

R PET

A WHOLE LOT OF DOG TO LOVE

By Kate Gilderdale

Jeff Steward has always loved dogs and his Irish wolfhound Liam is a whole lot of dog to love.

"He's just over two years old," said Steward, who had previously owned canines of much more modest dimensions. It was his wife, Robin, who sold him on the idea of the large and lovable Liam. "She had an Irish wolfhound before and had always wanted another."

She took him to a friend's kennel to see a new litter and he quickly succumbed to Liam's charms. The couple already owned a purebred beagle called Lindsay, a stray they found wandering on the street. "We were on our way to Lindsay on the night we found her."

The two dogs co-exist happily and Liam gets plenty of attention wherever he goes. When people drive by and see him, they almost screech to a halt," said Steward, who works

at Zehrs in Uxbridge. Although he isn't sure of Liam's current weight, the dog tipped the scales at 165 lbs when he was a year old.

"He's reached his full height now, but he'll still fill out some more before he's finished growing." The family, whose newest member is 17-month-old Shandel, live in Woodville in a house with a fully fenced yard.

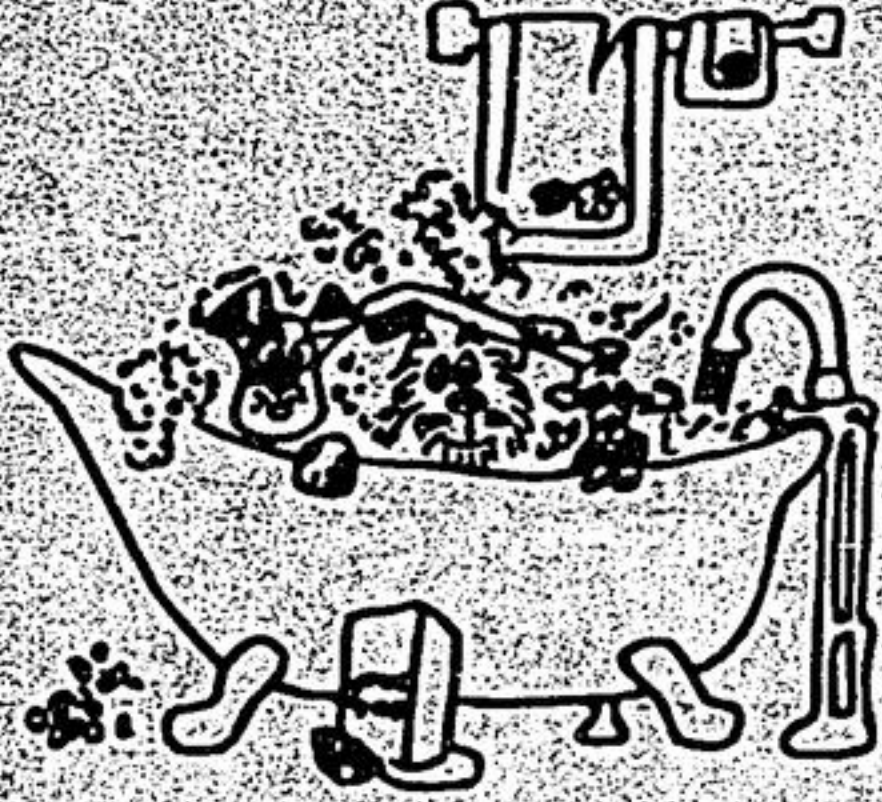
"Regular exercise is really important for Liam and I take him out for walks every evening. He's really bonded with me." Despite his size, Liam is very gentle, and he and Shandel are great buddies, said Steward.



Jeff Steward and Liam

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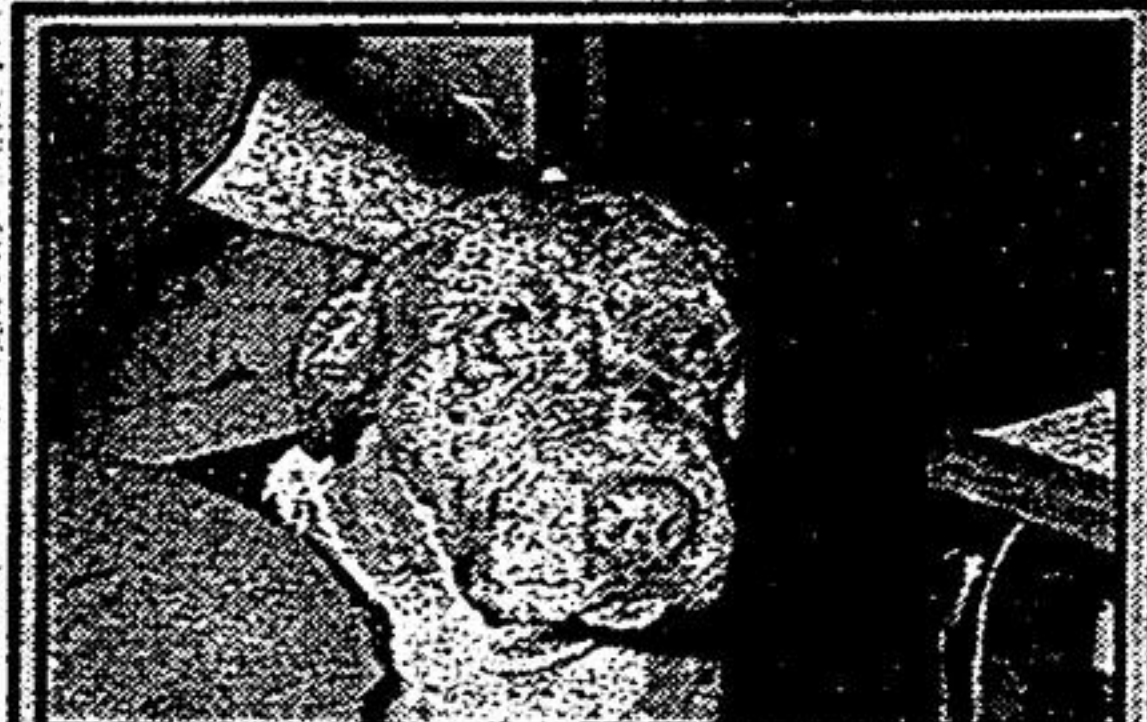
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Pit bull fighting is considered all in good fun for the participants.

Pit bull fighting held in secrecy

In 1997, old-fashioned ideas of fun are still thriving.

Pit Bull and Cockerel fighting, two past-times that are illegal in Canada, still occur, said chief inspector Terry Looker of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Newmarket.

"It's barbaric. It is blood lust that doesn't belong in civilization." Both activities are held in secret, but the Humane Society often finds out about them after the police do unrelated raids (often involving drugs), he said.

Considered "all in good fun" wagers are laid. Two dogs are then placed in the ring. Whoever comes out alive is the winner.

Sometimes, if one dog is losing, the owner will stop the fight and pull the dog out before it is killed.

"They get their jollies out of seeing blood and seeing one animal tear another apart."

To add a little more "fun" to cock fights, sharpen spurs are either clipped or tied to the birds' legs before the fight.

Link between animals and human cruelty

Parents should be concerned if their child commits sadistic acts towards animals - studies have found a connection between animal and human cruelty.

"There have been studies suggesting more violent people were, in



their younger days, abusive towards animals," said Terry Looker, chief inspector for the Society

Tobias was pushed for the down a flight of stairs. Prevention to

Cruelty to Animals in Newmarket. "I think it is a matter of common sense - someone who (is) sadistically cruel to animals probably could end up equally nasty to people."

The Humane Society of the United States magazine interviewed FBI supervisory special agent Alan Brantely in the fall of 1996 about the connection.

"Animal cruelty is not as serious as killing human beings; we have to agree to that, but certainly it's moving in a very ominous direction," said Brantely.

"This is not a harmless venting of emotion in a healthy individual; this is a warning sign that this individual is not mentally healthy and needs some sort of intervention. Abusing animals does not dissipate those violent emotions; instead it may fuel them." But Looker said people shouldn't worry that every person that doesn't like animals will grow up to be a serial killer, but parents should intervene when a child abuses an animal.

- Collie cross
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Speech in the Senate (1884)

