

Dogs Off the Leash in Oak Lawn

I have to vent. Let me start my problem with something that happened to my adult daughter a couple of years back. As she was walking down a sidewalk in Oak Lawn just south of 95th St. and West of Cicero Ave., two rottweilers ran up to her and started circling. One jumped up and bit her on her arm (my daughter is over 5' 10" tall). She started screaming for help and the owner came out. He got the dogs away from her and explained, "They've never attacked a person before." So I guess if I walked my little dogs past the house I'd be in court with this guy for allowing his dogs to run free and attack other animals.

My daughter ran home and although the bite wasn't too bad (no stitches needed), we both agreed that she should file a police report, which she did. I heard that he got fined and that this wasn't the first complaint this man received. Supposedly, he was instructed to keep his dogs enclosed. I don't think my daughter goes down that block anymore.

We live next door to a home that is now occupied by single 20 somethings. We put up with their summer parties but to our dismay they got a pit bull puppy last year. They do not have a fenced yard and every day as I was sitting in my home office I'd hear one of the male occupants yelling out for the dog to return & apologizing to the person she "charged" by saying "Sorry, she's rambunctious today." It was a daily occurrence. I can't imagine the postman hasn't complained.

When I had a cable man over he came into my house exasperated after she charged him. This was the first indication she was being allowed outside without a fence, leash or supervision. She isn't growling but she runs right up to you and it's scary as she isn't a tiny puppy any more. He said he was ready to conk her on the head with the metal tray he was carrying, although I doubt that would have helped him if she was in attack mode.

There were times my son was afraid to go from the front door to an awaiting car if this dog was out as she scares him. She has run up to me several times and I yell at her to go home. One night my mind was racing about this situation. My 4 year old granddaughter lives with us and we were practicing riding a 2-wheeler last year (with training wheels) going up and down our dead-end block on the sidewalk. There was no pit bull yet. I tossed and turned thinking about this pit bull attacking my granddaughter and me having to defend her. I've seen results of pit bull attacks on videos.

My husband spoke to the young man who lives in the house and explained nicely that we're afraid to go out our front door because of his loose dog. His excuse was that her chain was frozen under the snow we had. It seemed



like soon after the friendly talk the dog was chained.

No yard to run around in unless supervised. Left alone for long hours (sometimes all day). No dog can “hold it” for more than 8 hours or so. Having to be chained up if left out. What a nice life for a dog.

Last night my son’s girlfriend went out to her car and when she came in she was upset because the dog not only came up to her but nipped at her leg, catching her pants in its teeth. That made us all upset again and my husband will now have to give a 2nd warning to our neighbors. He said, “Do we have to wait for it to get really bad before we call the police or what?” Why can’t people understand their responsibility, especially with certain breeds known for harming people?

On another note, on a recent Sunday when it was warm the front windows of the house were open all day. No one was home next door & this dog barked all day, up until around midnight. I was wondering if other neighbors were annoyed. My husband had to close our window because he went to bed at 10:30 p.m. and could not sleep with the barking (which also causes our dogs to bark). We never mentioned this, hoping someone else in the neighborhood would.

One day the dog followed my daughter all the way to 95th St. and she was concerned about it getting hit by a car (she doesn’t like how it “charges” but she isn’t as fearful of it as the rest of us are, although she does worry about her daughter). So she ended up walking it back to its home. These young guys just don’t seem to care.



The other day she thought the dog was loose again as it walked up to her. Upon closer examination she realized it wasn’t the dog next door but another pit bull running free. She read the tag and walked it to its home which was a block down. No one answered the door and as she was standing there she watched in amazement as the dog climbed the fence like a monkey and went back into the yard! So this pit bull can get in and out of the yard whenever it feels like it and she judged this to be a puppy less than a year old.

I don’t think some home owners understand the ramifications if their dog bites someone. I don’t mean possibly losing the dog and getting fined. Some insurance companies will drop the policy on homes with certain dogs (there is a dangerous dog list many insurance companies have). I know pit bulls and rottweilers are on the dog list and other dogs, some that would surprise you, like dalmatians.

I love animals and have 2 dogs of my own, down from 3 until recently. We also have a cat. So many dog owners feel that because their dog is friendly to them that they won’t hurt anyone else. Some don’t understand that some dogs are territorial and we’ve all heard of many breeds turning against their owners, including pit bulls.

Many people might say we need to just call the police and complain. Not so easy if you’re trying to be a decent neighbor, especially when you live next to a group of young people and don’t want to have to worry about retaliation (although I’ve seen that happen with all ages).

I don’t understand how some people are so thoughtless and don’t realize the consequences. It’s a shame we sometimes have to wait for something really bad to happen before justice can be served. I can’t believe this is happening in Oak Lawn, pitbulls and rott running loose. I know we have to complain to get it to stop but why should we be put in these situations to begin with?

On another note, my dogs haven’t had fleas in years and already seem to have them this early in the year. I wonder if the dog next door has them. Let’s hope that’s the least of my problems.

Also, I was thinking of dogs in relation to real estate. I just listed a nice home that I was taking photos of. As soon as I went into the back yard there were two large rottweilers across the fence barking at me and running the fence. The home seller assured me they wouldn't jump the fence as I was afraid to go too close while I was trying to take a photo of the back of the house.

I'm wondering if these dogs might turn off potential buyers. There was a german shepherd in the yard next to the rottweiler house but that dog wasn't barking at all and seemed friendly. The rottts were another story. Truthfully, they would have turned me off to this house as I wouldn't want to live behind a home with 2 aggressive acting dogs like this. Even if I installed a tall privacy fence their barking was really loud. I'll be interested to see if they come up in feedback.