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(2006 NHN&WR letter/story/poem/card Finale)

**Walking Bailey**.

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**Subscription Renewal Alert.**

**(See below.)**

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Our Ottawa neighborhood has a myriad of meandering walking paths adjoining the Ottawa River. These paths are used by: pedestrians, parents pushing baby carriages, dog-walkers, power-walkers, joggers, joggers pushing baby carriages, bikers, & roller bladers. Boy, … some of those three wheel sport model baby carriages, propelled by a fit Mommy, really go! There are some rules. Most apply to the dog walkers.

Dogs must be on a leash. Dog owners must tidy up after their pets. Some paths/areas are off limits to dogs. There is an active *“Dog Gestapo”* to enforce these rules. *A “Dog Gestapo”* ticket carries a fine of $100 to $150 dollars. We don’t have a problem with these restrictions, free running dogs can be very intimidating to non-dog people. Our problem is with the above category having an average speed of 20-30 MPH and propelled by cyclists who ignore ‘No Bike’ signs**.** If on a bike path, we keep the leash short and are en guard. If not, unfortunately we tend to be more relaxed.

**Scene**.

Cold morning, heavy jacket and mittens required. Bailey is at the end of a leash which extends about 12 to 15 feet. Ken has mitten off and is scooping poop with one hand, holding leash and removed mitten in the other hand. Bailey is off to one side of the ‘No Bike’ path. Ken is off to the other side of the ‘No Bike’ path. *“Dog Gestapo”* is probably hidden nearby in the woods.

**Action**.

Around the corner comes a bike, speed 20mph**.**

**Options.**

1. Command Bailey to, “STAY!”, raise the leash to decapitation level and brace oneself.

2. Throw my end of the leash across the path and pray.

3. Abandon all hope and, … in a last act of defiance, throw scooped poop at the biker.

4. Make a mad dash across the path to Bailey’s side.

**Response**.

With Bailey’s predecessor, Jason, a decapitation attempt was quite viable and very much preferred, but Bailey is 30 lbs lighter, currently has a choke collar and could end up a bit worse for wear. YGRR would not like their #4263 placed in jeopardy. Praying is not one of this dog-owner’s long suits\*. Plus, even successful leash tossing could lead to the potentially worst possible result. Visualize this. Bailey takes off after the bike miscreant with trailing leash attached to lethal choke collar. Plus, seconds after the tossing, Heinrich Himmler explodes into view from behind a tree*. “Machen der hund frei gelossen ist verboten! Ein hundert fumpzig looneys bitte.”* Good Grief. (Can’t spell in German either.) Number three is definitely attractive, but darn, … not enough time to get the poop back out of the scooping bag. Throwing the whole bag would not provide the same satisfaction. Leap across thepath it is.

Geronimo!

**Retaliation.**

Invectives, … invectives categorized by first, second and third time offenders.

First*: “Hey , get off this ‘NO BIKE PATH!”’*

Second: *“ You stupid idiot, … stay off of this path!.”*

Third: (Sorry, … violates NHN&WR’s code of ethics.)

We could start carrying a cane. Is it possible to jam a cane into the spokes of a moving bicycle? Accidentally of course.

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We’ve come to the end of another year. 2007 will be our 11th year of publication. To continue your subscription you must respond in some manner. No response, … no letters.

The Management.

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Lucile, Bailey & Ken\* (surprised it even entered my mind.)

Ottawa.