

Papered People

I have to admit I have a terrible habit that is addictive, encourages behavior that produces absolutely nothing of lasting value and is as politically correct as a carnivorous logger wearing a mink coat. Yes, I watch the occasional dog show on TV.

The reason I like watching dog shows is to see all the breeds I've never seen before. So, you can imagine how sad I was when "The Greatest Dog Show on Earth," the Crufts Show in Great Britain, was not televised because a documentary (Or should that be dogumentary?) said that the show was nothing more than "Parade of Mutants."

The Times of London said the dog show was "a race to pedigree perfection" that produced inbred, worthless and malformed dogs. Which is funny when you think about it because those same words could be used to describe British Royalty. If you want to know about the dangers of inbreeding, just read a little British history!

The argument against dog shows is the owners are doing anything to win a ribbon (usually no cash is handed out). As a result of this intense breeding, some Pekingese have such mashed in faces they can't breathe, Bulldogs can't mate or give birth naturally and some dogs have brains that are too big for their heads.

I suppose I've owned more than a dozen dogs in my life and only one of them was a purebred with papers. (Papers as it refers to being pedigreed, not its bathroom tendencies). All the other dogs I've owned were dogs of undetermined origin, or as we refer to them: mutts.

Interestingly, the British have a different name for mutts. They call them "curs" because while the Kings and Queens were busy inbreeding, the peasant's dog's tails were being docked or "curtailed," to distinguish them from the aristocrat's dogs. It seems the British taxed dogs based on their length from nose to tail, a proposal I'm sure the tax-crazy Obama administration is currently considering.

Because I have owned only one purebred dog (and it was quite possibly the worst dog I've ever owned), I am no expert on the subject. But animal expert Temple Grandin is. In her excellent book, *Animals in Translation*, Temple said that although purebred dogs make up only 40 percent of the general population of dogs, they account for 74 percent of fatal dog bites. Needless to say, this is not a mark on the good side of the ledger for owning a purebred.

Temple suggests if you want a calm dog that will make a good pet, with the least genetic inclination for aggression, you should buy or adopt an adult female of a mixed breed. This is because male dogs are 6.2 times more likely to bite people than female dogs and intact males are 2.6 times more likely to bite than neutered males.

And lest you think that dogs only bite the postman or the UPS driver, Temple says that dogs almost always bite people they know well. Of the four and a half million dog bites per year in this country, three quarters of them are committed against the dog's family members or their close friends.

What is true of pooches is also true of people. I find that people of pedigree are far more likely to attack their fellow man and the purebred men are always worse than the blue-blooded women. Just like dogs, papered people are also more likely to hurt family members and friends.

As an Animal Science graduate I know that mutts are preferable to purebreds because crossbreeding keeps the recessive traits from bubbling up to the surface. I just happen to be a mutt myself, the result of a dust bowl union between an Okie father and a Prune Picker mother from California. You just know there had to be some bad genes hiding on both sides of that pedigree!

And yet, look at me, perfect in every way, with none of the problems seen in some purebred

It's the Pitts

Written by Lee Pitts

pooches. I have never had a birthing problem, a majority of my body parts are where they are supposed to be, and my brain is only slightly too large for my otherwise perfect head.