What If?

Part One

By Georgia Hymmen

"My daughter passed away and left her pups homeless. We desperately need to find them a home or they will be taken to the animal shelter and possibly be euthanized. My daughter would be devastated with such a decision". Sadly, posts like these are far too common on social media. One can only hope the dogs from this actual post found a forever loving home. But sadder yet is that the owner—who loved her dogs dearly— made no provisions for her dogs in the event of her passing.

We, as loving pet owners, do so much for our dogs in their lifetime. We are passionate about them, and for many owners they are not so much, "just a dog," as they are family members, and their well-being and care is a lifestyle. We do all we can to keep them healthy, happy, and safe. The thought of something bad happening to a beloved dog is unthinkable. Yet we are so involved in their day-to-day needs and our busy life, we forget what might happen to them if something happens to us, their caregivers.

"Wait", you say. "I have provisions in my will for my dogs. They will be cared for." That's great, but that is after your death. What about an immediate emergency? Should something happen to you, someone coming into your home such as a neighbor checking on you, or a first responder, won't be able to easily access that information. And it won't help with the here and now. If you cannot communicate, animal control, or even the sheriff, would most likely be called should the dogs need to be relocated immediately. The thought of your beloved dog in a noisy, smelly, crowded facility being "on hold," until family can be reached is unthinkable. We can do better than that!

One also must consider if the first responders need to break into your house for a rescue, how your dogs will react. They very well could be on guard against intruders they see as trying to harm their person.

There are several things we, as concerned owners, can easily do to help keep our dogs safe if something happens to us.

First assign an advocate for your dog.
This is the person who would be contacted in the event of an emergency. They are not necessarily the same person who could foster the dogs. But they would be the one who can easily be contacted, is reliable, "knows all the players," and most importantly, is familiar with the dogs. This could be a good friend, neighbor, or a family member. They would be the one to temporarily hold the dogs if necessary or locate someone who can orchestrate the dog's care as needed. And if required, arrange temporary longer-term fostering until you return home. Or, if

after your death, until a final determination can be made on their status after the reading of your will. All contact phone numbers should be listed (home, cell, work, close friend) for the Advocate so they can be contacted immediately. Assigning an alternate Advocate is a good idea.

The Advocate should know what you would like done with your dogs in the event of your death, and along with the Executor, can help facilitate those wishes once the will is read. Your Executor should know who your dog's Advocate is and visa versa; and the Advocate should know permanent relocation cannot proceed until after the reading of the will.

The Advocate should know who to contact for foster care in the event it's needed. Both the Advocate and Executor should be aware of any contracts between the breeder of the dog and the owner as many breeders require the return of the dog in the event of the owner's death. The Advocate should have the breeder's contact information.

If something happens.....

LIFE CAN BE UNCERTAIN

We all know unexpected events can occur in our life and we want you to know, that no matter what happens, we are here for the entire life of your Dane that we caused to be. In the even you can no longer keep your dog, for whatever reason, please contact us. And, if something should happen to us, please know that the people listed below will step in and assist you in any way they can. Please be sure to bring this information to the attention of family members, friends and veterinarian. Place a copy of this information in with your will and other important papers and also place in an area it can be easily found as sometimes wills are not easily accessible.

Georgia 425-388-5685

Jack 206-883-4378

Alternates

Sheryl Picco (Jack's daughter) 604-792-1204

Edie (friend) 360-568-8882 or 206-612-8110

Tish (emergency rescue information) 360-927-1378

The Advocate should know who the dog's vet is; and the owner should advise their vet clinic that the Advocate has permission to treat the dog in a veterinary emergency. The owner should provide their veterinary clinic with the name and number of a person who would be financially responsible for such charges.

The owner should leave funds available the Advocate can access for the immediate care of the dogs (for dog food and other incidental items).

If the owner knows no one suitable to be an Advocate, sometimes a volunteer at a rescue might be willing to act on the dog's behalf. If this option is considered, deal only with a reputable rescue having a stellar reputation.

Next, put this information together.
First responders will not have time to read a novel, so place all the basic information in a visible place in your house—on the fridge seems to be one of the best places as everyone sticks notes there!

You will also want to give copies of this information to *anyone* who might need to know it. This could include your neighbors, vet clinic, grooming shop, breeder, boarding kennel, dog friends, personal friends, family members and of course, your Executor and Advocate. This information should also be included with your dog's records, registration, and other information. See my sample flyer (next page) for ideas on how to put your information together, keep in mind you can personalize it as needed, and provide more detail to individual parties.

Another place to list information is the ICE feature on your phone. Sandee Elliott, a first responder, told me she will check this option if the patient's cell phone is available.

What if they cannot get in?
It does not do any good to have your information posted on the fridge if first responders can't easily get in because of guarding dogs. For emergency purposes all my exterior access doors and main gate have a plastic engraved sign that indicates there are dogs on the premises and in an emergency, to call the numbers indicated. I list our cell numbers, that of a friend, and the dog's Advocate.

PLEASE -- HELP MY PETS !

IF I AM ILL OR INJURED, PLEASE GET HELP FOR PETS AT MY HOME, OR IN MY CAR:

Vehicle:_____ Color:_____ License:_____

Please - Call these people for help:

Name:

Phone: Cell:

Name:

Phone: Cell:

My Name:

PLEASE -- HELP MY PETS !

(See other side)

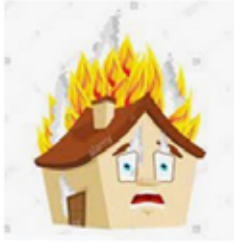
Courtesy of Daynakin Great Danes, LLC
DaynakinGreatDanes.com
Daynakin@aol.com
888-219-7846

What if something happens to you while shopping and your dog is in the car?
As another safety net, have information on you in your wallet or purse and car in the event something happens while you are shopping. If you cannot communicate, no one would know your dog is waiting for you in the car. A simple wallet card (see sample left) will give the basic information needed that can let people know there is a pet needing assistance.

What else do I need to do?
To fully care for your dog after your death, you need to provide for them legally and financially through your will. There are many ways to include care for your pets in your final wishes, and you should consult a lawyer on the best way to accomplish this. Your properly executed will can help to provide for your dogs for their lifetime. They devote their lives to us—this is the least we can do for them. Part Two will include ideas on what to include in your will to properly protect your dogs.

IN AN EMERGENCY

IN CASE OF FIRE



- Call 9-1-1
- Fire extinguisher in utility room behind door.
- Address is _____
- Evacuate people and dogs. People first priority.
- Evacuate dogs to any easily accessible exit door and dog pen.
- Call dog helpers if needed. Notify boarding dog owners.
- Call Jack or Georgia.

IN CASE OF FLOOD

- Call 9-1-1 if needed.
- Address is _____
- Evacuate people and dogs. People first priority. Evacuate before actual flooding.
- Evacuate dogs to red van and depart to higher ground.
- Call dog helpers if needed. Notify boarding dog owners.
- Call Jack or Georgia for further instructions.

IN CASE OF EARTHQUAKE

- Call 9-1-1 if needed.
- Address is _____
- During severe earthquake, human safety first.
- When safe evacuate dogs to any available dog pen.
- Call dog helpers if needed. Notify boarding dog owners.
- Call Jack or Georgia for further instruction.

EMERGENCY HELP WITH DOGS

- For immediate help with dogs and dog care, contact people noted on phone list on bulletin board.
- Call boarding dog owners and request they get their dogs as soon as possible.
- All dogs to remain on the premises if at all possible, with dog helper in attendance for their care.
- Contact Sheryl or Sandra for further instructions.

IF SOMETHING HAPPENS TO US

Contact for human issues

Name number
Name number
Name number

EMERGENCY DOG HELP

If something should happen to Jack and Georgia, the following people can be contacted for assistance with dog help.

Advocate Name number

If dogs need to be relocated

Name number

Name number

Veterinary Care

Name number