Kanine Korner

By Francis X. Lohmann

A "part St. Bernard" dog, abandoned as a puppy by his ungrateful owners and taken into the household of a softhearted family that could not bear to see him starve, has been named as Amercia's Dog Hero of the Year for 1968.

In a dramatic example of "returning good for good," Ringo, adopted by the Raymond Saleh family of Euless, Tex., repaid all of the couple's kindness by saving the life of their youngest son, Randy, 2½ years old. Ringo halted more than 40 cars on a busy and dangerous highway by leaping in front of automobiles and stopping them before they could round a blind curve and hit the child, blissfully playing in the center of the roadway.

The precious dog will be honored at a banquet in the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles, where he will be presented with the Ken-L-Ration gold medal, a gold plaque, a gold plated lead and collar, a custom-made dog blanket, and a year's supply of dog food. Addditionally, his owners will receive a $1,000 U.S. Bond.

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THE STORY of Ringo began on a dark and chilly day just before Christmas, 1965, when Mrs. Saleh looked up from her household work to see a forlorn, 6-weeks-old puppy whining and scratching at the back door. The mother of four children at the time, Mrs. Saleh, who was secretly preparing to purchase a Basset Hound for her youngsters for Christmas, at first attempted to "shoo" the puppy away.

But when she saw the furry little darling slink into the garage and, in his hunger, attempt to eat a mop, her heart went out to the pitiful creature, and she brought him into the house and fed him. As might be expected, her children swarmed over the newcomer and begged her to let the pup stay. She reluctantly complied.

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THEN, ONE DAY last April, Mrs. Saleh, disturbed at the manner in which little Randy took to wandering away from the yard, took steps to have a gate installed. But just 15 minutes before the gate was to be erected, the youngster disappeared again, with Ringo accompanying him. Twice before, Ringo had led searchers to the child, but now, after more than two hours of searching, the police and residents of the neighborhood could not find the tot anywhere.

Fully three-quarters of a mile away, a highly dangerous stretch of Pipeline Road was filled with rushing cars. Motorists coming over a hill and entering a blind curve were astounded to see a husky dog leaping in front of them and up against their fenders. As one car after another came to a halt, the word spread that "a mad dog" was in the roadway.

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WITH approximately 40 cars halted, a school maintenance employe, Harley Jones, decided to investigate. Clambering down from his truck, he went to the head of the long line, to find the child playing in the center of the highway, completely unconscious of his peril.

As Jones looked on in wonder, Ringo stopped several cars coming from both directions by jumping in front of them and even leaping against their fenders. As the cars came to a screeching halt, the dog would nudge the child to the side of the road. But the boy, evidently considering it all a game, would immediately return to the center of the highway, and Ringo's work began all over again.

As Jones approached, Ringo bared his teeth and growled at him, but the man was familiar with dogs and talked soothingly to him.

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FINALLY convinced that Jones was to be trusted, Ringo allowed him to pick up the child, but followed Jones with his teeth pressed against the calf of Jones' leg, until the man reached the shoulder of the road. Here he put the boy down, whereupon Ringo relaxed, allowing the long line of cars to proceed.

My heartiest congratulations and a king size bark to this brave and loving dog who joins an unfathomably long line of heroic canines extending back to the dim beginnings of civilizations.

BREED OF THE WEEK—Bull Terrier . . . About 150 years ago there existed in England a type of crossbred dog that excelled at badger and bull-baiting. They came into being by a cross between the bulldog and the now extinct English Terrier.

Known as Bulldog Terriers, these interesting dogs were coarse in head, thick through the neck and shoulders, bowed in the front legs, heavily built, usually brindle, black and tan, red brown or fawn in color. They bore little resemblance to the nicely balanced, clean-outlined dog we know today as the Bull Terrier. The change from the old type clumsy Bull Terrier into the modern good-looking Bull Terrier started in the 1850s.

An English breeder, James Hinks of Birmingham, England, by careful and selective breeding produced the first Bull Terrier.

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THIS FOUNDATION dog had all the courage, stamina and intelligence of the old type dog, but without his mongrel appearance. Hink's handsome dogs came into fast promience, but many contemproray breeders doubted that they had the gameness for which the old type had been famous.

The following years disproved this belief and the Bull Terrier steadfastly gained popularity both in England and America. During the period from 1895 to 1915 the Bull Terrier ranked in the top ten breeds in number of AKC registrations and he is still a great favorite.

The Bull Tierrier tips the scales at about 50 pounds and in height 20 inches. That's 30 barks for now. I'll be columning you next week.

Listen to Francis X. Lohmann's radio version of Kanine Korner, Monday through Friday at 4:30 p.m. over Station KTYM, 1460 Kcs.

Secretaries Set Meeting Here

Los Angeles Municipal Court Judge Joan Dempsey Klein will address members of the South Bay Legal Secretaries Association next Tuesday.

The association will meet at Dandel's Restaurant, 12000 S. Western Ave., at 6:30 p.m.

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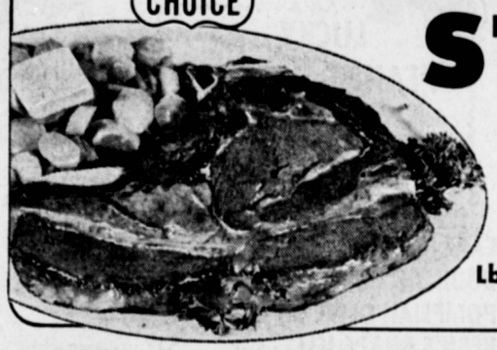

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