

Are we dog's best friend?

To the Editor:

Dogs are bred like livestock in Pennsylvania, more than any other state. The breeding dogs are confined to cages for life with forced conception, minimum sanitation and medical care. The pups are inbred, unstable, unsocialized, neurotic and sick when they are ripped away from their mothers and shipped across the country in trucks and boxes. There they wait behind the glass until some poor, unsuspecting, uneducated buyer comes along to "save" them.

The new owners were expecting fun and companionship, not problems. The "problem" dog is tied up outside, or maybe dropped off at a shelter, or given away or even turned loose to fend for itself.

Hundreds of thousands of dogs desperate for homes are waiting in shelters. Dogs are tied in the backyard and never leave the end of their chain. How dare we call a dog "man's best friend." Do we really think that a dog is born with human manners burned into its DNA?

Why is it OK to blame the dog for its lack of education? Why say it's OK to send it to a shelter, or post a "free to good home" ad, hoping the next owner has better luck, before looking for another dog that's "not so bad"?

When you adopt a dog, you have taken on the responsibility to learn how to effectively communicate your expectations and provide the proper exercise along with consistent boundaries, just as we teach our children manners and language using positive motivating methods. Why don't we take the time to learn to build a positive fulfilling relationship with our dogs? If a dog is our best friend, we have a responsibility to return that friendship.

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