

## Unleashing on Unleashed Dogs

*by Kathy Delgado*

As a resident of Bend for a little less than a year, I've found that more than any other place I've lived - Oregonians love their dogs. They're everywhere. Downtown. At the shopping centers. In the parks. In homeowner's yards. You can't drive down Highway 97 without passing a dozen or so vehicles with someone's pet happily staring out the window. But unfortunately they are everywhere - unleashed.

I am a dog owner, also, and I spoil my pet rotten and love him dearly - but my dog does not leave the fenced yard without a leash. Never.

On any given day, I see my neighbors out walking their pets. A precious few have their best friends on a leash. The dogs roam through the neighborhood yards, fertilizing and watering at will as their owners turn a blind eye.

I've seen numerous dog fights on my block. Usually from dog walkers whose pets are unleashed. Occasionally from one neighbor whose dog is left outside of an unfenced home, unleashed, who sees fit to protect his home by going after the poor unsuspecting dog owner who is responsibly walking his pet leashed. I've witnessed a child sustain injuries while trying to stop the dog fight after his leashed pet was attacked by my neighbor's unrestrained animal, resulting in tears, apologies, and promises. And then I have seen the same irresponsible dog owner commit the same offense yet again.

The city has an ordinance prohibiting unleashed dogs in most areas. Bend would be a much nicer, safer place if its residents would responsibly follow the rules which were adopted for our own good and safety. If your pet is home, make sure it is safely restrained in a fenced yard. If you are out in public (anywhere other than an approved dog-park where unleashed pets are ok) always, always keep your pet on a leash; and don't allow pets to relieve themselves in the yards of your neighbors who work so hard to beautify and maintain them.

Kathy Delgado - Bend, Oregon

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