

## The Socialization of Rory By Peggy Arnaud

The books say that in order to have well behaved dogs that are a delight to live with, considerable socialization is required – especially for kennel dogs, who can become stir crazy unless exposed to many and varied experiences and situations.

Rory is a kennel dog, who from early puppyhood has been exposed to many and varied experiences – most of his own choosing.

One example at a show. Becoming bored waiting at ringside he livened things up by jumping on the judges table, scattering ribbons, trophies, the judges' book and the judges' coffee thermos far and wide. This did not endear us to the judge, who was terribly put out about losing the contents of his thermos.

Of course, our other dogs all have their moments of unacceptable behavior, but Rory is light years ahead of them all in the knowledge of evil. Expelled from Obedience School at an early age, he has proceeded to live a life of crime, committing dastardly deeds almost daily.

Feeling that perhaps he had not been exposed to enough activity, one hot July day when he was just out of puppyhood, I shut up a resentful house dog and allowed Rory into the house while I showered and dressed; this leaves my sanity open to question as Ragged Hill is a perfect example of Murphy's Law – anything that can possibly go wrong, will, but hot humid weather weakens my thought processes more than usual.

Enjoying my shower and in the middle of shampooing my hair I suddenly became aware that I was not alone – Murphy's Law was in effect. The shower door does not fit very well, Rory had nudged it open with his nose and decided to join me. Instead of turning off the water, which would have been the practical thing to do, I tried to grab him, but a wet Bull Terrier is like a greased pig, and the sodden beast took off, tearing through every bedroom – leaping on every bed – stopping occasionally to shake off the excess water, and grabbing on the run my clean bra and panty hose from my room.

It was now rather obvious that I was going to be late for work, because Rory was in control of my torn and wet underwear – then I remembered that out on the clothesline was another clean bra. With an ecstatic dog leaping beside me, my lingerie trailing from his rotten mouth, I ran, quite naked, (the nearest house is a half mile away) downstairs, outside, and around the corner of the house to the clothesline. The other dogs were cheering Rory on, who now was playing mock warfare with my bare feet and neither he nor I heard the gas delivery truck until it was almost in the yard. I resisted the temptation to flee into the woods and hide in the poison ivy, as that would have left my dog loose, and I knew he would race the departing truck down our long drive and out onto the main road – also the delivery men would not leave the safety of their cab, until Rory was shut up, why I cannot imagine – unless it was because our first bitch held the electric meter reader by his pants leg for according to him “a lifetime” until we returned from an afternoons logging in the woods and rescued him. These stories get around!

On the clothesline I was airing a short fur jacket and a man's full length raccoon coat – the raccoon coat was the obvious choice, and on it swiftly went, and I entered, stage left, wet soapy hair, bare feet, enveloped to the ground in this enormous coat, to confront two delivery men who appeared to have turned to stone at the sight of me – and one dog who was trying to give an impersonation of a watchdog with madly wagging tail and a large red ball in his mouth.

Several unthinking friends have asked me why I did not explain the situation, - explain what?- “Hi boys, I am wearing this full length raccoon coat when the temperature is standing at 92 degrees in the shade because I am stark naked underneath.” Come on now! Some wise man once said that it is better to keep ones’ mouth shut and appear to be an idiot, than to open it and remove any possible doubt...But what I did say with much authority and little hope of success was “Rory come”. Rory stopped chewing the truck tires and looked at me with disdain. He went to his favorite tree and attended to it, then backed off, trying to avert his eyes from the distressing spectacle before him – it was clear that he had no intention of coming voluntarily to such an apparition.

I was also at a slight disadvantage, the coat lacked buttons, so I needed both hands to keep it serving its purpose – also it was far too long, requiring me to hoist it up in front to keep from tripping over the wretched thing. Moving cautiously toward my very last Bull Terrier I tried again “Rory come at once” – HE BACKED OFF – I moved closer – he continued to retreat. This futility was getting us further away from the house and kennel. Then I remembered reading in a book on dog behavior that if one turns and runs in the opposite direction, the dog will usually follow.

So, clutching my coat around me I turned and fled for the kennel door – Rory then proved the correctness of the book’s information beyond any question. Like Secretariat out of the gate he was off and running and I quickly realized two things, - one, he was not following me, he was chasing me, and the raccoon was his quarry – and two, I did not have enough hands, both were occupied holding onto the coat, and I needed another to open the kennel door.

With a burst of speed that would have served me well in the Boston Marathon, I reached the door one step ahead of the coon-hound. It was necessary to use one hand to open the door. This caused the coat to trip me, hurling me headfirst into four filled water buckets that shot like a covey of quail to all corners of the kennel room. Rory, close on my heels, simply ran up my prostrate back, seized the coat somewhere in the mid-section and kept on going, dragging it over on my head like an expert hunter skinning a rabbit.

I lay on my face on the lovely cool wet floor, listening to the sound of water sluicing back and forth, and Rory in his box worrying his prey. I heard the gas tanks being changed, still with no conversation from the deliverers, - they were awaiting their return to town where they would swiftly regain their speech to the delight an entertainment of the natives. Leaving as hastily as possible, I scribbled a quick note to Mike who would be returning in an hour – “Everything is all right”.

He was asleep when I returned at midnight, but he also left a note.

“The kennel was awash with water, all the beds are wet, Rory has what appears to be a large dead animal in his box, - he is disinclined to give it up, there was a wet bra halfway down the stairs and a pair of panty hose in the middle of the living room. What do you mean, everything is all right?”

If nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen, they don’t own a Bull Terrier.

**Reprinted from the Colket Memorial Book of Bull Terriers 1979.**