



Nov. 19, 2017

You may have noticed this week that the Wild Stare has been a little thin on new articles. It's been my plan to crank out the posts nearly

every blooming day to keep you informed and entertained about these dogs we're so crazy about, our Irish wolfhounds. And it's a *good* plan, I think. It just hit a few snags this week....

Oona went into heat, I stumbled onto some intriguing — and then, disturbing — information on genetics and wolfhounds, and that day before Black Friday approaches, sucking up every other second of time I had.

We're boarding Oona this week to keep her nephew, Oisin, from losing his mind in a hormonal frenzy. They're both still getting their daily walks, only I'm having to work around the kennel's schedule to check her out, walk her where there aren't other intact males to avoid a riot, and then scurry back home to take the young prince on the long rambling walks all through downtown that he's grown accustomed to. As with you, my wolfhounds come first.

While I playing puppy ping-pong, a reader with a strong background in genetics made me aware of serious genetic issues facing our breed and was kind enough to point me in several directions to learn more. It's a complicated situation and I'm not by any stretch a geneticist. If I run into math that goes over the number 10, I have to take my shoes off to count. Anything over 20 and we're in it deep, friends. So, I've been researching. And counting. It's slow going for an old guy. But I think you'll find it well-worth the wait.

Every time I thought I'd have a moment to actually sit down and write something, Thanksgiving reared it's red, knobby head. My day job is working at a daily newspaper. The days before Thanksgiving are bat-crazy. Thank you Black Friday. It's the start of the holiday shopping season, which means special sections out the ying-yang. Time to write or do anything that wasn't at a dead run....was not to be had.

Oh, and The Wild Stare website got hacked and Mr. Technology

had to learn all about malware, why it's *not* our friend and how to stamp it out like a cockroach.

And now Thanksgiving itself is nearly upon us. We'll all be double-teaming wolfhounds to keep them out of the kitchen. Then we'll be chasing them down the halls and up the stairs to see what forbidden goodies they managed to snatch anyway. There'll be family and friends over. Football games to watch. Hunting season opens. Meltdowns to be had. Trips to the ER and family counseling. Another glorious holiday for all of us.

So I'm taking the week off. Wimping out. Laying low. It's for the best. I won't have time or brain cells left to write and you won't have time to read much, anyway. But I plan to hit the deck running once the turkey's cleared and the guests are gone. We'll be looking at how the Russians turned wild foxes into dogs, at all the shapes and sizes the ancient sighthound has taken and how the ancient wolf dog was faithfully revived and reproduced in Victorian England.

We'll take a look at efforts to bring back the dire wolf, at selective breeding to build a better German shepherd and how dalmatians suffered from a genetic bottleneck that severely damaged the breed. Pay close attention wolfhound lovers, because we may be about to experience a similar calamity with our own beloved breed. Wolves, strange hounds, Darwin and more lie just ahead. So please, have a wonderful Thanksgiving. Then let's get back together after the holidays for some serious reading....