claim that our forces are combatting "terrorists". He is terribly wrong. The Iraqis are killing each other in what is clearly a civil war between rival Muslim sects, each of which hopes to dominate the new government. U.S. forces should not be in the middle of this kind of conflict. And Americans are being killed by partisans of either Iraqi faction who believe that our forces are aiding their adversary. The course that should be followed by our nation is withdrawal, not sending more troops into harm's way.

Very truly yours,  
Janet McCarthy  
Flushing

### Gore Only Bores

To The Editor:

"Gore's 'Oscar' Hijinks" (Eye on Politics by John Toscano, February 28) concerning former Vice President Al Gore winning an Oscar for Best Documentary for his film "An Inconvenient Truth" was informative, but could have dug even deeper. Did anyone notice every time Gore traveled to his speaking engagements in "An Inconvenient Truth" he was always seen exiting a limo or taxi? Several thousand of his trendy Hollywood friends who attended the Oscars didn't use mass transit or any alternative fueled vehicles--but arrived in mass using gas guzzling limos! You don't see either Al Gore or his Hollywood fan club setting any examples promoting a cleaner environment by individual actions. Is riding mass transit like

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