

MINE! II

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While out walking Bosco the beagle, you scan the sidewalks and streets with skills finely honed from years of living with an expert garbage monger. As you pass the local butcher shop, the man

away! They've done it before, haven't they? As a puppy, Bosco roamed the house investigating his environment by picking up everything he could with his mouth. If they caught him in the act, they bellowed "No!" and removed the prize from Bosco's clutches. Every time he found a treasure, it was snatched away. Before long Bosco upped the ante with a growl, then a snarl, and often progressed to a full-fledged bite.

Down in the mouth

Your dog should be used to having his mouth touched, so that when you wish to

The big switcheroo

It is important for the dog to view his handler as the provider of all good things. You can accomplish this by tightly controlling his environment. Keep all but a few chew toys off the floor and take the others out only when you wish to play. Make sure you offer the playtime-only item with a command such as "Take it." When you tire of the game (you, that is, not the dog), tell him to "Drop it." Give him another item in exchange, then pick the first object up and put it away.

To make a sweeter deal for Bosco, give him a "better" item in exchange for dropping

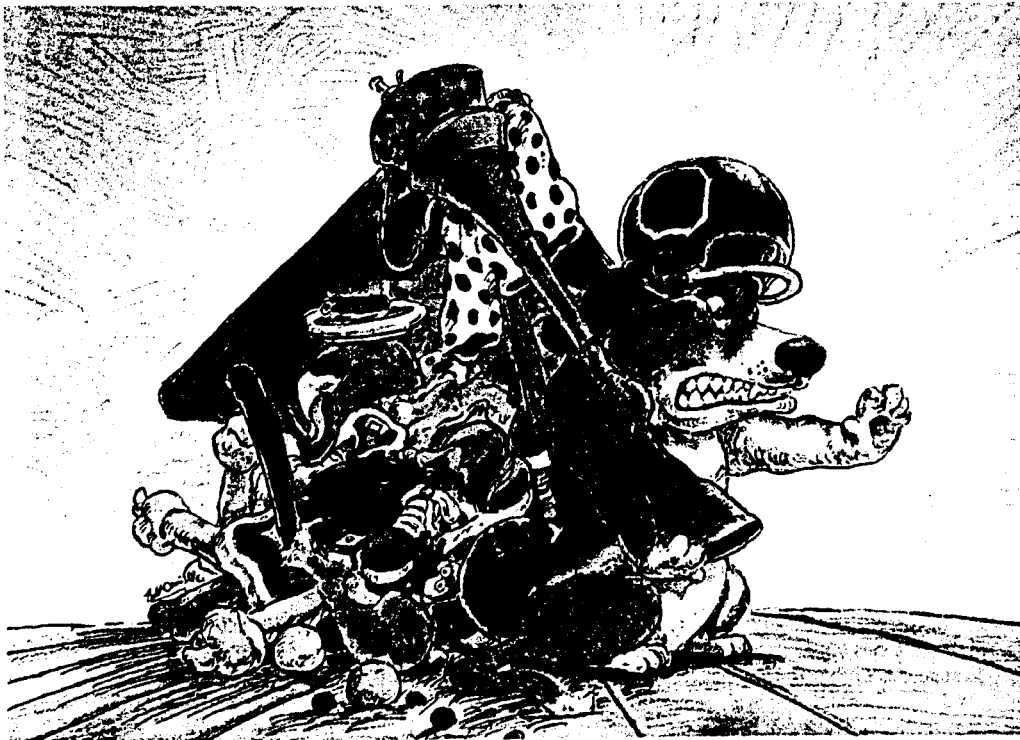
the first. Find out what those "better" items are by composing a hierarchy of things your dog enjoys; include food, toys, treats and activities. If tennis ball retrieving, for instance, is third on your dog's list, reward him with liver (number two) for dropping the tennis ball. If he indulges in a bit of garbage from the street, command him to drop it and give him a tennis ball.

On the wrong rung?

In theory, anyone higher up the pack-order ladder should be able to take whatever he wants from those further down. Since the dog should be on the bottom rung, any family member should be able to take anything from him. In reality,

dominant dogs have a hard time believing that children are above them on the ladder. In many households, the dog believes his rightful place is on the rung between Dad and Mom, if not higher. If this is so in your home, enroll your dog in a 30-day "tough love" leadership program to reclaim your rightful role as leader of the pack. (Write to CAS for a booklet detailing such a program.)

If your dog's problems are years in the making or are so serious that you are afraid of him, it is imperative to work with a professional dog trainer or behavioral consultant. He or she can carefully assess the situation and design a protocol tailor-made for you and your dog. **ASPCA**



at the counter offers you some beef marrow bones, but you decline. You're almost home free when a tennis ball bounces across your path. In one fell swoop, Bosco seizes it in his mighty jaws and growls "Mine!"

Food guarding, a form of Canine Possession Aggression (CPA), was covered in *Animal Watch* Summer 1994. In this issue we discuss object guarding, the act of aggressively protecting toys, chewies (especially rawhide and beef marrow bones) and stolen objects such as shoes, underwear and human food.

Why does a dog see the need to protect an item from his family members? Because he thinks they are going to take it

remove something from it, you won't get bit. Start from puppyhood on — brush his teeth, play with his flews, open his mouth and inquire, "Anybody in there?"

For dogs who have specific problems with items such as rawhide, purchase a foot-long retriever stick. Hold on to one end while the dog chews at the other. Bosco may not enjoy this as much as hiding under a table with it, but in time he will get used to your presence and relax.

For a list of topics on which you can receive informational literature, write to: ASPCA Companion Animal Services, 424 East 92nd Street, New York, NY 10128