

# Backbeat Concert



South Bay residents Erin and Joan Bodkin. Photos by Chris Barnes



Backbeat performs Beatles Classics.



## Safe Dog Park Visit

In Long Beach, we are fortunate to have a dog beach and dog parks. These are wonderful spots for dog owners to visit. However, caution and common sense must be used when going to any of these places.

Last week I had a client walk into my hospital with an emergency. They had been at the dog beach with their seven-pound Yorkie. The Yorkie encountered a 55-pound pit bull mix. As we know, many small dogs, including my four-pound Chihuahua Alejandro, have no fear of larger dogs.

When the two dogs approached each other, the owners noticed the dogs stiffen up when they were nose to nose. However, there was no growling or barking.

The attack happened in a split second. The Yorkie was grabbed around its neck and back and shaken. The pit bull dropped the smaller dog as soon as it went limp. The owners said the entire attack took just a few seconds.

The Yorkie arrived at my hospital in terrible shape. At first glance, the dog did not seem alive. It was limp, cold with pale mucous membranes. His eyes were fixed and dilated and did not appear to be breathing. There was a large deep laceration that extended from one side of the dog over the back to the other side. The skin had been peeled back and nearly half of the deep tissue over the back was exposed. The back of the neck was also missing skin and the muscles, tendons and ligaments of the neck were completely macerated.

My team jumped into action immediately. Oxygen, I.V. catheter and fluids, urinary catheter, blood pressure, and a cornucopia of drugs were administered within a minute. An x-ray was taken and to everyone's relief, there were no broken bones and the chest cavity looked intact. Although alive, the little dog was still in severe shock and wasn't out of the woods. The neurologic exam had us feeling fairly confident the spine wasn't severed but we were concerned that he had a concussion. It was also too early to tell if any internal organs were damaged or functioning properly.

By this time, the entire extended family had assembled at my hospital to stand vigil over their critically injured pet. I explained that the massive bite wound injuries they had seen could not be surgically repaired right away because he was not a stable patient. We had started cleaning the wounds but could only bandage at this point. Our main concern was to keep the blood pressure up

and all the vital organs working.

As the afternoon progressed the Yorkie improved slightly but could not raise its head. Most of the muscles and ligaments that hold the head up were severely damaged.

72 hours, a half dozen specialists, a long surgery and lots of Fentanyl pain medicine later, our little dog attack victim was ready to go home. There will still be some follow up care and it remains to be seen if there is any permanent damage to the neck muscles, but it appears to be looking up for our Yorkie friend.

It's important to point out that neither dog had a history of aggression or fights. This is very common. The larger dog may have seen the Yorkie as a play toy and not a threat. There is no way to tell. What we do know is that these attacks are preventable in many cases.

One way to avoid conflicts is by staying alert and keeping your dog under a short leash and voice control at all times. Some owners take the additional step of not allowing their dog to look or sniff at another dog.

Teaching a dog early on that he can't visit with every other dog he meets is one good way owners can prevent leash aggression. Teach the dog not to pull on the leash, and to sit and wait for permission before greeting another dog. Basic obedience training can help prevent fights.

Along with leashing and good training, owners can avoid conflicts by keeping their pets from roaming, neutering young dogs before six months of age, and socializing their dogs during the critical puppyhood stage between six to eight weeks of age.

If you own a very small dog, use caution around any larger dog. Your tiny dog may resemble the big dog's favorite squeaky toy.

Many fights occur with little warning, but watch for these behavioral cues to see if a fight is imminent:

A hard, unwavering, targeted stare.

Dominance posturing, such as mounting.

Stiff body movements.

Extreme body language: the tail held stiffly up or down, lips pulled tight against the teeth.

Dog parks and beaches are a great place to play with your dog and using common sense and training will make your visit safer.

If you have a specific question or topic you would like me to write about, please email me at [cats.dogs@verizon.net](mailto:cats.dogs@verizon.net).

Dr. Greg Perrault owns and operates Cats & Dogs Animal Hospital in Long Beach, CA. •

## CERT

from front page

ready, and you know what to do and have certain supplies available, you will not be a burden to the city during an earthquake; you will be able to self-sustain."

Butts explained that the CERT program doesn't compel its members to risk their lives during major emergencies but gives people the training they need to survive one. "All of our classes teach you to be able to take care of yourself, your immediate family and neighbors after a disaster," Butts said. "At that point, if everything is okay on your block, if you are able activate and meet up with other members...we will go around seeing if we can help others."

Because the City of Manhattan Beach typically has nine working firefighters on duty at a time, Butts explained that larger incidents sometimes require mutual aid, which is when other cities also respond. He thinks CERT will be of great assistance in the event of a large regional disaster, such as an earthquake. "Those cities will be taking care of themselves...we will have to be able to take care of ourselves and fend for ourselves, for a week, two weeks, who knows," Butts said. "So it's our job to help make the city safe."

In order to be of maximum benefit, CERT works close with the fire department, which helps the organization train its members. "The only time that we can do anything for the public and go out is with the knowledge of the fire department," Butts said. "We are out there to do no more than what we're trained to do; we will not exceed the limits of our training."

Fire Department Battalion Chief Ken Shuck feels CERT is very similar to the interaction and involvement of the neighborhood watch program, with many residents active in both programs. "We work really close with them," Shuck said. "It's a real partnership, they govern themselves, and we provide technical and manpower assistance for them."

According to Shuck, the problems during Hurricane Katrina showed how important the CERT program is to the community. "I think it helped solidify it; we used to tell people they had to stand on their own from 48-72 hours and we saw what happened, and it could be a week or more," Shuck said. "And we'll do our best for what we have with our on-duty staff and our ability to recall, but we will be overwhelmed, especially if it is a regional disaster."

Explaining that Manhattan Beach is home to about 33,000 people and that the Manhattan Beach Fire Department runs about 3,000 calls a year, Shuck said a major disaster could quickly overwhelm local personnel if 10 percent of the population needed help. He estimated it could take up to a day for help from Northern California fire departments to arrive. "The availability for these neighborhoods to stand on their own and take care of issues until the fire department arrives during major disasters would be essential," Shuck said. "I'm an incident commander and we will have our hands full. If CERT members could help with minor first aid and minor gas leaks and minor fires, that could save a whole neighborhood."

Butts said all students that go through the CERT training are sworn in as disaster workers, meaning they would be covered under state workers compensation laws after being activated in a disaster. "In a disaster, we could conceivably work in the back lines

of the fire department and help pull hoses to help them fight a fire," Butts said.

Members of the fire department teach most of the classes, although Butts and several other CERT members have become Red Cross certified instructors. "A lot of its done by our staff, but they are getting to the point where they are being able to teach themselves--and that's a good thing," Shuck said.

Butts hopes the classes will help the organization achieve its goal of training 60 to 80 people a year and provide retraining through the year. Members have occasionally used their training, such as when a bike crash occurred during the recent Manhattan Beach Grand Prix. CERT members also plan to operate a first aid booth during the hometown fair.

The City has donated several vehicles to the organization which are strategically placed around town in the event of an emergency. CERT members have raised thousands of dollars of their own funds to buy equipment like emergency defibrillators, generators and water pumps. "We've never had a fundraiser so to speak...most of this is word of mouth and finding people with a little luck who are willing to give money," Butts said.

The City currently provides funding for the program's two yearly classes, including the upcoming classes starting September 12. Butts recalls that CERT had to prove its importance to the community in order to maintain funding when the Manhattan Beach City Council considered recent budget cuts. "We are happy to say that Mayor Cohen, Councilmember Montgomery and Councilmember Powell have gone through our training," Butts said. "They didn't cut our funding. Council has supported us and I believe that's because they've gone through it and know the value of it."

Councilmember Wayne Powell said he has served on the program's executive board and, like other CERT members, was able to use his training to help others in an emergency. "I was a first responder to an auto accident and fortunately it was just a minor one," Powell said.

Powell was happy to see the program spared during the recent budget cuts, although fees will double to \$50 per student and there will be two classes, rather than the three classes per year CERT members wanted. "That was one of the areas that I didn't want to see any budget cuts and I was successful in doing that," Powell said. "CERT is embraced by the fire department and police department as well, because we would be first responders right alongside of them in the event there was a major disaster."

One of the organization's goals is to increase the participation of people who have gone through the CERT training. "About a hundred are active that come to our periodic retraining or meetings, and we are trying to improve that just like we're trying to get more people in the program," Powell said.

Butts said he will try to make sure that everyone who wants to take the classes next month can do so. "It seems like we always get another half of the class that comes in during the last week," he said. "Every time we get an earthquake, people start taking the class, which is a good thing. As long it's a small earthquake, I don't have a problem with that."

To sign up for the class, interested persons may call (310) 802-5233.

