

Dog Bites

Gentle Is as Gentle Says

Recent comments have given Dog Bites pause. Specifically, comments like:

"You were so mean."

"I can't believe you said that."

And, "Well, that was bitchy." (Especially since the last one came from Dog Bites' mom.)

So after much soul-searching, we have decided to make some changes. Dog Bites is going to turn over a new leaf. Instead of retailing nasty media gossip, complaints about Muni-borne disease, and the whining of the under-employed, we will focus on the good things in life, among them flowers, kittens, and triumphant underdogs. This column will become a *safe* place, a place where many voices can be heard, where no one is marginalized and, as often as possible, we hold the print equivalent of a group hug.

Welcome to the new, non-disgruntled Dog Bites.

Raindrops on Roses ...

Every year Dog Bites thinks, "Gardening has gotten as trendy as it can possibly get." And every year, Dog Bites is wrong.

In fact, gardening is now so trendy that the San Francisco Garden Show had to move from its former home at Fort Mason to the Cow Palace, where there is more room for people to knock each other down trying to grab the choicest specimens of *Erodium reichardii*. Judging by the bruises on our shins, the event was a tremendous success, and we anticipate all kinds of glowing reportage in the *Chron's* Wednesday Homes section.

Allow us, however, to air one small disgruntlement, just for old times' sake:

Dog Bites recalls a time when gardening-oriented establishments were happy to see potential customers — any potential customers — strolling through the merchandise. But at some undefined point between Martha Stewart and Rosemary Verey, gardening, like many other things in life, was taken over by pushy young matrons in headbands, stirrup pants, and Barbour jackets. These matrons, whose normal state of mindless acquisitiveness is ratcheted several notches higher by gardening's Anglophiliac associations (anything British is, after all, *bound* to be classy), now make the garden show a place to hear overheated demands such as: "Sue! Sue! Get *me* one of those hostas too!"

To the merchants who dance attendance upon these grasping dilettantes, ignoring previously loyal customers, several words: Fashion. Fickle. Shit. Creek. No. Paddle.

Oh, and the flowers were very pretty.

... and Whiskers on Kittens

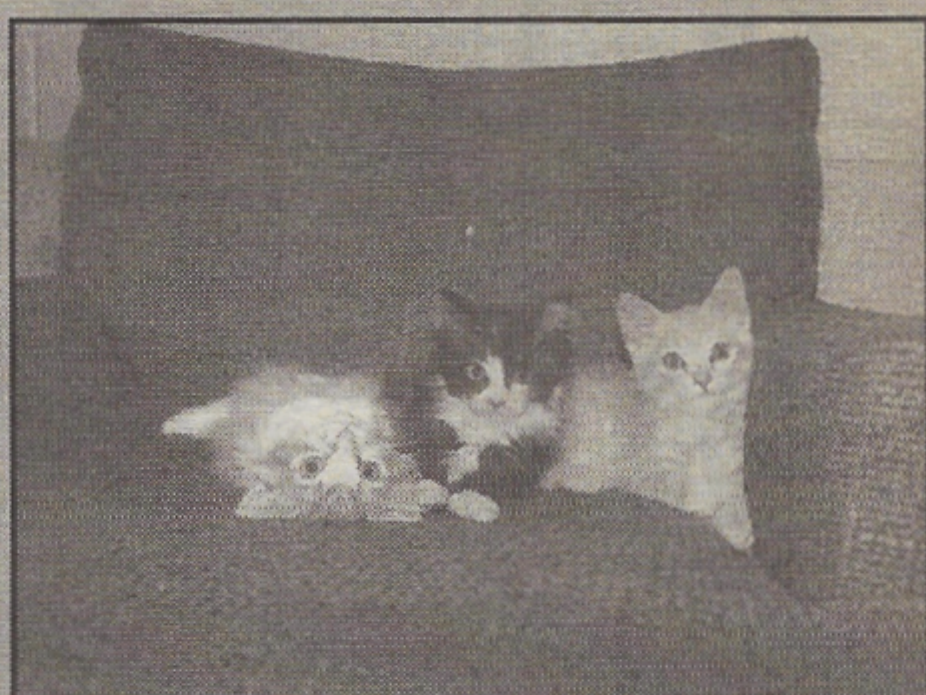
In the interests of forcing this column back into the positive spirit in which it began, we would like to point out that kittens are adorable (see photo for details). And you can bring a kitten into your life just by calling the San Francisco SPCA, which is looking for foster parents for wee felines too young to find permanent adoptive homes, but old enough to need practice hanging out with humans.

"There's a whole range of commitment levels for people," says the SPCA's Lynn

Spivak. "You could just have an adorable 6-week-old kitten for a couple of weeks. Or you could have 3-week-old orphaned kittens that have to be bottle-fed every three hours."

So it's a lot like dating, really, except with more shedding.

The S.F./SPCA provides food, supplies, and any medication the kitten may need. "You provide the love, time, and socialization," says Spivak. Kittens have to be han-



Return of the adorable kittens.

dled when they're young, she explains, or they grow up skittish.

We will end this item now, as we are worried we will turn into Jon Carroll if we keep this up.

— L.W.

And Now, a Special Grow-Eating Session

Open Letter to Boxer Paul Nave

Dear Paul,

Congratulations on your exciting WBF world title victory last weekend over Greg Haugen. A sold-out crowd of 2,000 cheered you on at Marin Veterans Memorial Auditorium, and the judges' unanimous decision was well-deserved. It looked like a tough 12 rounds — your eyebrow was cut, you broke a knuckle, and Haugen threw out his shoulder. I apologize for the heavy-handed treatment of you on the cover (the March 18 "Great White Nope?" headline about you getting your "ass kicked"). You proved this paper to be quite wrong.

I am quite embarrassed, and there's only one way to come clean on this — to let you kick my ass. I hereby volunteer myself as the next opponent of the Marin County Assassin. We'll install a ring down here at the pier outside the *SF Weekly* offices; the bout will be sponsored by Budweiser and the Society of Professional Journalists. We'll get some food vendors, hire a blues band, give donations to the folks at Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, and you can punch away. Due to my doughy journalistic physique, I ask we go only two rounds, and reserve the right to suddenly lie down like Sonny Liston, if necessary.

Best,
Jack Boulware

(Editor John Mecklin adds: "Actually, the headline was mine; meant to be witty, it was too harsh and, as it turned out, wrong. I apologize, congratulate Mr. Nave, and award myself the first official *SF Weekly* Dewey Defeats Truman Award.")

Dog Bites welcomes tips, especially those pertaining to disgruntlement. Write to Dog Bites, c/o SF Weekly, 185 Berry, Suite 3800, San Francisco, CA 94107, or e-mail dogbites@sfweekly.com.