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Date: January 24, 2000 05:42 PM

Author: Ethan Gelber (ethang@gorp.com)

Subject: some first thoughts about our canine friends

It's the slow rocking climbs up a stiff slope that make me most afraid. Especially when they are lined with low-fenced residential homes or, worse, farms. Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against these kinds of homes or the communities they create, but I have everything against the yard-bound unchained dogs hiding within.

I have three scars - thankfully clear of rabies - to show for battles lost against canine rage. In all three cases, I was concentrating on forward movement and not paying attention to flashes of fur lounging in the shadows. In all three cases, the dogs knew better than to bark; they just silently intercepted and only began to growl when they knew it was too late for me to do anything. They were right.

But I have had my victories. I have halted many a dog with a rap to its sensitive nose, I have barked and

growled pooches into submission, I have waved bike pumps, and thrown stones, and squirted water bottles. I have also out-sprinted a few beasts thanks to that adrenaline burst. But I live with that haunting sense of dread that just around the next bend, on the next hill, at the next stop sign, another scar awaits.

Have you had any notable run-ins with our four-legged best friends? How do you deal?

(http://gorpforums.gorp.com/forums/Index.cfm?CFApp=52&Message_ID=30846)

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Date: January 25, 2000 10:45 PM

Author: Steve Kraeger (SKraeger1@aol.com)

Subject: Dogs and biking

I agree in part with the first message posted. However, being a dog owner and avid mountain biker myself, I'd like to suggest people redirect the anger and frustration they feel for the dogs to their irresponsible owners. The dogs are acting purely on instinct and conditioned responses instilled in them by their owners. In short, if you have a dog that can't be trusted not to chase/attack cyclists, keep it tied or fenced! As to dogs on the trails, my dog loves to run along with my friends and I when we ride. It is a great form of exercise for me and my dog. He has also learned through a few unfortunate encounters with my tire or falling body that it's a good idea to give bicycles enough room to stop or turn. (seems I'm always the one who gets hurt trying to avoid him)As time has gone by he's become a great trail buddy who I couldn't imagine leaving behind except on some of the very longest rides. For the dogs who do come after you I recommend keeping a water bottle filled with VERY DILUTE lemon water to spray in the dog's face when it comes toward you. (By very dilute I mean NO MORE than what you would put in an iced tea or water you would drink...that way it stings a little but doesn't harm the animal) Also if you run out of water in your pack or primary bottle, you CAN drink it! Good luck and have a great ride.

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Date: January 30, 2000 01:13 AM

Author: Clark Reames (cwreames@dellnet.com)

Subject: Dogs & bikes

As a road rider who has been riding seriously for the past 17 years, I have found that the overwhelming majority of dogs display a lot more bark than bite and are just out to run along side of you. Usually my greatest fear is that one might run in front of my wheel (I have had some close calls but no crashes as of yet) Many dogs can be bluffed with a show of aggression (even if it is fake). Another technique I use is when I see a dog waiting up ahead for me, I will start to accelerate directly at him which many times will bluff him to stay put or back up and by then you have already passed by and he has to start the chase from a dead stop. Generally I get to know dogs along my riding routes and know what to expect in advance.

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Date: February 23, 2000 02:42 PM

Author: sb (broomster2@aol.com)

My experience road and mountain has always been -- ignore-- stay on line -- never show fear -- and never, never, slow down, dodge, or attempt to flail with hands or feet. Most of 'em just want to chase and bark. But anything aggressive or defensive by a rider can up the ante. There are exceptions, however! Last summer, I had a small-sized car chaser key on me and a pal. He stood in the center-line of the road waiting. He started a charge as we approached. I kept to my above strategy. This dog took me on, head-on, at 20mph. Realizing I was not going to flinch, he turned in the last 1/100th of a second. Too late. I caught him dead-center. Cost to me - separated shoulder, six weeks watching tv, and trashed helmet. Cost to dog - broken spine - and that last trip to the vet. Fun for neither man nor beast. Now I'm carrying a heavy-duty can of postal worker mace rigged to a velcro strap on my bars. Don't know if it will work, but next time, I'll keep to the straight line strategy, and spray any creature that gets in range.

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Date: February 26, 2000 09:32 AM

Author: Vann (vann@schaffnerfamily.com)

Subject: Re: Dogs

I usually don't have a problem with dogs that I know are there. It's the ones I don't know about that are a problem. I once had a stealthy one fly out of the evening shadows and bite the heel of my foot. Too bad it was cold and I had on neoprene covers. But it could have been bad.

I have a real problem now. There is a wolf size yellow dog on my only realistic commute route, that is not there (confined?) when I get off on time, but out if I am late. He is getting habituated to me coming by. The first time he was very sneaky and was right behind me before I knew he was there. I had to out race him. The next time he started barking earlier but was even more aggressive. Again I outran him. My temptation now is to confront him and pepper spray him.

As to the suggestion that we turn our anger towards the owner, I don't know who the owner is and I don't exactly want to anger somebody along my route either. Too me, it is not a matter of where you direct your anger, but one of self defense.

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Date: February 29, 2000 12:48 PM

Author: D Yu (chino99@mail.com)

Subject: Dogbite

I'm chased all the time, usually by the same damn dogs. My trick is to anticipate the chase and accelerate at the right moment and in the right direction, usually straight(thus creating the maximum rate of

seperation). Got bit by a giant wolf hound in Vermont, still have the scars too. Owner came out to restrain her two dogs (out of 5) that were loose. She grabbed them by the collars, but the dogs were so strong they took her down the road. I just kept going rather than try to face those two animals again.

I would never try to do anything to the dog, the best bet is speed. If your on a hill and the dog wants to bite, your SOL.

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Date: April 02, 2000 10:21 AM

Author: Jim

Subject: Dogs

I carry "Halts" with me when I ride here in Missouri...the dog capital. I have found that one squirt in the face will usually keep a dog from ever getting near you again. I take the aggressive approach. I feel that an owner is obligated (by law in fact) to restrain his or her dog from harming anyone. I have a standing policy, that if I am ever bitten, I will have the owner arrested, charges will be filed, and there will be a law suit....no questions asked. I get very tired of being threatened by irresponsible dog owners and will retaliate in force. The law is on my side.

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Date: April 03, 2000 05:39 PM

Author: Dave (trailbos@bresnanlink.net)

Subject: it would be nice . . .

Yes, it would be nice if all dog owners were responsible. But to many people, it seems, having a dog that chases cars and cyclists seems to be acceptable. I've also learned that dog owners can become the primary aggressor when a cyclist defends him/her self against a dog. Owners somehow feel that their dog, while chasing, barking and growling at a cyclist, poses no threat and they do not want to see a cyclist squirt or strike their dog. I've had one owner who saw me squirting his dog (a doberman) with a water/lemon juice solution, come after me in his pick up truck, tried to run me off the road, then threw rocks at me! (that happened near Los Angeles). My worst incedent was in rural Texas, where a rather friendly dog was chasing me, got ahead of me and stopped and turned into my path, apperently to see where I was. I hit him broadside, wrecking my bike, injuring an arm and shoulder, and injuring the dog.

The simple fact is, dogs don't belong out on the road chasing cyclists or pedestrians, and we need to take every opportunity to convince dog owners that this is not right.

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Date: April 09, 2000 05:08 PM

Author: Bob (Clubjav@rmi.net)

Subject: Dogs!

When a dog starts chasing me I just call it like I would my dog. "Come on boy, come on!". It's never failed to stop them in their tracks. I guess it messes with their heads. They are into the chase and the rider's fear. When called they usually stop and cock their heads in puzzlement. Try it sometime.

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Date: April 12, 2000 09:51 PM

Author: Laurie (junkmailstuff@juno.com)

Subject: Dogs and Biking

I've had two run-ins with dogs. 1) A dog ran right in front of my front wheel. He got run over but otherwise not hurt. I got a broken elbow requiring a surgery, a screw put in, and a year of rehab. 2) A dog ran after me, lunged at my leg and took a serious chomp. Luckily, no rabies, just a scar. Now I carry mace velcroed to my handlebars. I bike 10 miles to work every day so I have to do something. I love dogs and I love biking but not together.

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Date: April 15, 2000 06:41 PM

Author: no respect

Subject: what works with bears...works with dogs and their owners

after a backward body slam over the handle bars...the answer was Pepper spray...it will stop a grizzly and freeze a dog...the spray will shoot a mist out to 30 feet...the dog will recover with no side effects except the lack of desire to chase another bike...and in the case of the pissed off owner, it works great on him too. HAPPY BIKING

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Date: April 19, 2000 05:28 PM

Author: leo

Subject: dogs and owners

as both a dog owner and cyclist, let me tell you it is up to the owner of the dog to control it, always. In the 30+ yrs of riding, I have few stories, the best thing to do is to sprint away, if you can. The only time this hasn't worked, I kicked the little dog in the face, stop him cold. I also have spun the back wheel a few times(it will smoke on pavement). But the thing that really gets me is this, I ride on a 'multi-use' trail, if I see a dog off leash(which by the way is against the law) I slow down and ask the owner to leash the mutt, most do. But ever now and again I come across a guy that says "don't worry, he won't chase/hurt you", and what does the dog do, he chases me, always. I would like to run over the owner.

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Date: May 29, 2000 11:47 PM

Author: Jay (NetOfIndra@aol.com)

Subject: Dogs who appear challanging

Dogs who chase are typically herding dogs whose prey drive makes them run after anything moving. These dogs are usually not out for blood. As far as the dog is concerned, the biker is a cow or sheep. The territorial dog is different, and, if you are going by that dog frequently, you've gotta talk to the owner! Anyone who can justify blasting through a dog in the middle of the road is using the bike as a weapon. Anyone who thinks a dog knows to get out of the way is assigning more intelligence to the animal than it may have. On the other hand, the pooch may be shocked that someone would attack him while he's perhaps protecting the house nearby (but not necessarily the road). It's always much better for long term happiness to carry treats than create an enemy. Years ago on my newspaper route these methods proved themselves. Ask your postal carrier what to do: make nice but carry mace just in case, remembering that Rover will remember either you or the next guy on wheels. And don't rely on the leash law: people with loose pets are thinking different thoughts than bicycle safety, and if you were in a car passing a dog you would not be thinking bicycle safety either. Happy trails.

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