

Animals make early morning peace elusive
by Carole Cloudwalker

PINION

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You really can't teach an old dog new tricks and, apparently, you cannot even trick an old dog into sleeping, when it comes to sleeping late. At least I can't.

My dogs are conditioned to awaken at 6 a.m. every day. That's weekdays, weekends, holidays and my birthday. Even on their birthdays, they wake up way too early.

This is not a big problem except on weekends, holidays and my birthday. These I call, "Sleeping In Days," those times when the horses can nicker all they wish, but they still cannot have their breakfast at sunrise, as they do on my workdays.

I hope, on such days, to sleep until noon. Ha. One recent Sleeping In Day went a little bit like this:

- Clock struck 6 a.m. – dogs jumped off bed and looked out window. I tried to ignore them.
- 6:05 a.m. – dogs spotted something unusual they could not remember ever seeing before, meandering around the yard. It was a deer. Wow. Even though 40 million deer wander around our property, the dogs have short memories for seeing them, apparently.
- 6:05 1/2 a.m. – dogs began barking furiously at the deer. Basset hound Sadie could not even see out the window, but collie whipped her into a barking frenzy anyhow.
- 6:06 a.m. – I tell dogs, lovingly, "Shaddup!"
- 6:06 1/2 a.m. – they don't do it.
- 6:07 a.m. – I grow accustomed to their barking, and drift back to a fitful sleep.
- 6:10 a.m. – Phone rings. Dogs bark at it. It's my daughter, reporting on how the twins woke her up early. I tell her, "Thanks for sharing."



Postcards from the High Ground
Carole Cloudwalker

"6:46 a.m. – I explain, politely, to Sadie Dammit that those are MY covers and she will just have to adjust to that fact."

- 6:20 a.m. – daughter hangs up, claiming my dogs' barking is annoying her. I mutter, "Oh? They were barking?" as I gently replace the receiver.
- 6:21 a.m. – deer leave and dogs stop barking. I pull covers over my head and go back to sleep.
- 6:30 a.m. – 40 pound cat jumps on bed, landing on top of me. Dogs bark. I attempt to regain breathing capability. Results are mixed.
- 6:30 1/2 a.m. – again I lovingly tell dogs, "Shaddup you idiots!" Basset hound starts to think, "Dammit" is her middle name. With mighty effort, I push disgruntled cat to the floor.
- 6:31 a.m. – dogs bark at meowing cat as he leaves the room haughtily in a tail-switching protest march loaded with feline dignity.
- 6:32 a.m. – horses, lured to the house by the commotion, begin to mill around and nicker for their breakfast. Dogs bark at horses. Horses whinny at dogs, whom they can see through the upstairs window.
- 6:45 – I go back to sleep at last, horses and dogs to the contrary notwithstanding. Dream I am living in

rotating cement mixer. Wake up to find Basset hound pulling covers into a large pile for her nest.

- 6:46 a.m. – I explain, politely, to Sadie Dammit that those are MY covers, and she will just have to adjust to that fact. I toss her my bathrobe to nest in.
- 7 a.m. – Sadie Dammit hates the bathrobe, kicks it to the floor, and begins barking at it. She grabs edge of bedspread and begins tugging.
- 7:01 a.m. – I am freezing. Sadie Dammit has all my covers and my bathrobe is lost. Maybe Sadie ate it? I decide to get up and start my happy weekend. Wow, I have total freedom to do whatever I please for two whole days.

All that comes to mind is a long nap.

- 7:10 a.m. – I sip instant coffee and thumb through my favorite reference book, "How to Train Difficult Dogs." I look in desperation for a chapter about sleeping in. There is none.

I think of the next best sage advice: Let sleeping dogs lie.

I decide the tricky part is ascertaining when they ever actually do sleep, so I can leave them to it.

Renal Disease.