



"Dog Walking or People Walking?"

**By Kit Belcher, Executive Director
The Beltrami Humane Society**

Why is it that most dogs pull on their leashes when out on their daily walks? I think that we can all identify with our dogs at one time or another "walking us". Big dogs or small dogs, it doesn't seem to matter. A door opens and they are "outta here".

Pulling can be related to either their personality or heritage. Dominant dogs seem to be pullers. Breeds such as Siberian huskies and Alaskan malamutes (or sled dogs) are bred to pull. If their personality is that of a commanding leader, they are more than likely wanting to be out in front. But why do other breeds like to pull? Dogs such as Bernese mountain dogs, Newfoundlands, Saint Bernards, and Great Pyrenees were all once used to pull carts in small villages for farmers and delivery people. Many dogs can still be found in work places today participating in a variety of roles for their masters.

It is best to start training with a puppy. If your puppy surges ahead, snap the leash and say no. Reward your puppy for walking nicely beside you. Often times a dog will pull on his leash because he wants to be "boss" and only needs to learn his proper place in the family. You can help reduce the pulling behavior by taking a dominant position in the household. Never let your dog walk in front of you, fly through doors ahead of you or eat before you. A lighter direction you can take in controlling a dog's tendency to pull is by redirecting their instinct. You can teach your dog to pull a small cart or wagon. By training him in that fashion, he can help you unload groceries or even do yard work. If you live in a winter wonderland like we do here in Bemidji (most winter seasons), you and your dog can take up skjoring or dog-sledding.

Check into different dog collars and leash equipment available at your Vet Clinics or Pet Stores. You can use gentle dog leads for easier-going dogs, or for your more dominant, strong or aggressive dogs, you may need to try a "pinch collar" to keep their attention. Head collars are fashioned much like a horse halter, whereas it is designed to put pressure on the back of the neck in much the same way that a dominant dog or mother dog imposes discipline, instead of the front of the throat. A head collar does not hurt the dog, and it is easy to use. It is natural for a dog to pull against pressure, so check into a few different methods and see what works best

for you and your companion.

If you are looking for a companion, visit Beltrami Humane Society at 1612 Carr Lake Rd SE, Bemidji, MN. We currently are housing a number of shepherds, labs, huskies, mixed breeds and even some small breed dogs such as a male min-pin/rat terrior cross, and an elderly female rat terrior named "Lena". "Lena" is 8 years old and was brought to the shelter as her owners could no longer keep her due to a move. She is very sweet and loves attention. She would do best in a home with seniors where there is a quiet and more calm atmosphere. She is house-trained and likes toys. She can be seen Tuesdays through Saturdays, 12-5:30 p.m. at the shelter. Visit our website photo gallery at www.beltramihumane.com or www.petfinder.com to see other animals available for adoption. If you have additional questions, call us at (218) 751-7910. Listen to KKBK Mix 103 to hear about our "Pet of the Week", see pet photos at the ends of the pet aisles at your local Walmart Store (we participate in the Very Best Pet Network), or even see our "Pets of the Month" posted at Pamida. Watch for us as we are "Out and About" in our community, introduce yourself, and perhaps you will find your next pet companion waiting for you!

Interested in Volunteering? Our next Volunteer Training Meeting is March 17th, 1-2 p.m. at the shelter. If you have space, and can commit to helping care for displaced animals, we are still in need of Foster Homes. Please call the shelter for more information.

Shelter Wishes: Clean (old) blankets, kitten chow, puppy chow, clay cat litter, Medical \$\$ for animal emergency costs.