



Though covered with soap, Bandit cuddles up to Vicki during his bath at Silver Trails kennel. The leash is a standard safety device used in raised wall tubs, to be sure dogs don't jump out and hurt themselves.

to enlist Tragesser's aid in stirring her into a walk.

The victory of Vicki and Bandit is edged with sadness. Lamon Redd, grown older, has come to feel that Vicki has stolen his dog. Vicki regrets that Redd and Bandit have lost each other. She also frets that, because of the muzzle, Bandit cannot compete in obedience trials in Connecticut where, she knows from long experience, he would certainly achieve the title of "Companion Dog Excellent."

Not every dog in trouble can get three months of attention from a celebrated trainer, particularly not one who is also so articulate and cantankerous in pursuit of what she takes to be justice. Hearne has always been troubled by the gap that exists between the language and knowledge of dog training and the unknowing yet patronizing attitudes of animal behaviorists and psychologists in the academic world. Like many other trainers, she uses morally loaded words like "courage," "comradeship," "commitment," even "nobility."

To some—by no means all—scientists, such language smacks of (good grief!) anthropomorphism. If dogs are merely creatures of instinct and conditioned reflex, how can you speak of them as having thoughts and emotions? "Heroic" dogs clearly don't literally say, "If I jump into these rapids to save this baby I may drown"—and then jump at their own peril. Yet anyone who knows dogs well has seen them undergo brief moments of indecision of that kind, and then, having made the equivalent of a moral decision, launch into a courageous act, apparently as a result of something more intricate than contrary pulls of blindly opposed instincts.

Human attitudes toward dogs and dog training, the

two things that concern Hearne most, are clearly crucial in dealing with dog biting, and with the plight of dogs and dog owners in the United States. Because of sloppy and greedy breeding methods, all kinds of dogs are sometimes less stable than dogs of their breed used to be; there is such a thing in dogdom, for example, as "spaniel rage." But as most dogs still are reasonable, they usually bite out of fear, often the result of the way they have been treated, especially from age 5 weeks to 9 weeks. What affects them most, however, is how they have been trained or not trained.

Because of fear of crime in cities, there are more poorly trained big dogs, whose bites are likely to cause enough damage to produce demonizing headlines. Dog bites can be dreadful, traumatic, occasionally deadly. And obviously there are now a number of really bad guys with really dangerous dogs around. The new canine-control laws seem mainly designed to deal with such worst-case scenarios. But mandating cyclone fences, slapping felony charges on owners, and killing dogs, though encouraging some sort of owner responsibility, won't cure the problem. Meanwhile, inflexible and intimidating machinery is in place, often producing a good deal of unnecessary litigation, owner anguish and canine death.

Because of Bandit, news of dogs and owners in trouble reaches Vicki Hearne every day. She has some 40 dog clients and is committed to a heavy training schedule in the afternoon. So these days, in order to have time to write, she gets up at 4 A.M. and works undisturbed until 8. About 9, her fax machine stirs to life and her phone begins to ring. With their dogs at