

If We've Said It Once...

by Tamara Znak

We've said it again and again...unleashed is unloved. DVGRR has a strict, no off-leash policy and frankly, we sometimes get flack for it. Often, those applying to adopt from us ask, "do you mean that I can NEVER play Frisbee with her in the park?" Or they sometimes try to tell us that they are able to train their dog so well that a leash is not necessary.

As I sit writing this column, I am less than two hours past striking my neighbor's dog with my vehicle. I cannot fully describe the horror of seeing a dog I know run out into the street in front of me and not being able to avoid hitting her. I cannot fully describe the sickening sound made when I hit her. I cannot fully describe seeing her in my rear view window tumbling in the middle of the street. Nor can I describe the disbelief, shock, fear, anger, or terror I felt as I ran up to her bloody body lying in the road. I can't begin to list all the thoughts swirling in my head as I drove to the emergency veterinarian, my neighbor cradling his wife's dog in his arms. One thing I can describe: how awful it is to realize that we don't know if she is going to survive, and that one simple object could have prevented this tragedy – a leash.

In spite of all this, I think the only one feeling worse than the dog (and me) right now is her owner. He knows he should have never left her unsupervised outside without a leash.

What makes people as a whole (myself included) feel we can beat the odds? What makes us so sure the unthinkable will never happen to us? What makes us think that the mere ten feet between the car door and the front door is any safer than a heavily traveled road?

No matter the situation, I'm sure there are times when we've all felt we could beat the odds, that the odds wouldn't dare catch up to us. My question is: are we sure enough to place our dogs' lives on the line? How sure are we that that squirrel or neighborhood cat won't dart out and tempt our dogs into harm's way?

Frankly, no amount of confidence should lull us into complacency. It takes a split second, a blink of an eye, the beat of a heart for a nightmare to unfold. This is why DVGRR insists on a no off-leash policy. There is no greater way for us to ensure that our dogs are loved and protected. Please remember: unleashed is unloved.