

NADOI NOTES: AN ANTHOLOGY

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AN ANTHOLOGY

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SECTION 1 • GENERAL INTEREST

WOULD YOUR DOG BITE?

By Jan Gribble # 925

Jan is a trainer, instructor, and writer from New Mexico. A hard-working NADOI member, she has served in many capacities for our organization, and is a former editor of NADOI Notes.

The days when a parent would ask their child what he or she did to “make the dog bite you” are long past! The assumption now is that the dog is always at fault when a bite occurs. Stories about children being mauled by dogs seem to be in the news almost daily. Despite the growing concern about dog bites, most dog owners are poorly educated about the reasons why dogs bite and what should be done to minimize the likelihood of their dog ever biting anyone.

The majority of dog bites occur in the dog’s home or yard, and most bites are to family members or visitors. Children are more than twice as likely as adults to be bitten, and boys are bitten more often than girls. A large percentage of bites can be attributed to the dogs not being properly socialized or trained, and very frequently, there is no adult supervision when children and dogs are together.

The following are a few examples of why dogs bite and what can be done to avoid these situations.

Scenario 1: The dog is protecting its territory from someone it perceives as an intruder.

Dogs that are chained often become territorial and are more likely to bite children and adults approaching them. Chaining also creates frustration in the dog, as he is able to see the intruder, but not reach them. Do not chain your dog. If you need to confine your dog to a kennel or crate, make sure that children know not to stick their fingers inside and the kennel or crate can be securely closed or locked so kids cannot try to get inside with the dog. Train your dog to exhibit acceptable good manners when visitors come to your home.

Scenario 2: The dog is guarding an object or food from someone who is trying to take it away.

Children should be taught to never try to take away an object or food from a dog. If you have a dog that growls or snaps when someone tries to take things away from him, consult with a professional trainer.

Scenario 3: The dog is fearful of being hurt or is in pain.

Dogs who have not been properly socialized are often fearful. Socialize your puppy or dog to anything or anyone you want him to be able to handle later on. Provide regular veterinary care for your dog to make sure any health problems are identified and to make sure he is not uncomfortable or in pain. Keep him wellgroomed so he doesn’t have tangles that pull or sore spots on his skin.

Scenario 4: The dog perceives the person as “prey.”

This reaction is frequently triggered by movement and/or sound. Many years of natural selection have enabled all canines, including our domestic dogs, to pick out the easiest target when hunting. Young, old, or weak animals are usually easier prey than adults. Children are often the victims of bites because their size and behavior can elicit this response in some dogs. Teach your children how to behave around dogs. If the family dog gets excited and rambunctious when playing with the kids, the supervising adult should call a time out so that children can be stopped from running and yelling, and the dog can be stopped from chasing.

To teach your kids how to react around strange dogs, play a game and have them practice these behaviors: (1) when they see a loose dog, have them stop moving; (2) tell them not to call the dog; (3) if the dog approaches them, they should stand still and “be a tree” – they should fold their branches in by clasping their hands together and watch their roots grow by looking down at their feet. Count to themselves (not out loud) until the dog goes away or help comes; (4) if the dog knocks them down, become a rock by curling up and protecting their face and neck with their hands and arms. Children should also be taught never to run up to or pet a dog without asking permission first. This includes dogs belonging to friends, as well as unknown dogs.

Children should be taught to never approach or try to pet any dog behind a fence, tied up, or in a car.

Scenario 5: The dog is protecting her litter of puppies.

Never allow a child or another person to handle puppies unless you are present and are supervising closely. Remove the mother dog first and confine her in a safe place.

Scenario 6: The person is bitten trying to break up a fight between two or more dogs.

Don't try to break up dog fights with your hands. Use a water hose (if outside) or fire extinguisher to break up the fight. Always separate the dogs first before checking for injuries, as the fight may resume.

Scenario 7: The dog believes it has the right to correct a person for breaking the rules the dog has established.

Train your dog. He should never be “leader of the pack.” Never hit or kick your dog. You can teach him the rules and boundaries without physical violence.

Dog owners can reduce the likelihood of owning a dog that bites by following these 10 steps:

1. Educate yourself about dog breeds and mixes before you buy. Not every dog is suitable for every family.
2. Socialize early, properly, and consistently.
3. Train your dog.
4. Confine your dog behind a secure fence or in your house – never allow your dog to run loose.
5. Supervise all interactions between your dog and children.
6. Give your dog regular veterinary care.
7. Spay or neuter your dog.
8. Leash your dog when not on your property.
9. Don't encourage barking or aggressive behavior in your dog.
10. Be a responsible dog owner!

THOSE LITTLE DOGS!

Helen Cariotis # 372, Editor NADOI Notes

Helen@caninecounselors.org

For over 30 years now I have had big dogs. My serious, macho, very focused and very biddable German Shepherd Dogs are just my thing. I like their strong build and high work ethic. I like their noble good looks and the way their beautiful gait covers the ground. I like having their big heads right at hand level. I am a big dog person!

Then one of my children left home and gave me her Papillon to dog-sit. “It’s only temporary, mom ... just till the semester ends!” It turned out to be that semester, and the year in Spain, and while she hunted an apartment ... well, you get the idea. When she walked in the door with him, all I could think of was “here comes happy meal!” Now Teddy appears to be a “resident alien.” I may be a big dog person, but I have learned a lot about him, learned to appreciate him, and toys as a group.

Naturally, being a male toy owned by a student who lived with multiple roommates, Teddy was not housebroken. That became my first challenge, and I knew it had to be something I accomplished or he couldn’t stay, beloved daughter or not. As a trainer, I have worked with many clients and their toy dogs. I knew that housetraining, particularly of the boys, could be problematic. I knew too many experienced people in toys who couldn’t housetrain, kept their dogs kenneled, belly-banded, or just put up with it. Although I always thought that they just didn’t try hard enough (blamed the owners), living with Teddy taught me some surprising things.

I noticed that Teddy, at 7 pounds, was not like my 90-pound Shepherd. Yes, an amazing observation! Everything about him was faster; his movements, his heartbeat, the way he breathed, panted and barked. He was definitely “busier,” and more alert. While my GSDs could easily go long hours during the day without a potty break, Teddy seemed to need to go far more frequently. It was as if his metabolism was running at a faster speed, and he reminded me for all the world like a little bird. Early on I knew that I was not going to use pads or a litter box; no poop and pee in this house! Teddy was going to learn to go outside like the big dogs. I discovered that taking him out to potty more frequently was essential to success. I also learned that he didn’t like to “go” when the grass was wet, it was raining, or even when it was dark. That problem was solved by carrying him out into the far corner of the yard, putting him down, and making him walk back to the patio. On the walk, he would potty!

Teddy also needed to fit into the feeding schedule around here, if possible. I feed my large dogs once a day. Generally, they take about three minutes to eat, and nothing is ever left. I learned that Teddy was used to having food and water down 24/7 (no doubt this contributed to his lack of housetraining). When he moved in here, he quickly learned that food was available for a short time only, and if he wanted it, he needed to eat it then. It didn’t take many feedings for him to figure this out, and although he still takes longer than the Shepherds to eat, he does chow down. When I looked back over my case files dealing with clients who had toys, it was obvious that this one change could have helped many of them to housetrain successfully.

Another little dog problem I see a lot of in our classes is snappiness, especially when being carried by their owners. Although I wasn’t Teddy’s mistress, as soon as my daughter was out of the picture, he latched on to me big-time! If anyone approached and he was in my lap or on my bed, became a miniature Cujo, and wouldn’t

hesitate to bite. Fortunately, his little teeth and jaws weren't capable of doing much real harm to an adult human, but the behavior was anything but cute, and could have been dangerous to a child or older person. Worse, this jealous/protective/guard behavior really pushed the GSD's buttons. Being typical herding dogs, their job in life is to micro-manage every aspect of the household that I allow them to manage, and Teddy was just what they needed. Since I really didn't want the GSDs to discipline Teddy, I figured that I'd better get on it myself. Keeping a house-line on him solved the bed and sofa issue, and if I had wanted to, I certainly could have just made those areas off limits to him.

One big problem was barking. I discovered that Teddy was very alert, and little got past him. He was always ahead of the GSDs at telling me who was in the driveway, at the door, who belonged and who was new, what new squirrel was in the yard, or which cat had jumped from the lounge chair to the window sill. And while the Shepherds alerted with one or two throaty "woofs," Teddy just kept on and on until the intruder or the distraction was gone. Even though I have electronic bark collars and don't mind using them, the very low-tech water bottle method worked like a charm with him (remember he didn't like rain)! On the down-side, the Shepherds did teach him their annoying habit of running the fence and barking at dogs, but I guess you can't have everything.

Now that he was housetrained and didn't bite people, I could take Teddy on to obedience training. Like most Paps, he did great, and even got his CGC in short order. I have made some concessions to his "littleness," one being that I carry him many places just for safety. When you have a dog smaller than a housecat, you sometimes won't get a second chance if another dog or even a toddler tries to hurt him. The true test is in the making as I write, as my daughter has returned to claim her dog. Will all my remedial work go down the tubes? Will Teddy be just another convict who is slapped back in the pen? Will I be able to train my daughter? Stay tuned!

SOCIAL DOGS: THE PROS AND CONS

By Blanche Hessel # 897

Michigan member Blanche Hessel has been training for competition since 1977. She started with an AmStaff, and has also had Belgian Sheepdogs, Pembroke Welsh Corgis, an Australian Terrier, and Border Terriers. Blanche has enjoyed most dog sports, from Obedience to Rally to Earth Dog, and also does therapy work.

Getting NADOI members together anywhere usually leads to lively discussions, and this was the case recently on our email list. Someone asked if "bad behavior" on the part of some dogs was a common occurrence at agility trials. As members joined in to give their opinions, the topic quickly became "are some dogs too social at competition events?"

Some members did think that "some" agility people are too casual. They may have an "uppity" idea about obedience training and think that it is a bad thing. Many of these same folks have "overly friendly," outgoing, larger-breed dogs. Some owners of large, guard-type dogs don't seem to be able to "read" their dogs and see that they may actually mean to do some harm to another handler's dog. Unfortunately, both these kinds of exhibitors can cause problems in a trial situation. Imagine that you are standing around, waiting your turn to take your small dog into the ring for a fun run, when along comes "Miss Friendly," who, unfortunately for you, is at the trial to have a "fun time." Miss Friendly runs up to your dog, her owner paying no attention to her, and "thumps" against your little guy. Your dog reacts, and in an instant, your focus and that of your dog has changed! Miss Friendly's owner was not a responsible dog owner in this situation.

While at any competition, you certainly do not want your dog upset, intimidated, or distracted by some other dog, so-called “friendly” or not! Most members agreed that instructors have a real responsibility to explain this to newbies. They also agreed that while serious competitors in agility are very good at controlling their dogs and keeping a watchful eye on them, there can be a problem with some novice people.

Some members who participated in the discussion were quite adamant that any handler out in public and participating in dog activities should have a social dog that can interact with other dogs and people. They feel that there is no excuse for a dog-aggressive dog, no matter how talented the dog may be in whatever sport. Dogs working for people who are frequently out in the non-doggy world (in other words, therapy and service animals) should certainly be social. Dogs who can’t interact appropriately in public with other dogs should be left home, and dog obedience instructors need to make sure their students understand aggression prevention, good management of the dog, and responsible ownership. In the classes that I teach, for example, I instruct and enforce the “no nose-touching rule.”

Many discussion participants thought that while the above may certainly be true, no one needs to feel that his dogs must interact with other dogs at competition venues, or even at training. The agility class I am in, for example, is full of serious competitors and our dogs are loose much of the time. However, they are expected to be interacting with their owner, working, or on a stay. Before and after class, with the handlers’ permission, they may socialize. Naturally, some breeds or individuals are going to have a more stand-offish temperament, and won’t be overly friendly with everyone, or even want to play. Some of my friends think I am a little anti-social because I don’t let my dogs play with others at a trial. I want to keep them safe, but more importantly I want them to think that I am the only friend they have at the show!

Handlers who insist on allowing rambunctious play at agility trials often don’t realize the effect their dogs have on dogs who may be some distance away. I recall one time at training when I was almost dragged off my feet when my large and very friendly dog spotted some other dogs playing and lunged towards them. It just never occurred to that group that their actions could get someone else hurt.

Most agreed that there are people in every dog sport who simply do not control their dogs. One reason could be that, unlike in days past, dogs are no longer just a part of the home scene, but often the center of it. Their job is to be the “child,” even in households that have children. All seemed to think this topic would be a whole other discussion!

To get the final word, I took this question to Donna Albro, an AKC obedience judge with over 25 years experience working with competitors.

“A small percentage of our population is involved in dog competition events. The rest see us as a spectator sport. All dogs involved in the sport, whether it is agility, obedience, conformation or other dog-related activities, must have social manners. Dogs must be trained so that they can interact with people and other dogs. Some dogs in the sport of agility lack this attribute. This should be the responsibility of the owner or handler. If that is not enough, other trainers, dog clubs and show-giving clubs should stop condoning bad behavior. Those of us in the sport have a duty to the general public to portray dog/handler teams in the best possible light.”

As with most social interactions, having some common sense and good manners seems to apply to our competition dogs as well!

IS YOUR DOG “LISTENING” TO YOU?

By Lonnie Olson, #294

Michigan member and past NADOI president Lonnie Olson is also a writer and trainer. She may be best known as the founder of Dog Scouts of America, and travels the world presenting seminars on the value of positive training.

I spent an interesting afternoon in the veterinarian’s office this week. As I sat there in the waiting room, I could hear one of the clients in the hallway shouting commands at his dog, accompanied by the sound of toenails scraping the floor and lots of panting. I didn’t need to see what was happening to know what was going on. The man was trying to get his dog on the scales and he was hollering, “Get up on there, now. What’s the matter with you, Buck? Hold still!”

I imagined that Buck was probably a large Labrador or a Shepherd mix of some sort. I got the feeling that he was an outside dog, never having learned the manners that would allow him to occupy the house, close to his family. I wondered about what kind of life Buck had. My thoughts were interrupted with more admonitions from Buck’s owner. “Stop that! You know better than that! Now, behave!”

When they called me in, I took my dog Karli into the hallway and was led to the scales. Like most Border Collies, Karli would prefer to do everything at “light speed,” but she controlled herself and minded her manners. Karli lost her hearing about a year ago, but even without commands, she saw the scale, jumped on it, and held perfectly still while the Vet Tech recorded her weight. In the exam room, she waited quietly. I told her she was being good, but she couldn’t hear me.

Through the door, I could hear more toenails and panting, and the man yelling at Buck. “Settle down! You know better than that! I’ll smack you if you don’t cut that out!” He sounded like he was trying to reason with a cantankerous child. Buck was oblivious to his every word.

The doctor came in to look at Karli and she got onto the table when I pointed to it. She held still for the exam and when the doctor left, she went back to sitting quietly, looking at me. I thought to myself, this dog can’t hear a word I say, and yet she does everything I ask with just gestures. Loud commands or threats would fall on deaf ears. And then there’s poor Buck in the hallway, who, last I heard from his shouting owner, was going to get “zapped” (whatever that means), if he didn’t stop his foolishness, because he “knew better.”

I looked at Karli and was so happy that I had trained her to behave properly. She made me very proud. I realized that she was such a joy to own because of the bond we had together, and because I had trained her to pay attention to me and obey “unspoken rules” of good behavior. I was thankful that I had taken the time to teach her to control herself, so that I didn’t have to. I felt sorry for poor out-of-control Buck, dragging his embarrassed owner to the car.

The truth is Buck didn’t “know better.” Dogs are never deliberately bad. People who think this are making excuses for their dog’s lack of training. I hoped that Buck’s owner would not lose patience with his dog. Most dogs end up in the shelters because of behavior problems. Buck just needed to learn some basic control. His owner’s refusal to accept responsibility for his dog’s lack of obedience makes me think that Buck might end up as another “statistic,” with a one-way trip to the pound.

If you were in the vet's office last week and you think I am describing your visit, it probably wasn't you. The vet sees owners and dogs like this every day of the week. The perfectly behaved ones are the exceptions. But they don't have to be. It is so amazingly simple to teach your dog a few basic manners. Here's something easy to start with.

Everyone has to feed his or her dog each day, and so everyone has an opportunity to teach the very important lesson: sit for your supper. Items required are one food dish with the dog's daily portion in it, one hungry dog and patience.

With the food bowl in your hand, ask your dog to sit. If your dog does not know how to sit, then don't ask - you might as well be talking to a deaf dog. For those of you who just ignored the last sentence (or, like Buck's owner, you think your dog knows the word "sit"), don't say it more than once (if you have to say it more than once, your dog does not know how to sit on request). Just hold the bowl above your dog's head (if he's already off the floor, this won't work - wait until he calms down - he'll sit eventually). When the dog sits, start to lower the food to the ground. When the dog goes for the food, you lift it back up again. In other words, if the butt is down, the food keeps lowering to the floor. If the butt goes up, the food comes up. The dog will get the message that he controls the outcome by not trying to get the food. When he is able to sit long enough for you to lower the bowl, set it down, and stand up straight, then you can say, "Okay," and let him have the food. Try this for a few weeks and see if it doesn't make your dog more attentive to you (you're not his valet - you're his leader). This small accomplishment can be the first step in helping your dog be the companion you are proud to own!

GOODBYE, MY FRIEND A CHILD'S VIEW OF THE LOSS OF THEIR DOG

By William (Bill) Burt, NADOI member # 527

Missouri member Bill Burt serves on the NADOI Board of Directors and trains service dogs for people with disabilities. He especially enjoys his work with children, some as young as six years old. He has had his own TV shows, including Animal Planet programs, and was even a rodeo cowboy.

They say that kids and dogs are a match made in Heaven. I was lucky enough to grow up on a farm where there were always dogs and other animals. That upbringing taught me much about relationships and responsibility, although like all kids, I didn't realize it until much later. Like many kids, I had that one "special dog," and to this day, each time I think of those memories, a smile and a warm feeling comes over me. Those days of playing fetch, sharing ice cream cones ("Don't tell Mom"), and curling up side-by-side after a long day of playing outside with my best friend are memories I will always keep.

Today I am still blessed with dogs in my life, and managing a pediatric program for kids with special needs continues to remind me of the value dogs have for kids. Those of us who grew up with dogs understand that relationship. We remember our dogs never teased or belittled us, how we learned to trust our dogs and have confidence in them, how our dogs were always on "our side" when we got in trouble with our parents or our friends turned their backs on us, and most of all how they accepted us no matter what. These relationships were

based on unconditional love and were always nonjudgmental. Those who study child development and behavior point out kids benefit in many ways from experiencing these kinds of relationships. They learn to accept responsibility and improve their interaction and communication with others.

It is easy to understand, then, the traumatic experience many children will go through when they lose a beloved pet to death. They may have come to believe this relationship will endure and be never-ending, as death and dying can be difficult facts to explain to children. For many kids, the death of a beloved best friend can be their first experience with such a loss. In an instant, companionship, loyalty and unconditional love are replaced with loss, confusion, fear and grief.

How do the adults in a child's life explain what has happened? It may be difficult, as many "grown-ups" don't have the answers even for themselves. It is important to handle the loss of a beloved dog in a way that explains honestly to the child what has happened. The effect of grief and loss can be unpredictable and generally will depend on the individual child's age and emotional and cognitive development. Kids under the age of two will normally base their reaction to such loss on the reaction of those around them. Extra hugs and attention and following a regular routine usually work and the bad experience quickly passes. Helping kids from ages three to six may be more problematic, as many times they think the loss is not permanent, and their friend will soon come back. My grandson, at four, is a good example. When his Golden Retriever Blue died, it was very hard for him to accept. After all, he had spent his entire young life with Blue; crawling to follow him, pulling up on his back as he learned to walk, and taking those afternoon naps with him. They were constant companions, and in an instant, Blue was gone. Even months after, I will sometimes find him in his room, quietly crying and saying, "I miss my Blue!"

In helping kids understand and accept the death of their dog, we must first reassure them it is not their fault. Choose your words carefully. If you say the dog was put to sleep, you may create sleep issues for the child. Even saying that "God has taken him because He needed him" or "the dog was special" can cause the child to resent God and wonder who will be taken next. Open and honest communication is best. Don't be afraid to use the words death and dying. If possible, prepare the child in advance if their dog is sick or old. Let them express what they think, and let them know it is okay to be angry or upset. Make sure the child understands what death and dying mean. It is important the child understands his dog is not coming back.

Parents should always allow kids to discuss what they are feeling. Holding a memorial service for the dog may be a good idea. The child will learn the finality of the situation, have an opportunity to remember and tell what they are feeling, and also see the parents feel that way, too. It is always okay to grieve, as failure to show emotion may cause the child to think you don't care, and even cause the child to suppress his feelings.

Children are very resilient, will usually learn to accept the death of their dog and will move on with our help. Don't be in a huge rush to get a new dog until the child is ready. Just as living with a beloved dog can enrich kids' lives in so many ways, losing that same dog to death will teach them some of life's most important, yet hard to learn, lessons.

IN THE BEGINNING

By Joan Segler, NADOI member # 522

Hard-working NADOI member Joan Segler owns an obedience school in Illinois and has Labs. She told me she wrote this article because we all need to remember what it is like to learn something that is totally new to us. These are wise words in this day of ever more complicated methods and tools, new knowledge for the professional, and an incredibly wide assortment of training philosophies.

In the beginning there was a human and a canine who attended an obedience class for the first lesson. Others much like themselves were there, too. Those who appeared to be the leaders began to speak, and at first it was in a language familiar to the human, but then a strange thing happened. All at once the leader began to speak in a language that was completely foreign to the human. It was if the entire room and the whole class-full of students and their dogs had been transported to another country! The humans were expected to understand and carry out instructions that they couldn't possibly comprehend, and everything moved way too fast for them to stay up with what the leader was telling them. Finally, the class was over and the human and the canine were allowed to leave.

Later that day when the human and the canine had returned to their dwelling, the human tried very hard to remember all that he had been told, but it was impossible. When he tried to show the canine what the leader had instructed him, he couldn't remember the strange language, and so he did many things wrong. Laying his hand on his canine's head, the human said, "I don't think we will go back to that obedience class, for the language they speak there is not our language. Maybe sometime later, after we have had time to get to know these new beings, we will return and perhaps then we will understand all that is said."

The moral of this story is never forget your beginnings. If you are just starting out as an instructor, or if you have taught thousands of human/dog teams, the lesson is the same. Always remember what it is like for the new student! Try to recall that first obedience class with your unruly dog. Were you confused, and did you feel uncoordinated? Did you struggle to hear what was said and see all of the demonstrations? Were you embarrassed that your dog was "acting out," barking, or causing you to get unwelcome attention from the others there? When you tried to practice at home what your instructor showed you in class, could you remember all the steps? Were you frustrated when your commands to your dog didn't bring success, and did you wonder what to try next? Was there ever a time that you felt as if your instructor was speaking a different language? If you can remember those feelings, then you have a good chance of becoming a good instructor of beginning students.

As instructors, we must always seek to explain things in the simplest way. When we demonstrate an exercise, we should slow it down, and make sure to repeat many times. Our students will often take what we say quite literally, and while the experienced student may be able to string steps together easily in their minds, the new student will most likely not be able to do that. For example, we may instruct the down by showing the student how to lure the dog into position. What we may forget to instruct is that the dog should be sitting first, before you begin to instruct the down. A very simple part of the exercise, but all too often skipped over because we assume that the new student will "know" that part. They don't!

Providing written handouts to your classes is a very good way to make sure that they remember what was said in class, and what you demonstrated. Step by step instructions are good, but even a brief review of the exercise will be helpful. Don't forget to add where to practice and how many repetitions the student needs to perform with his dog. Handout sheets are a great way to "jog" a new student's memory of what he experienced in class.

Not only is the inexperienced student trying to follow a steep learning curve himself, he is also attempting to teach a dog that is totally green as well. Both are working hard to learn new languages! Keeping the instructor-to-student ratio small will go a long way to providing efficient instructing, whether that means keeping your class size small, providing enough class assistants, or both. An overcrowded class with too few helpers will result in too much noise, confusion, and ultimately, drop-outs.

We need to remember that we are many things to our new students. For some, we may be their "last hope," and a final stop before getting rid of the dog. For most, we are seen as the solution to all their problems, perhaps even to behaviors that have existed for a long while. We are expected to provide instruction that is sound and concise, motivate, commiserate, relate to their frustrations, be sympathetic to their failures, and rejoice in their accomplishments, no matter how small. They look to us to fix problems overnight, and often with one try. Even though it can be difficult, we need to remember to listen to their every complaint, provide new ways around each stumbling block, and all the while continue to encourage the new student at every step.

Our new students are the future of NADOI and the sport of obedience that we so enjoy. At every new class we should be able to "go back in time" and recall what it was like to learn something new, with a new dog, and in a new language. Remembering the beginnings will make all of us better instructors.

TALES OF TRAINING TENACIOUS TERRIERS

By Judy Endo, NADOI member # 905

NADOI member Judy Endo lives in Northeast Pennsylvania and has trained and shown terriers since 1978. She is active in obedience, freestyle and therapy dog work, teaches obedience classes, and in 1998 owned the eighth top performance Cairn Terrier in the country. As this article demonstrates, she also possesses a great sense of humor!

This article is being written from the perspective of a terrier owner and lover, and is for all those who have a terrier as a member of their household, perhaps have a terrier in their future, or have them in their classes.

We all know that terriers come in many varieties, but all come with the genetics to do what they were born to do. They are feisty and fearless, spirited and confident ... big dogs in small bodies! As hunters, terriers are very environmentally aware and motion sensitive. And they are very intelligent. Some say terriers are stubborn, and definitely tough. In all the years that I have owned terriers, I have many times thrown up my hands in defeat, laughed and cried, but always returned to my work with them a little wiser.

Most terriers won't take kindly to heavy handling, and you may find that too much compulsion (force) will get you a dog that "shuts down," or one that may bite you. Successfully training them requires quick thinking,

creativity and being able to accept the unpredictable. Terriers quickly become bored when drilled, and you will find that they need to be challenged. To motivate my dogs, I use food treats, as well as lots of verbal praise and petting. I keep the training sessions short, and train the behavior I want in small increments. Then I can raise the criteria to get the desired behavior on cue. As with any dog, training a terrier requires patience, consistency, a good relationship, clear communication and trust. Oh, yeah, did I mention patience? Of course, spending time with your dog and training him should be fun, not regimented or something you consider a chore.

Training an intelligent dog can be a challenge. Let me give you some examples. I was actively working toward my first title with my first Cairn. I entered Casey in a match trial to get some practice. We had qualified up to the long sits and downs, and I felt confident as my guy was pretty steady on those exercises. He did his one-minute sit! Now on to the three-minute down. I crossed the ring and as I turned to face him, Casey made eye contact with me. He began to wag his tail. Oh oh, not a good sign! I had to give him a very firm look. The tail kept wagging, and keeping his belly on the ground, he crawled a body length towards me. Some chuckles from the spectators gave him all the encouragement he needed, and Casey proceeded to crawl slowly, then stop. At the end of the three minutes he was lying directly in front of me, tail wagging madly, but still in his down. There was loud laughter from the gallery, and the judge asked me if he had been trained for combat!

My second Cairn, Toby (now 12 years old), was a sweet-tempered and loving boy. He made it all so easy for me, would always do what I asked of him, and earned many titles with high scores. He did go through those “teenage” months as he was growing up, however, and was prone to bouts of unpredictable energy bursts. One such episode occurred in the beginner’s class I had enrolled him in (taught by one of my peers). We were working on stays, and every time I would try to put him down, he would bite my hand and pop up, each time with more excitement. On about my fifth attempt to down him he sprang up, charged, and proceeded to do “zoomies” around me. Before I could react, he had me wound tightly with his leash, and stood in front of me with that “smiling” look. When asked if I needed assistance, I said no, but I could have used some help. To this day I am not sure how I freed myself!

Then there is my girl Whitney, almost three years old. She is my first female, and now I understand the meaning of the word “bitch”! She is brazen and dominant, has a fiery temper, and has absolutely no respect for the trainer, me. Although she is always a challenge to work with, she is also giving me a wonderful learning experience. I felt pretty good about what she had learned so far, so I entered her (what a daredevil decision) in the huge Montgomery Terrier Specialty. Whitney’s breeder was attending and at ringside when it was our turn to compete. I entered the ring with confidence! When the judge asked me if I had any questions, I assured her that I had done this for many years, although it was my dog’s first trial.

Looking back, I should have known by the look on Whitney’s face that she had listened to my remarks to the judge and decided to take me down a peg or two. As I began the heel pattern, she latched onto my pants leg and began growling and shaking it! I did the entire exercise with a Cairn Terrier firmly attached to my left leg. As we set up to do the figure eight, the judge informed me that if my dog continued to do this behavior, we would be excused. I was sure she wouldn’t do it on the figure eight, so off we went. Wrong! She latched on again with even more fervor, growling and shaking. What a good time she was having! We were excused from the ring, and my breeder did not find this performance the least bit entertaining! The motto of this story is, if you are over-confident, you may pay the price. And terriers will keep you humble!

Whitney is still a work in progress. She passed her therapy dog test with flying colors and loves people, particularly kids, and is good in all environments, but she still needs a watchful eye around strange dogs that invade her space. All in all, she is a Cairn with much personality and zest for life, and a delight to have around.

So you want to train a terrier? You will need knowledge, a plan, patience, a sense of humor, treats and plenty of motivation. Respect? That you must really work to earn!

ETHICS

By Helen Cariotis, NADOI member # 372

A prospective student called recently and asked what I thought at the time to be a strange question. She wanted to know if I had ever been sued. To tell the truth, I was taken aback and hesitated a second before answering. That gave her just enough time, I guess, to ask me if I'd ever had to refund anyone's money. I told her a quick "no" and "yes," but then just had to ask her why she wanted to know. It turned out that she had had a rather bad experience with another school, paid them what she felt was a nice little sum, and ended up with an instructor who ran a terrible class. I did sign her up for my school, but it reminded me of some of the not-so-ethical trainers I have run into in my 30-plus years in this business.

Just a few years ago, I took one of my own dogs to a local community college for a basic class. To be honest, I just needed a place to get him out and work him around other dogs, so I wasn't necessarily looking for stellar instruction, but the others in my class certainly deserved better than we got. This guy was not only a lousy trainer and instructor; he ran a poorly structured class where very little learning took place. Not only that, it was not a safe environment for any of us; there was one dog fight, and one lady actually got bit by another student's dog. All but two of the students had dropped before the half-way point, and I don't blame them. To top it all off, this instructor finally just stopped showing up. The sad thing is not only did the students not get their dogs trained, they most likely will never again try a training class because "it didn't work." This instructor did a good job at only one thing: making the profession look bad.

So what is the answer? Dog obedience instruction is no different from any other field. There will be excellent instructors, horrible instructors, and hopefully lots of good ones in between. Maybe we can't regulate talent, but we should certainly be on the lookout for the downright unethical instructors. I used to think this group of trainers would just naturally put themselves out of business, but unfortunately, many of them continue on year after year.

When NADOI was founded over 41 years ago, it was the intent of that original small group of trainers that some effort be made to improve our profession by requiring all members to be screened and tested for competence in their ability to train and teach. They also knew high ethical standards of conduct needed to be required of each member. Out of that realization, the NADOI Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct was written and instituted. Here is the Preamble to that Code, and although the years have dated the language somewhat, the intent is still clear.

The National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors, Inc. was founded to elevate the standards of the dog instructing profession. Mutually to aid both dog and human in the solution of the many problems of the profession, to designate members as having attained certain skills and knowledge, and acknowledging these facts, the members are pledged to maintain a high level of trust and integrity in the practice of their skill.

This Code of Ethics should not be recognized in passive observance, but as a set of dynamic principles guiding the members' conduct and way of life in obedience instructing. It is the instructor's duty to practice this profession according to this Code of Ethics.

As a member of the National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors, Incorporated, I shall remember that to my community and all with whom I come in contact in dog obedience work, I typify dog obedience. It is my duty to keep the ideal high. I will always strive to better the understanding of dog obedience, proving it a work and profession worthy of respect and admiration. Always will I advocate training by such methods that will keep the best interests of the dog, the handler, and the fancy in mind. I will work towards improved methods of instruction for all breeds of dogs. At all times in my association with people and my work with dogs I will conduct myself in a sportsmanlike manner, neither boasting if I win in the show ring, nor showing rancor toward my dog or toward the judge should I lose. At no time shall I display evil temper, either in the ring or while instructing. When handling my own dog or another's dog, either in the show ring or while instructing, never will I conduct myself in such a manner that will bring discredit to this Association or the fancy, I will work to train persons as competent instructors for dog obedience training classes, and toward this end will always freely exchange ideas, methods, and techniques in connection with dog obedience instruction.

HOW MUCH TRAINING IS ENOUGH WITH POLICE SERVICE DOGS?

By Captain David "Lou" Ferland NADOI Member #908

Lou Ferland has been a Police Officer in Portsmouth, New Hampshire for 23 years. He has a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice and is a nationally certified Police K-9 trainer. He served as head trainer for the Working Dog Foundation NH Police K-9 Academy for 10 years, and was the first NADOI member with a background in Police Service Dogs. He can be contacted at K9Dragon@aol.com.

During the past 19 years as a dog handler and now trainer, I have been asked many times "HOW MUCH TRAINING IS ENOUGH?" From the handler to the Chief of Police to the media to the Councilperson, they all want to know how long it takes to train a police dog and how many hours a week to keep the training up.

It is tough to compare times because all dogs are different and the jobs they are asked to do range from hard to very hard. Each dog needs a different amount of training based on the skills of the dog, handler, and trainer involved. The job that they are being trained to do will also determine how much training a dog needs. To make this easy we can take averages and industry standards to help answer the question.

Most Police Dogs are trained at Police K-9 Academies that require a minimum of 420 hours of basic training for the handler and the dog. There are some that are longer, and some that are shorter (although I would not recommend a shorter one no matter the level of the dog when the handler receives the dog), but it could be argued that the standard most observed would be 420 hours. This would produce a team trained in obedience, agility, basic tracking, evidence recovery, basic apprehension skills including the verbal out and recall, and building searches.

Next comes the training for drug detection, explosive detection, cadavers, and SAR. It could be argued that these dogs need an additional 250 hours of training. This would yield a dog trained to locate 4 odors and react in a specific way once locating these odors. Again, I am speaking in generalities because some dogs and handlers need more time and some less. It depends on the level and skill of the dog, handler, and trainer involved.

I get many questions from Chiefs about HOW MUCH IN-SERVICE TRAINING is enough. Speaking in generalities, the average would be 4 hours per week for patrol work, and 2 hours each week for additional disciplines such as drug detection. A cross trained Patrol Drug Dog therefore would need 24 hours each month at a minimum at a recognized K-9 training facility under the observance of a skilled trainer. This would not include the 15 minutes each day that the handler and dog practice away from the training academy.

Anything less could be considered deliberate indifference (City of Canton Ohio.1989) and would deviate from the industrial norm. The Working Dog Foundation with the advice from the K-9 Academy for Law Enforcement and the United States Police Canine Association has adopted that all Police K-9 Teams undergo a min of 420 hours of basic training, be evaluated on written standards by outside evaluators such as the United States Police Canine Association, and continue in-service training to average 4 hours per week for patrol dogs. Specialty dogs such as drug detection would require a min of 200 hours of training before evaluation by outside evaluators and then a minimum of 8 hours averaged per month of in-service work.

I need to get out from behind this desk and train now!

PROTECTING DOG OWNERSHIP

Helen Cariotis, NADOI Member # 372

A few weeks ago I attended a “town hall meeting” in the city council chambers of a neighboring town. The purpose of the meeting was to get residents input on prospective dog ordinances the mayor and council were considering. Rumors and speculation had been flying for months that this small city would become the next municipality to ban American Pit Bull Terriers and other “bull” breeds. I had even heard from area veterinarians and some of my clients that any dog weighing over 50 pounds would be banned from the city. So, armed with lots of information, I arrived early on the appointed evening.

The auditorium quickly filled to standing room only, and I learned that residents of the town would be allowed to speak first. Since they pay the taxes there, that seemed only fair. Unfortunately, because so many residents turned out to give their input on this issue, none of the non-residents had time to speak. That included me, area veterinarians, groomers, shelter personnel and another training school owner. Disappointed, I gave my stack of papers to the mayor, and urging him to call me if I could help in any way, left.

I don't live in this town, and my training school is not there, so why should I be concerned about legislation that may pass there? Why does it matter to me what other cities do or how they word their dog ordinances? It matters to every one of us, because when one town is able to pass anti-dog or breed specific legislation, it makes it much easier for the next town down the line to do the same. We all know it is much easier for us to stay informed and step in before these kinds of ordinances are passed, as getting rid of them later is always more difficult.

What can we, as dog professionals, do to stay on top of proposed restrictive legislation in our towns? For starters, make sure that you are the go-to guy locally when it comes to all things dog. Being the “dog lady” or “dog fellow” is a good thing if you want to hear what is going on. You want to be the one the mayor calls up for information and advice. You want the newspapers and TV channels to seek you out for interviews, because you are the local expert on dogs and dog and people problems. Together with other dog professionals in your town, you can be the one to provide accurate information on the subject of loose and unattended dogs, unaltered dogs, and dangerous dogs. You will be the one to point out that the vast majority of dog problems are, in reality, problems of owner responsibility. As the local expert, you will be able to offer positive solutions to a serious problem, using resources and laws the city already has in place.

Read your local newspaper, and go to council meetings from time to time. Get to know your animal control officers, shelter staff, and police. Be aware of proposed legislation before it gets drafted into law, so that you can counter it. Be prepared to make your city government aware of the many resources out there which can help them write good laws that hold all dog owners responsible for the behavior of their animals, and thus don't penalize everyone for the actions of a few.

Unfortunately, breed specific dog laws will continue to be written and passed as more of us try to occupy less space, and busy or irresponsible dog owners make the majority pay for problems they create. City leaders, in an effort to make our owns safe, will be all too willing to listen to those who want to get rid of all dogs of a certain breed or size. Staying aware and involved, being vigilant, and always being prepared to counter their arguments with good information will keep most “bad” legislation from ever seeing the light of day. The NADOI web sit at www.nadoi.org has some good resources in addition to our Position Statement on breed specific laws.

What happened in my neighboring town? Fortunately, the city fathers listened to reason and some good ideas, and no anti-dog laws were passed, at least for now.

THE CIVILIZED PYR JACK'S STORY

By Anita Fahrenwald Crafton, NADOI member # 463

Anita Crafton has been teaching dog obedience classes since 1978 and has been a member of NADOI since 1985. She has shown Samoyeds and Shelties in both conformation and obedience. She and her husband Danny live on acreage in southern Idaho with three Great Pyrenees, an Akbash, two German Shepherds, two Shelties, a small band of Shetland sheep, a horse, and several cats.

True or false?

From 7 to 16 weeks of age, livestock guarding dogs (LGD) should be socialized only with livestock.

There is no need to provide training for LGDs.

Both of these statements are false!

Conventional wisdom seems to dictate that LGD pups should be raised with the livestock they will be guarding, isolated from humans. In reality, this is an exaggeration of recommendations made by scientists in the USDA bulletin about selecting, raising, and using LGDs.¹ The publication's language about minimizing the dog-to-human bond has been incorrectly interpreted to mean elimination of contact with humans. However, the same publication also recommends that LGDs be trained to accept human handling, walk on a leash, and come when called; and points out that some owners teach additional commands. Training cannot be accomplished without human contact.

Sadly, the isolation protocol is accepted as gospel by many, including some instructors, because most of us really don't know much about these dogs. This misinformation results in tragic rescue situations – fearful dogs who cannot be touched by humans, much less even caught.

My background as a competition and pet dog obedience trainer caused me to question the “isolation” advice. My advice to pet owners has always been to socialize their dogs to both humans and other animals as much as possible. This is especially true with the personal protection breeds, because the best protection dogs are those who do not fear people. I couldn't help but wonder, if protective instinct could still develop in a well socialized German Shepherd Dog, why would it be any different for a livestock guarding dog? Yet I had doubts because I had no experience with LGDs. The argument that a LGD might find people or other dogs more fun than sheep made sense, too.

In 2001, my husband and I decided to raise our newly-acquired Great Pyrenees pup pretty much like any other dog in the family, with a few modifications to allow for socializing with the sheep. We got Jack at 10 weeks of age from a small farmer and began socializing him 24/7 with sheep. At four months of age, we took Jack to an obedience class, although he was not allowed to socialize nose-to-nose with the other dogs. Workdays for Jack were spent at first in the corral and later in the pasture with his sheep. After the sheep were locked in the barn for the night, Jack rejoined the family. He had playtime in the back yard with our other big dogs before feeding time. At night, he slept next to our bed.

In doing our research, we learned that a dog's chance for success at guarding livestock is as much related to its individual personality traits as to the amount of socialization with other species of animals². While socializing the pups with the species they are to guard is important, it is just as important to choose the right dog for the job³. The isolation theory of raising LGDs fails to consider genetics and the nature of dogs, most of whom typically develop protective behaviors as they mature. As Jack matured, his natural protective instincts kicked in. He became more reserved toward human strangers entering our property, but would accept them after a proper introduction. He also began acting highly aggressive towards stray dogs outside of our fences.

When Jack was about 6 months of age, decided to test Jack's guarding instincts against his yard pals while we were there to observe. Jack kept putting himself between the sheep and Simba. Using rough play, he kept maneuvering Simba away from the sheep time after time. As they got further from the sheep, they calmed down, went back to grazing, and Simba lost interest in them.

We could not be more satisfied with our decision to civilize our LGD. He has turned out to be the quintessential pet dog who wins friends everywhere we take him – from the veterinarian's office to treat-outings at the local pet store. He loves people of all shapes and sizes, especially children, and he's polite to other dogs we encounter. He has even performed as my obedience class demo dog. At work in the pasture, he becomes highly aggressive towards strange dogs or coyotes roaming within sight of his pasture fence, but not to dogs that we bring into the adjoining back yard. Because he is such a joy to live with, he's become about 99 percent house dog; yet when he is in the pasture, his Pyr-independence and guarding instincts win out over his bond with humans. (Translation: he would not win any obedience competitions!)

Livestock guardian dogs are becoming more and more popular all over the country. Socialization and training to some degree is important for all LGDs³. It is only logical that dogs used on family farms or acreages need to receive more human socialization and training than those used by ranchers in open range conditions. Even range-LGDs must receive veterinary attention at least annually, and they must occasionally be removed from the livestock. They should also receive regular inspections of teeth, ears, coat and general body condition as well as grooming⁴.

Instructors: Trust your instincts! To achieve the goals suggested by LGD experts – a confident, alert guardian – pups must be handled by humans and exposed to the variety of situations they will encounter as an adult dog. Instructors should not be afraid to admit LGDs to their classes. In fact, if contacted for advice, instructors should strongly recommend they do attend classes. Some caveats are in order: a working/pet LGD should not be led off the property, but taken from the property in a vehicle; the amount of training given should not emphasize the human-dog bond to the extent that it interferes with the dog's bond to livestock (and desire to remain with livestock). This will vary from dog to dog, depending on its personality traits (extremely sociable vs. highly independent). With the reputation for obedience that most LGDs have, logic tells us that basic socialization and training will not greatly interfere with the dog's bond with livestock!

Some excellent online LGD resources are listed below.

1. Livestock Guarding Dogs, Protecting Sheep from Predators. USDA Agriculture Information Bulletin #588, <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/guarddog.pdf>.
2. LGD Library – GPCA Breeders and the Family Farm Dog, <http://www.lgd.org/library/lgd pamph.htm>.
3. LGD Library – Socializing Your Puppy, by Catherine de la Cruz, <http://www.lgd.org/library/socializepups.htm>.
4. LGD Library – Grooming the Working Livestock Guardian Dog, by Catherine de la Cruz, <http://www.lgd.org/library/GroomLGD.html>.

DOGS WITH NO CONFIDENCE HAVE THEY REALLY BEEN ABUSED?

Norma Simpson Rust, NADOI #459

In my 23 years of teaching Dog Obedience Classes to the general public, I have worked with numerous dogs who appeared to have been abused. Anyone involved with a rescue organization has encountered countless numbers of these “abused” dogs. Typically, these dogs will bark when approached, try to run away, and often bite if one persists in trying to touch them. These dogs have learned that the best way to keep people away is to act or be aggressive. For the fearful dog, the best defense is a good offense. I, along with most rescue workers, initially thought that such fearful aggression was surely the result of abuse. I questioned the owners about what they had done with their dog when it was under 16 weeks of age; did they take it everywhere with them, etc. I discovered that they had never taken the dog anywhere in these formative months. It made me rethink the cause of such behaviors.

The real problem is lack of socialization. Everyone I talked to about this problem would answer that they had a lot of company at their house, so their pup was well socialized. This displays a misunderstanding of what it takes to socialize a dog properly. The worst cases of this occur when someone comes to our classes with a dog that they bought at a pet shop who was already past four months of age. They are often too frightened to walk. We would put this kind of a dog into our puppy class, because they weren’t afraid of puppies. They could gain some confidence and some learning was able to take place. We could make them better, but could never make them very confident. To build confidence in a puppy it takes three new experiences a week plus the training activities that included behavior-shaping techniques.

Pups have come to class too stressed to take a treat, looking very much like they were abused. After a week of what I call “going places”, they come back more confident and outgoing. If the pup gets to 16 weeks without resolving this lack of confidence, it will spend its life acting like it has been abused.

I recently had a dog in my agility class who was a one-year-old wire Jack Russell Terrier acquired from a local rescue group. On his cage it said, “not suitable for children, men or other dogs”. He had been adopted five times and been returned each time. He came in the door of our training facility barking and growling, and it was obvious to me he was afraid. After about three months of obedience and agility training, he went to a match and won ribbons in both rally and pre-novice classes. This is a classic case of an un-socialized dog. The training that he received made a big difference in his ability to function in the real world. His new owner was very dedicated to making him as good a dog as she could. He ended up a much happier dog than before, but he was never going to be the dog he could have been with a proper start in life. Until fear is overcome, there can be no communication and therefore no learning is taking place.

Unfortunately, many rescue dogs have not been properly socialized, and therefore fit this “fear” profile. Training does build confidence, and you can make most of them better, but you can never make them completely right.

I always have to learn the hard way and did so with a six-month-old Border Collie sired by my dog. The owners of this dog called and told me that this pup was aggressive, weird, destructive and all-around incorrigible. I suggested training to them, but that was not an option. I subsequently purchased this dog, confident that I could “fix” him. It was through this dog that I discovered that I could make him better, but he was never going to be the way he could have been. I thought I could put some training on him and find him a good home. I found him

a good home all right, mine, but I could never completely overcome his fearfulness. He was always afraid of children. The whites of his eyes would show if a child tried to approach him. I trained him to a Companion Dog title, but he was never confident enough to jump and would stutter step up to an 8" board.

In the last months of his life, he came so close to biting me in the face that it was scary. He was sleeping on the floor and when I tried to wake him to put him out for the last time of the evening, I startled him. He lunged at my face and the teeth snapped too close for comfort. It amazed me that the person who had him the first six months of his life had more influence on his behavior than I, who owned him until he was fifteen, did. I trained and trained and trained him (more than any average person might have done), but really to no avail.

It is good to remember that there is this short eight-week window of opportunity to socialize your dog and make it a confident and outgoing individual. If this is done, even a dog that suffers abuse in his life could distinguish between abusive and normal treatment and have appropriate reactions.

YOU CAN TEACH AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS THE STORY OF MINDY MINYA

Helen Marie Capps, NADOI Member # 1033

Helen Marie and her Brittany's have truly done it all. She was awarded the California Obedience Trainer of the Year for 2000, and competes successfully in obedience, rally, field, and conformation, as do her many students.

I had just taken Mindy out of the x-pen and given her a chance to piddle; now we were waiting for the two dogs ahead of us to finish running the Rally Novice course. Could she qualify today? Could

she get at least 70 points and earn her third leg and her Rally Novice title today? We stepped into the ring.

The judge asked, "Are you ready?"

"Ready," I answered, "Mindy, heel."

Ten months ago Mindy, a 12-year-old, 60-pound rescue Brittany, came into my life. An old dog, she was found running loose in Northern California, picked up by the local dog pound and then rescued from them by a no-kill shelter near San Francisco. The shelter had her vet checked, cleaned her teeth, spayed her and got her ready for a new home. She then spent seven months doing nothing but eating and waiting.

I found her photo on the American Brittany Rescue website. I sent in my application late one night. She was delivered to me by a rescue volunteer almost two weeks later, in May, a very plump 60 pounds of white and orange Brittany with an abundance of freckles on her front legs and a sweet graying face with a pouty smile. She was introduced to my other two Brittany's, Magnum and Merlot. After a few snarking incidents between the girls and some unwelcome overtures from Magnum, the male, she settled into our home.

She became Mindy Minya (with the help of a computer search for names), meaning Sweet Older Sister. And that she was. She was mannerly. She was pushy. She wanted her own way. She was grabby when treats or food were dispensed. She knew no real obedience. She could sit if offered a treat but that was the extent of her knowledge.

If Mindy was going to live in my house she needed to learn obedience commands. I am an obedience instructor; my dogs and I live with obedience words 24/7. I was not sure how much a dog her age could learn. My estimation, along with the vet's, put her at 12 years of age. Could I teach an old dog new tricks?

I signed her up for the next beginning obedience class at our club. I put her on a strict diet; well, the same diet my other dogs were on. Her hips were weak and the additional weight was not helping. She waddled. She had a bad-looking, rough-feeling coat, and a bad eye that was the result of "dry eye" and a blocked tear duct. We got medicine from the vet for her eye and added supplements to her food for her hips and coat.

At the first beginning class (I had my assistant teach the class so I could train Mindy), my old dog taught me a new trick. I called it the "limp lump." When it came to anything Mindy did not want to do, she went limp, fell on the floor and could not be moved. At 60 pounds she was a hernia waiting to happen if you tried to pick her up. She clamped her mouth shut when she didn't get her way, and would not be enticed with any type of treat. She even tried a hunger strike for 24 hours because she was upset with me for something I insisted she do.

Her attitude shot down the lure and treat training I usually use, so I went back to an old method of correct and praise. She responded to that well. She quit being a limp lump and started to move. She looked up at me as we did heeling exercises and smiled. Mindy still did not take treats when she was working, but once back in her x-pen at the classroom she would eat. When she decided she was done working, however, she would try to get to the x-pen and end the lesson. When I didn't allow her, she would yelp. We stopped calling her "limp lump" and started calling her "melt and yelp." It was quite entertaining for the new beginning students to watch their instructor work with a problem dog. But Mindy was learning, and sometimes even looked like she was enjoying the process.

She started dropping weight, and currently weighs 40 pounds. She started getting energy and stamina with her three-mile walks. She started running around the yard and playing with my other dogs. I didn't get to work with her daily as I would have liked, but she got in at least one or two days of practice each week. Mentally, she could only handle about ten minutes of training at a time before her little old brain would shut down and she would stress and shake and pant. I tried to end the sessions before she started panting and shaking so she didn't think that act could end a session on her terms.

In November I signed her up for our club's annual CGC (Canine Good Citizen) testing. It had been six months since she came to live with me. The test wasn't easy for her, but we completed the ten exercises for the Canine Good Citizen certificate. What a happy day! I was very pleased with my rescue girl. I wondered what more she was capable of doing.

Over our winter break I trained my competition dogs, Magnum and Merlot. Mindy watched from the patio door while they worked, got treats and had fun with me. I would bring her out for a short bit of training. Shortly she started demanding to come out and train. She started taking treats. She started really being interested in trying to do an exercise—not just having to do it.

In February, my fellow obedience competitors entered a back-to-back trial at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. I decided to enter Mindy in Rally Novice to see what she could do. Rally is a low-stress obedience competition; highest score is 100 points. Seventy points are needed to qualify. Your dog needs three qualifying legs to earn the AKC Rally Novice title. The courses set up at the trials are always different, with signs giving you obedience exercises to complete along each course. It is like a PAR exercise course or rally road race. The judge scores each exercise as they are performed.

Very early Sunday morning in February we all piled into my Tahoe, three people and seven dogs, off to the trial in San Francisco. The first course - early in the day - was not an easy one, but I managed to get Mindy through it, and she was willing. The required lie-down exercises found Mindy upside-down on my feet. The left turns, which are her bug-a-boo, were like turning a semi-truck, but we got through the course and she scored an 85. What a good girl, Mindy!

The second trial didn't start till 1 p.m., but Mindy was already getting tired by late morning. It had already been a long day and then Mindy had one of her panic attacks. She started panting and shaking. This is something she has done since I got her. They come less frequently now, and usually have to do with stress, exhaustion or separation from the other dogs. I took her for a walk outside, but she wanted to get in the Tahoe and go home. Sorry, girl. I worked with her, treated her and petted her until she settled again, and then brought her back into the noisy building and the x-pen with her buddies, Magnum and Merlot. She settled and took a nap.

Finally, 1 p.m. rolled around and we got ready for the next class, but as we waited for our turn in the ring, something happened. A noise, a dog barked - I don't know - but she started shaking again. She stuffed her head between my legs. I stroked her between the eyes and told her she was fine. And it was our turn in the ring. Yes, Mindy, you can do it.

It was another hard course with a call front, back up one, two, three steps. Mindy was supposed to sit toe-toe with me and face me on each of the stops. But by the time we completed the exercise she was sitting on my feet, her back against my legs looking up, backwards into my face. Points off for being out-of-position and touching the handler. But even with that, we passed with a 72! Talk about squeaking through. We now had two green qualifying ribbons. She had earned two of the three legs needed for her RN title.

Now, one month later, we were outside a Rally ring again, hoping the old girl could keep it together and come out with another qualifying leg and the title we were after. It would be an easy course if I could get her through the left turns. You don't ever count your points before the judge gives you that score sheet - too many things can happen in the rally obedience rings.

"Mindy, heel."

She started forward; we did our fast, then normal, then the first 360-degree left turn. Yes, it was like turning a semi-truck again, a very wide turn, but it should be passable. A right turn, call front, sit, and return to heel around behind me and sit. Another of those dreaded left turns, this one a 270, semi-truck time! She did the turn without sitting down - that was good.

Spiral ahead; time to get dizzy. Thank goodness it was a right spiral where she was on the outside of me. I could coax her along, and she moved easily on the outside turns. Spirals consist of three cones and you walk around and around them cutting off one cone each time until you finish going around the first cone for one last time and off to the rest of the course. She was still with me, yay!

Another right turn, another call front and sit, this time a finish to the left and forward. A 270-degree right turn, and another left turn. Next was what I call the wedding march. Halt and sit, heel one step forward and halt, sit; heel two steps forward and stop, sit; heel three steps forward, stop and sit. That was the last exercise. We finished the last straight heeling exercise of the course. Mindy was still bouncing and looking at me and smiling. We were done. All we had to do was wait for our score. We raced back to the x-pen and I gave her lots of good treats for a job well done. What a good girl, Mindy.

Minutes later, I checked the judge's scores. Mindy had scored an 85! She passed! She had earned her third leg in Rally and was now an AKC titled dog: Mindy Minya RN CGC.

You CAN teach an old dog new tricks. Where shall we go from here?

Well, it has been another year. Mindy is now 13. A few months ago some friends got together with their Brittanys and went out to a hunt club to see what the dogs were capable of. I had Mindy and the other two dogs with me. Mindy was the first one off the "chain gang". (A length of chain with shorter chains attached so dogs can be leashed next to each other - close enough to sniff noses but far enough away to not get tangled.) I had thought about keeping Mindy on the check cord, but at the last minute let her loose to hunt on her own. She ran down the hill and started quartering like a good bird dog. She drifted into the wind, stopped and sniffed and off she went, right to where the men had planted a bird. She pointed! Oh my, this dog has had some training in her previous life! She held her point till the bird was flushed and shot and she returned it to hand. Holy Cow! Mindy had a secret skill. Everyone was amazed. So much so that they insisted that I take her to the next hunt test.

I ran the old girl both days of the weekend of the hunt test. She ran hard on Saturday morning, hunting and pointing and finding two birds. Her average score that day was a 7.75, passing. (In hunt tests, two judges judge the dogs on four different skills earning points from 1-10 - they must get at least a 5 for each and average 7 from both judges).

Saturday night at home I gave Mindy a good massage of her sore muscles so she would be able to run again the next day. I was worried that she had run too hard and would be stiff and lame on Sunday. Well, she is a strong old girl because of good food and good exercise and a current good weight. Sunday morning she didn't run as hard, but she still ran, quartering and hunting and finding her bird. She only found one bird on Sunday, but that was enough - and her pointing skills earned her a 9.5 to average a passing 8.5. This was her second orange hunt test pass ribbon. Two more and she will have the title of Junior Hunter.

But she hasn't stopped. The next weekend we went back to the Rally courses. With just regular heeling practice and doodling exercises, Mindy was going into the next step up in Rally, Rally Advanced. She was working that afternoon on the foundation obedience training that was done when she first came to live with me ... and working with her same tail-wagging attitude she trotted out of the Rally Advanced ring with a qualifying score of 92! Guess we need to go back and finish that Rally title (two more legs) and of course the Hunt title ... because the old dog hasn't stopped learning - and amazing all of us!

CHECK OUT THAT RESCUE GROUP!

Marlene Stachowiak NADOI member # 337

Long-time member Marlene Stachowiak is a retired obedience judge, therapy dog expert, and the busy owner of a Georgia obedience school. She has had many rescues and has worked with many good rescue groups.

Not all rescue organizations are warm and fuzzy! Some are not interested in providing a service to either the dog or his new family. Believe it or not, they may be more interested in numbers, which gives them the

“documentation” to collect undeserved grants, donations, and sucker in more volunteers to do the work. Yes, some are in it for the profit! Of course, most rescues are doing the right thing, but unsuspecting families need to have some guidelines and use caution and common sense when selecting a knowledgeable and supportive rescue organization. Distinguishing between the “good” and the “bad” is really not difficult.

Groups that hold adoptions at pet shops and malls with dogs and puppies ready for adoption “on the spot” may not have good canine knowledge. The prospective new owner selects based on the appearance of the dog or puppy. They may be told a “sad story” about the dog, which is really a subtle high-pressure sales pitch. The groups may tell the family that the dog “will be destroyed tomorrow” if they don’t adopt. Another tactic used by these unethical groups is to push a second dog on the adoptive family once they have committed to one dog. “But they are best friends,” they will say, or “they won’t do well if they are separated.” Guilt can be a powerful thing!

Prospective new owners should ask about the “take back” policy of the group they are using. If a new family finds out that the dog they have adopted is not going to work out for them, and the rescue will not take it back, a serious problem can develop. Often the group “will” promise at the time of adoption that the new owners can return the dog, but then don’t follow through. The sad truth is that some of these groups are more interested in the adoption numbers than an adoption that is truly successful. This is not being interested in the welfare or best interests of the dogs and puppies in their care. Reliable rescues will have very detailed adoption forms that ask questions about the family’s experience, ability to care for the dog financially, and may even require a home visit before the dog is adopted out. Often people will laugh and say that they were interviewed in such detail that one would think they were adopting a child! Right!

Adoptive families would be wise to check out any rescue they are interested in with the Better Business Bureau, local obedience schools and veterinarians, and the local shelters. The shelters may be able to tell you if they have taken in dogs that could not be returned to the rescue group.

If a particular breed is wanted, consider contacting a rescue that specializes in that breed. Good groups will usually have the dog spayed or neutered, and give the appropriate shots and health checks. Some even will go so far as to get teeth cleaned! Of course, you will have to pay or provide a “donation” for any animal you get, but most times you are getting these health services at a far lower price than you would otherwise.

Even rescue dogs that aren’t puppies can experience the adventure of new learning, and should be taken to obedience training classes. Most rescue dogs will come with a name, but will do fine if you choose to rename them. Rescue dogs excel in many roles, from therapy dog work and obedience competition, to taking part in family activities of all kinds. My rescue Greyhounds loved doing tricks, showing off with the “Dancing Greyhound” of Kathleen and Waldo Gilley, and competing in UKC and AKC trials. One, “Sage,” was listed in the top ten AKC obedience Greyhounds. The best rescues groups will try to match dog to human so that the dog will have the best chance to fulfill his potential.

Those who take on a rescue dog can be rewarded many times over. If they are trained with patience and love, and made a part of the family, the likelihood of having to return a rescue dog is small. Good rescue groups have a vested interest in making sure their placements are the best they can be, so be sure you do business with only the ethical groups!

WANTED: NEW HOME

Jan Gribble NADOI member #925

NADOI member Jan Gribble lives in New Mexico and runs a busy obedience school. She is active in dog-related legislative issues both in her area and nationally, and is currently serving as NADOI's president. This article is certainly timely, and hopefully will aid instructors who may encounter clients with this problem.

The increasing number of foreclosures, combined with an even larger loss of jobs, has placed many pet owners in dire straights. Forced to move, or faced with a choice between feeding their family or the family pet, many dog owners have abandoned or surrendered their dogs. While in the last two decades, the number of dogs euthanized by shelters has steadily decreased, that number is again on the rise.

In the past few years, using “adopt-a-thons” and weekend “adoption” clinics, shelters and rescue organizations have re-homed larger number of dogs than ever before. However, since these types of events are geared towards impulse “buys”, many of these dogs are going into homes where the new owners are unaware of the commitment, both financially, emotionally and in time that is required to meet the physical and mental needs of their new dog. Is it any wonder that when times get tough, the dog hits the road?

People who take the time to research the best breed for their family and lifestyle, who connect with a responsible breeder who screens his or her puppy buyers and educates buyers on the responsibility associated with obtaining a dog, are less likely to feel their dog is expendable, and because responsible breeders will take back any dog they breed, these dogs are less likely to end up in shelters or with rescue groups if a dog owner's situation turns dire.

While no one wants to believe their job is at risk, that they or a family member may face significant health problems, their home may be foreclosed or that they might even die, significant life-altering events are a fact of life. Everyone who owns an animal, large or small, needs to have a contingency plan in place if something were to occur where it is impossible to continue to maintain that animal. Letting a horse starve because you can't afford hay is not an option. While your dog might be happier eating a lesser quality kibble and staying with you, a forced relocation may make it impossible for you to keep your dog.

No one should feel guilty about calling the breeder of their dog if their situation requires placement of the pet they spent forethought on obtaining. A breeder often knows of people who are looking for an adult dog of that breed and may be able to help transition your dog into another home with the least amount of trauma to both owner and dog.

Even if you didn't obtain your dog from a reputable breeder, most rescue groups and some shelters, now have contracts that require you to return the dog to the group or shelter. If you have such a contract, please respect it and let the group or shelter know that your situation has changed and you can no longer provide for the dog.

If you obtained your dog from another source, however, and returning the dog is not an option, then there are some basic considerations to keep in mind.

While there are people who will tell you that charging a fee for your animal will ensure it goes into a good

home, money is not the best criteria to determine whether the home you place your pet is suitable. Simply paying a fee does not guarantee that the person is going to be a responsible dog owner. The first thing you need to accept is that the amount of money you have invested in your pet is not going to be recouped. Your goal should not be to make money on the deal, but rather to ensure that the match between prospective owner and dog is a good one and likely to result in a permanent placement.

Long before you ever find yourself in a position to need to re-home your dog, you should take steps to ensure that if you need to do so, a good placement will be possible. Socializing your dog so that it is acceptable of people is critical. No one is interested in taking on an older dog with serious behavioral issues, and it is unrealistic and unfair to expect anyone to feel responsible for your dog. Basic training so that your dog has good manners will make your dog more appealing to someone looking to provide a home to an older dog. If your dog has behavior problems, understand that, again, the chances are good that no one else is interested in taking on those problems. Address behavioral problems when they first occur. It will make the time you spend with your dog more enjoyable as well as make it easier to re-home the dog if needed in the future.

If your dog has serious health issues which require an ongoing financial commitment, realize that your best choice, while difficult, will be to make the decision to humanely euthanize your dog.

Well-mannered, trained dogs, which are well socialized to people, will often find a new home with friends or family. If this turns out not to be the case, the following may help you locate that great home.

Start by answering the following questions about your dog and family:

1. What is your dog's underlying temperament (is he/she quiet or rambunctious)?
2. Does your dog enjoy or simply tolerate children?
3. Has your dog been exposed to babies, toddlers, and children under the age of seven? If the answer is no, look for a new home without the added stresses of babies, toddlers or children under the age of seven.
4. Does your dog need more grooming than regular brushing or nail trimming? If yes, look for a home that has experience with the type of grooming required or the finances and willingness to have the dog professionally groomed.
5. Has your dog lived in a household with another pet? If so, did the dog interact appropriately with that pet? If not, re-homing your dog into a household with a cat or another dog may not be an appropriate placement. There is a big difference between a dog that enjoys occasional interactions with other dogs and one that is willing to share the time and attention of its owner with another dog. Think carefully before you place a dog that has never lived with another dog into a household with an existing dog.
6. How much exercise does your dog need (this may not be the same as how much the dog is currently exercised.) Placing an active dog in a household with a retired couple that is not physically active is not a good choice. Conversely, placing a dog that would prefer to be a couch potato with someone who wants a jogging companion is also not advisable.
7. What is the dog's current household like? If the dog is used to a single person, a family may be overwhelming for the dog. While some dogs may adjust, keep the dog's underlying temperament and prior exposure to children in mind before making a placement with a family. If the dog is used to a family, and enjoys the activities of family life, it might not be happy in a home with a single person.

8. Is your dog used to sleeping on the bed and being on the couch? Is your dog usually kept outside or inside during the day? Find out how a prospective owner intends to maintain the dog and whether the expected changes are going to be radical. While some dogs are flexible about major lifestyle changes, other dogs find major changes traumatic which can lead to behavior problems that the new home may not want to deal with.

Being honest about your dog's past, with regard to health issues, behavioral problems and how well socialized your dog really is, will help you determine what type of home you should be looking for. Once you have identified the type of home that will be the best fit for your dog, then you can make good decisions about where to re-home.

Talk with your veterinarian (your dog has received regular veterinary check-ups and is current on vaccinations, right?). Maybe a client has recently lost a beloved dog similar to yours and is looking for another companion.

Talk to your co-workers. Perhaps they, or a neighbor, has been talking about getting a dog and would be thrilled to get a well-socialized, trained dog that needs a new home.

Talk with friends and family. The dog may find a new home with someone where you can still spend time with your dog; or you may find that someone is willing to keep your dog in the interim while you get back on your feet.

Surrendering your dog to a rescue group or shelter means you have no input on where your dog is placed or even if your dog is placed. "No kill" shelters or rescue groups that warehouse dogs for long periods of time are detrimental to the emotional and mental health of dogs. Think carefully before consigning your dog to this fate. If you opt to relinquish your dog to a rescue group or shelter, find out what their placement policies are, that you agree with those policies, and make sure you are comfortable with where the dog will be housed in the interim.

Don't wait until the last minute when you have no time to find the right home and are willing to accept any home for your dog. Your dog trusts you and deserves better. Re-homing your dog is going to be traumatic, more so for you if you have done your job with socializing and training your dog. Dogs that are well-adjusted will make the transition to a new home with relative ease, and you will know that you loved your dog enough to make the transition to a new home easier on him or her.

SO YOU OWN MORE THAN ONE DOG

by Marti Kincaid

Owning more than one dog can be quite an adventure. Let's look at it from the dogs' point of view.

Most dogs spend the first weeks of life with littermates where they will learn the skills needed in a pack. Their social life revolves around the dogs present. When a puppy is brought into its new home, it wants this social interaction to continue. If another dog is not present, the puppy will learn how to interact with the human family. However, if another dog is present, the puppy will choose to interact with the dog. People can become no more interesting than a piece of furniture.

An analogy for this is to imagine that you have been transported against your will to a foreign country. No one looks, acts or talks so that you understand what is going on. In order to survive, you will learn how to interact with this foreign society. However, if you find someone else from your hometown, you will cling to that person as much as possible.

Here are two simple tests to see whether your dog prefers you over another dog. 1) Take dog #1 out for a walk and leave dog #2 at home. When you arrive home, see who Dog #2 greets first. Is it you (pass) or Dog #1(fail)? Now repeat the test only take dog #2 and leave dog #1. If the dog greets the other dog first, guess what ... you're not very socially important.

2) When the dogs are playing together, can you easily get either dogs' attention? Try calling one of the dogs while they are playing or interrupt the game with a toy. (The game must end without lashing out by one dog at the other dog. If that happens, then things are out of control.) Did the dog come willingly (pass) or were you ignored (fail)?

If your dogs can pass these two tests, congratulations...you will not have a problem with training.

Didn't pass? It's time to build a relationship and change the dog's behavior.

First, separate the dogs. A fence is fine. No fence? Then it's harder but it can be done. Now, lots of control work with both dogs. We're talking about basic obedience work. Each dog will have a chance to learn that you are the source of what is important ... food, grooming, and games. Their social interactions will now come from you so you must be more interesting than any dog could ever be!

This is a slow process. It can take six months but the benefits will far outweigh the time it takes. You will have dogs that respond to you, that don't howl and cry when left alone, and are not a problem around other dogs (there is nothing cute about a Newfoundland frantic to “play” with a Min. Poodle!)

Yes, the dogs can eventually be back together. This is not a permanent situation. If you see problems developing later, you can intervene with the program again but with much faster results.

PREVENTION: When bringing a puppy home, do not allow unlimited access to the other dogs. If the puppy wants to play with another dog, take the puppy somewhere else and play games with a toy, do some training...anything exciting and enjoyable.. so that the puppy gets a bit tired. Now let the puppy play for a while with the other dog. The puppy should have times of isolation so that it will learn the self confidence of being by itself.

When the puppy has spent about 2 months bonding to the family, it can be introduced to more unsupervised time with the other dogs. Watch for inappropriate play (growling, attacking, lashing out behaviors). If it occurs, do more control work. Be sure you are following the basic rules of feeding, sleeping, toys, territory and grooming. [see handout “How to Have a Happy Dog ...”]

These same procedures apply when bringing a new dog (rehomeing) into the household. Develop the relationship with the new dog as well as establishing the priorities in the pack.

NADOI

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Letters to the Dog Lady

By Helen Cariotis
NADOI member #372

Many years back, in an attempt to keep my name out in front of the public, I agreed to write a “dog column” for our local weekly paper. It sounded like a good deal; I’d take questions from the pet-owning public and give them sage advice in the column. In return, I’d get lots of free exposure and name recognition. So “Canine Corner” was born, and proved to be a popular feature for the hometown folks. With any luck, I’d get some reasonably good questions each week, but sometimes the mailbox came up empty, yet I still faced a deadline. So I did what every good advice columnist does ... I wrote to myself. The following are two of those columns, pulled, as they say, from the vault.

“Hello Dog Lady ... my dog is a dyed-in-wool cat chaser. He hasn’t hurt one yet, but I am afraid he might. Is there anything I can do?” (Signed, “Furs’ a flyin’ Fred”)

Dear Fur, you don’t say if these are your cats, a neighbor’s, strays, or what. Dogs are territorial and will defend their home turf against intruders of any variety. Many dogs are quite prey-driven, as well. Even dogs that get along with “their” cats will chase the neighbor’s cat away. He is just doing his job, and besides, the neighbor’s cat isn’t likely to come in your yard twice, unless he really is a box of rocks!

If it is your household cats that your dog is chasing, you have a bit more of a problem. Some dogs will leave the cat alone if they are in the house together, but chase it if it appears in the yard. Some will just chase, but not hurt, the cat. Some won’t chase the cat unless it runs (most cats that live with dogs know to move in slo-mo). But many, unfortu-

nately, will chase and kill the cat.

This can be tough to deal with if your dog is an adult, and has not been exposed to cats, or has a history of cat chasing and killing. Remember that prey drive (what we are talking about here) is hard-wired into the dog’s brain and is best modified in puppyhood. In fact, most kinds of work that dogs do for us are nothing more than modified prey drive, but that’s a whole other column!

If you bring a new puppy home, and you have cats, introduce them from the beginning. Hopefully, your cat is one of those that will stand his ground in front of the little intruder and not run. Running triggers prey drive. Let the pup investigate the cat. A confident cat will let him know when he is getting too familiar. Make sure the cat has an escape route or high place to go to. Hold and talk to the cat so that the pup knows he is yours, that you like him, and he belongs in your house. Always monitor the situation when the puppy and cat are together, and be patient. Millions of dogs and cats live in harmony, at least most of the time, if brought up together. And get lots of cute pics!

My best advice for the “advanced” cat chaser is to not push your luck!

“Dear Dog Lady ... I just bought a puppy for my four-year-old child (he really wanted one). I want him to have his own dog to grow up with. But the puppy plays really rough with Timmy and won’t listen to him. What can I do before Timmy becomes just another chew toy? (Signed, “Chewie’s mom”)

Dear Mom, I hate to be the one to tell you this, but four years old is way too young to have the responsibility of a dog. Timmy “is” just a chew toy as far as the

puppy is concerned. He’s a littermate, and certainly no one with any real authority over him. You see, dogs are pack animals, and are genetically programmed to want to know where everyone stands in the pack, dog or human. Your new pup wasn’t in the house a week before he knew Timmy was at the bottom of the pecking order (or at least I hope he is; if not you have more problems than I fix). Because your new dog views Timmy as a subordinate, he will tend to be pushier with him than he would with you, probably won’t take corrections very seriously, and will play with him like he would with another puppy, in other words, rough. Besides, little kids act a lot like puppies do anyway: running and yelling, waving their arms, and getting down on the ground or floor.

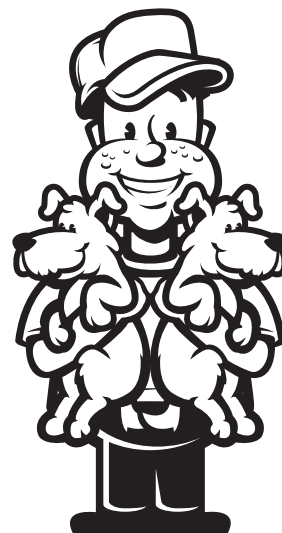
This is not to say you can’t raise kids and dogs together ... my German Shepherd Dogs have helped me raise five! But do give thought to selecting the right breed, and the right individual puppy. Never give a child under the age of about 14 sole responsibilities of a dog, and use common sense at all times. Always monitor kids and dogs when they are together. You should be the one in charge of training and discipline. As soon as the kids are old enough to understand, educate them about how to relate to dogs, and always set a good example for children to follow.

By the way, the only other Timmy I know of was Lassie’s owner, and isn’t he still in the well?

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Littermates ... Don't be Tempted To Keep Two

By Norma Simpson Rust
 NADOI member #459

Ideally, the time to select or purchase your pup is seven weeks; however by 10 weeks it is imperative to separate the puppies. Over the past twenty years I have talked to people every week who had littermates and wanted to sign up for puppy class with them. I felt obligated to mention what a difficult task they were facing.

They were always amazed that I could describe their pups' behavior without seeing them in action. Invariably one of the pups becomes a bully, the other a wimp. Life with these pups is one big wrestling match. They become neurotically attached to each other and when separated neither one of them will have any confidence. Unfortunately, I could probably count on one hand the people who made the decision to sell or place one of the pups as a result of my advice.

A veterinarian signed up for puppy class with two pups that were to become hunting dogs. When I saw that he had paid for two pups I called him and discussed the problems incurred with littermate behaviors. As it is necessary to separate them as much as possible, I suggested that he bring one the first week and the other one the second week, alternating through the six-week class. This would allow each pup to be with him by itself and able to spend bonding time and training time without competition. He stated that he had already arranged for his wife and son to come to class to train the second puppy. He wanted to continue with his original plan and I reluctantly agreed to go along with it. Throughout the first class the pup that he was handling was able to function some-

what normally. The puppy that his wife and son were working with, however, would only cower and shake. It was too frightened to even take a treat. The doctor was convinced that this was because he wasn't handling that puppy in class. He decided to handle that puppy the next week and have his wife work with the more confident puppy. He quickly realized that when they exchanged puppies his presence made little or no difference to the cowardly pup. This convinced him to make the decision to separate them. He was uniquely dedicated to adhering to the separation of the two puppies and had the facilities to do so at his clinic. He was able to take one of the pups to work with him every day, leaving the other at home. He continued to train them and obtained a Canine Good Citizen Title on the most confident one. He later told me that a friend of his purchased two puppies out of this same litter. This friend kept them in a pen in his backyard until they were eight or nine months old. He then decided to start training them but found it to be an impossible task. This shared experience convinced each of them to never again have two puppies at the same time. The veterinarian, recognizing the value of puppy training subsequently sent every owner that came into his clinic to our puppy classes.

I need to point out at this time the most wonderful thing about puppy training is that all breeds are equally trainable from 8-16 weeks. It doesn't matter what breed it is, all puppies are on equal ground for behavior shaping and training during this period of their lives. However, if your pup spends all of its time with other dogs or a littermate, it will bond to dogs and not people and

never gain the socialization skills it needs to function confidently in life.

An example of this occurred recently in my puppy class. A lady with a 14-week old Boxer came to class and her puppy wouldn't even look at her the first night. In the behavior-shaping segment of the class she was showing the pup treats but it was only interested in getting to the other pups.

We tried different treats and nothing worked.

Later in the class I asked the question, do any of you have other dogs? At this time I caution the class to keep their pups separated from their grown dogs and the reasons that it is so important the puppy not be left unattended in the company of adult dogs. First and most important of all, the puppy could be seriously injured or killed. Second, the puppy would bond to dogs and not be interested in human interactions. The owner of the Boxer said that her puppy was spending all of her time out in the backyard with three adult dogs. After the problems were explained she kept the puppy separated from the other dogs and by the next week her puppy was working for treats and became the star of the class.

I recently had a woman in a beginning class with a tiny white Poodle that was about three years old. He would bite without provocation or warning. He had grown up with his mother and a littermate. He was very insecure and this kind of idiopathic aggression is very

See Littermates on page 59

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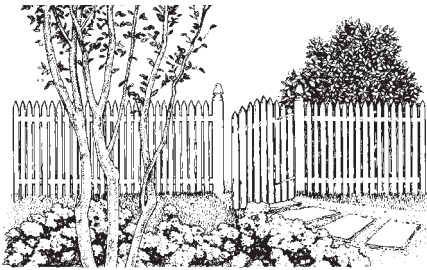
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Everyday Dangers

By Helen Cariotis, NADOI member #372

Most of us experienced “dog hands” just naturally (and benefiting from years of experience) seem to be able to see the things in our environments that can be dangerous for dogs. This article is meant to be an aid to our clients who may be new to the world of dogs, and a good reminder for all of us that our first responsibility as dog owners is to keep dogs safe. We can buy the best puppy around and feed the most expensive diet, see our veterinarian regularly, and train and compete too, but one gate left ajar can end it all in a heartbeat.



When visiting clients in their homes, I am amazed at some of the things I observe. One thing new dog owners frequently need to be reminded of is that no barrier will keep the dog in (and safe) if the dog can get through it. Doors to the home should be kept closed and locked. Make sure family members know that no door should be opened until the dog is under their control. This may be as simple as slipping a couple of fingers through the collar, or perhaps keeping a leash hanging by the door for use *before* the door is opened. Everyone wants to teach their dogs not to go through the front door without permission, but until they learn that, physical restraint will be needed. It is a personal decision, of

course, but I advise my clients to always take their dogs outside through one door, or possibly two. The dog will learn that these are “his” doors, and if he is never allowed out the front door, it may cut down the chances that he will bolt out that door and into a busy street.

Just as we do with our kids, try to take a look around your house from the eye level of the dog. Keep pots pushed back on back burners on the stovetop, and defrost your roast in the refrigerator. All garbage containers and household chemicals should be safely out of the dog’s reach.



You may want an immaculate bathroom, but now is not the time to add poisonous disinfectants to your toilet tank/bowl. For your dog, that is just another water supply! Child safety latches for cabinets and toilets work great for dogs too. Burning candles should never be left in a room with a dog, not even for an instant. Fireplaces and space heaters can also be a danger if you are not always watching.

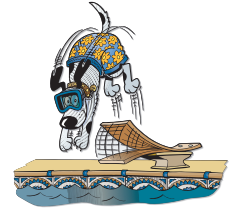
We crate our new puppies for training purposes, and also to keep them out of trouble. Once in the crate, make sure that your dog can’t reach anything near the crate or dangling close by, like electric or drapery cords. I always advise my clients to remove collars before putting a dog into a crate, unless they are nearby. It is amazingly easy for collars or tags to catch on the interior of a crate. Likewise, take a good look at the hardware on your kitchen cabinets. Those handles are at just the right height to catch a collar, and if you aren’t home, your dog can panic, pull, or turn, and easily tighten and twist

his collar. It goes without saying that any training-type collar should be removed if you are not with your dog, and leashes as well.

All outside gates should be locked. Either arrange to be home or have a neighbor let in your pool guy or lawn man if you can’t be there. Chances are really good that if your help let the dog out, they are not going to spend time chasing the dog around your neighborhood.

Dogs should be nowhere near any power lawn equipment. Lawn mowers and weed whackers can cause deadly injuries to dogs.

If you have a backyard pool, it goes without saying that you must either fence it off or make sure that your dog can get out safely if you are not around. Get in your pool and peek out just at the surface like an alligator would. Are you amazed that each side of the pool looks the same at water level? Dogs can easily panic and not remember or understand how to find the steps, so make sure there is some kind of visual marker in that area. It can be a cone (paint it white) or even a white stripe, or some bright, contrasting color painted on the house. Then practice with the dog in the pool. Also, pools can be deadly, even in winter. Make sure that pool covers aren’t torn or sagging into the water. If a dog walks out onto that “trap,” it could easily drown.



Safety in the car is another area that inexperienced dog owners often leave to chance. Of course, keeping a crate in the vehicle for the dog is always a good idea, but if not, the dog should be taught to ride in the back, away from the driver. Always lock doors (child safety locks are good) as it is very easy for a dog to inadvertently hit an automatic door lock and possibly open a door. Leashes can easily be attached to seat belts or cargo clips, or even dog harness/seat belt devices can be used. Caution new owners about the dangers of leaving a dog in an unattended car for any length of time, and at any time of year.

If dog-proofing sounds very much like child-proofing, you are right, and that can make it easy for our clients to understand. It is always worth the effort. I hate to hear of a client losing a beloved dog for no other reason than they didn’t think ahead about possible dangers.

Getting Dogs and Cats Together

By Jacqueline Munera
NADOI member #1070

So you've decided the time is right to add a cat to your dog family. You've read about proper introduction procedures, the importance of going slowly and environmental management techniques. Everyone knows the old scented towel switcharoo and look at each other through the sliding glass door games, but is there a missing element to most of these plans? I believe there is and it goes by the name of 'Basic Obedience Skills'!

I am certainly not implying that the above desensitization activities aren't worthwhile or should be discontinued. They are, along with counter conditioning, in fact a vital aspect of promoting harmonious feelings between species that are expected to live together and perhaps even become friends. The presence of a new kitty creating massive amounts of favorite yummys for the resident dog is bound to encourage at least a tiny bit of ****.

I propose that we not forget about the skills we have worked so hard to teach our dogs for use in the show ring, agility, rally O and the myriad of other fun jobs we do together. If you instruct puppy or basic obedience classes, think about how you encourage your clients to teach their dogs alternative behaviors to common complaints about jumping, mouthing and barking. Now imagine ways in which these skills can be utilized during the introduction of a new furry family member.

Remember to set your dog and cat up for success by using leashes, crates, the ever popular baby gates, and favorite toys or treats. Progress to closer meetings only at the pace set by your furry family, keeping them fun and promoting good feelings among all involved.

- 1) **Sit:** This foundation behavior is one of the most overlooked problem solvers around! If a dog's butt is glued to the ground, just think of how much trouble they CAN'T get into. Highly rewarding sit instead of running out the door, jumping on quests, stealing goodies off the counter, and of course chasing the cat will make a great start in harmonious cat/dog relations.
- 2) **Attention:** Another key foundation behavior that heads off numerous undesired behaviors because it is quite challenging to get into trouble while giving eye contact and attention to your human. I use eye attention in two ways when working with dogs that are having trouble with other dogs or cats.

First teach eye attention without distractions to complicate training, only adding the cat or dog when the behavior is solid. When adding the distraction cat or dog, let the training dog look calmly at them, click or use your word marker, and reward them with a party when they look back to you. This teaches your dog to look calmly without barking, lunging or chasing kitty then give attention back to you for a fantastic reward.

- 3) **Leave It:** This is another behavior that people often learn in classes to come away from food and then forget all about using it when attempting to teach their dog good behavior around a new cat. The key to success with this cue is to start with ample distance between the two and deliver a reward more valuable than what you are asking your dog to leave alone.

The challenge may be to find a reward worth not chasing the cat, so don't limit yourself to only using commercial dog treats. Experiment with toys, a variety of foods, and don't neglect using your voice and expression to let your dog know how excited you are about her success!

- 4) **Down:** This is a wonderful cue to give if your cat is nervous about meeting a large breed dog. As with the sit, think of all the things your dog isn't doing while they are lying down and now they even look smaller!
- 5) **Kisses:** This is a silly, fun behavior cue helpful to a dog that may not know quite what to do with the furry alien creature added to the household. "Do I run away, eat it, ignore it, or what? Oh, mom says to give it kisses!" If you've worked on this cue and created a really positive association to it, those feelings can transfer to whoever you are asking your dog to "kiss". This cue obviously requires actual contact between the two animals, so is only done after prior utilization of Counter Conditioning/Desensitization exercises, the above behaviors are under solid stimulus control and both dog and cat have let you know they are ready.

Successful household integration between different species involves multiple key factors including, but certainly not limited to, breeds, ages, and sexes, amount of living space, prior exposure and genetic temperament tendencies. These factors should ideally be well examined prior to new family additions, but if they weren't, don't despair.

Once you bring in a new cat or dog, don't forget to utilize the hard work you've previously done to train your dog. Set the dog and cat up for success by managing the environment to encourage good thoughts towards each other, while you remain relaxed. And the number one most important thing to remember is ... HAVE FUN!

Jacqueline is a Florida member who has "four crazy cats" one troubled dog, and a sideways gerbil! A dog trainer and obedience instructor, she will be working towards her degree in animal behavior in the fall.

SECTION 2 • INSTRUCTORS INSIGHT

REMEDIAL HOUSEBREAKING PROGRAM

Helen Cariotis # 372, Editor NADOI Notes

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Not a day passes that I don't get a phone call from someone frantic to finally cure their dog's housebreaking problems. This is almost always a long-standing problem. The reason the owners are trying to solve it varies from their spouse threatening to get rid of the dog, to them moving into a new house (or getting new carpets), to their in-laws moving in, to them finally realizing that no one can live with this problem forever.

Remedial housetraining will generally not be a cakewalk, like training a new puppy. Thank goodness our dogs are as resilient as they are, for many are able to bounce back from poor early management and learn the appropriate behavior. For purposes of this article, I am considering a dog a candidate for "remedial" housetraining when they are adult dogs that have never been housetrained and have had at least a year to practice the wrong behavior. Dogs who have been maintained outdoors (even for years) can usually be housetrained much faster and easier than those who have a history of years of eliminating inside. What's done is sometimes hard to un-do, and only the most committed and motivated of clients will follow through long enough to see a good result.

Several years ago, I wrote up this plan for Bonnie and Bella, two Schnauzer sisters. It worked well for their owner and for many since, so I am passing it on to anyone who might find it useful. It is a plan that is highly adaptable, and would be even easier to implement by an owner who could be home more during the day. Their owner was gone during the day on a regular basis and couldn't leave them outside, which made designing a do-able program even more of a challenge.

Weeks 1 and 2

Bonnie and Bella are not to have any freedom to roam the house. They must always be supervised, or in the crates, in the utility room, behind the gate in the kitchen, or on house lines out in the family room (or anywhere else).

A house line is a lightweight line or leash that you keep on the dog's collar when he is inside (only under your direct supervision, of course). It should be sized according to the dog you have (i.e. a Rottweiler can have a six-foot houseline, but a Papillon might need a four-foot one). The house line acts as an extension of your hand. You can easily watch the end of it, and if you see it sliding around the sofa, get up and follow the dog so he doesn't have a housetraining accident. If you have a dog that puts his paws up on the kitchen counter or tries to get on the sofa, you can simply step on the line or pick up the end to prevent or correct the behavior. It is also good while teaching a "wait" at the door.

Dragging a house line not only makes housetraining easier, but is also good for taking pushy dogs down a notch or two. It is a wonderful tool when you need to allow a dog a little freedom in the house, but not run of the house. The dog will always be in eyesight, so there are many opportunities for the handler to praise appropriate behavior (i.e. downing calmly), as well as prevent/correct inappropriate behaviors (i.e. picking up the remote or getting on the bed). recommend house lines a lot!

The nice thing about the house lines is that the dogs will never be out of your sight; thus, you will not have any more accidents, unless you are very unobservant. You must hold on to the lines, tie them to your belts, sit on them, whatever, but the dogs must be attached to you. Get help for this if you can't do it alone.

Weeks 3 and 4

If you have had no accidents in the first two weeks, you may stop attaching the lines to you, and just let the dogs trail or drag the lines around. You still need to keep the dogs in view, since they can get tangled. If there are accidents, go back to what you did the first two weeks. If there are no accidents (which means no accidents for four weeks), you can remove the house lines altogether.

Weeks 5 to 8

Continue to "back up" the boundaries for the dogs. Keep bedroom doors closed, and if the dogs go from the family room to the breakfast nook for example, follow them or make sure you can keep visual tabs on them. This will be a challenge with two dogs! If there is any backsliding, you will need to re-attach the house line on the offending dog.

General tips

Be sure to take the dogs out after eating, drinking (keep water outdoors; it's easier), playing, waking up, or after any change in activity. Go out with them and praise them verbally when they go. You may give a little food treat. At other times, cut back on the treats, because we want them eating only at mealtimes, not throughout the day. You might give your cookie in the morning, for example. Clean any soiled areas with an enzyme (biological) type cleaner; follow directions exactly.

If they don't go, confine in crate or on house line and try again in 15 to 20 minutes. The dogs don't get any freedom in the house until they have gone potty. When you take them out, try not to play with them until they "go." You may need to take them out on a leash (I know this is a pain with two dogs) if they just play around. Play with the dogs for a few minutes after they go potty, if you can. This play can be a reward for eliminating outside. Use your "command word."

You may want to attach some jingle bells to the doorframe and teach the girls to ring the bells to alert you to open the door for them. Make sure you don't mind being "the doorman" if you try this tip, as smart dogs will take advantage of you! Sometimes just covering the bells with a dishtowel will signal the dogs that the doorman is off duty.

Keep the dogs in the utility room during the day. You may want to crate them in your bedroom overnight. If you can make the patio into a safe area, that might provide a little break for them on work days.

Take up all water in the house. Give water throughout the day when you are home and first thing in the morning. They can go a few hours without a drink. Schedule the food and feed in separate bowls. Leave it down for 10 minutes, then remove. Always take the dogs out to potty after eating and drinking.

Stay on this plan for the entire eight weeks. If you have good luck (no accidents), then you can start allowing the girls more freedom of the house, but still be very watchful. I would, in any event, keep them somewhat confined when you are at work. The day will hopefully come when both of them can be out in the whole house while you are away, but since you are gone all day, it won't be a disaster if you don't get there. You might want

to have someone (neighbor, dog walker, friend) come in at least once a day to let the dogs out; this would speed up the rehabbing and sure make it easier on the dogs.

Of course, I also recommend that you get started on the “Leadership Program” right away, and consider registering for one of our basic classes as well.

BEHAVIOR SHAPING

By Norma Simpson Rust, NADOI member # 459

Texas member Norma Rust has put 32 titles on her Border Collies and Poodles, and her students have earned well over 200 titles.

She thinks that behavior shaping is a must for puppies and certainly for competition dogs.

When I first heard the term, “behavior shaping,” I was skeptical about the process because it involved using food. I had attended classes where a collar pop followed by praise was the normal procedure and food was considered an absolute NO. Today, twenty years after teaching behavior shaping in two puppy classes per week (about ten dogs in each class), I am an avid proponent of this way of doing things. I discovered that at this age, most pups seem to be created equal. After pups get beyond about four months, training may change some if you have a Dachshund or a Golden Retriever, but the stars of my puppy classes seem to be the Boxers, Shar-Peis, Bulldogs and Chihuahuas. As a trainer, this observation has never ceased to amaze me.

The use of food by itself does not insure successful behavior shaping. Where the treat is held, offered and given is of prime importance. It is necessary to pair the delivery of the food with praise as well, so that when you no longer have the food you will still have your verbal reward. Puppies are trained to walk on the leash, sit, down, stand, and come on a hand signal by properly using treats to shape these desired behaviors. For example, the sit is taught by holding the treat in palm of the hand by the thumb and delivered with the correct hand signal.

Just as correct behavior can be shaped, incorrect behavior or position can be shaped as readily. A good example of this happened recently in my Beginner obedience class with a young man and his five-month-old American Bulldog. A graduate of my Puppy class, this pup has had eleven lessons so far, and struts alongside his owner with that look we all strive for in our competition dogs. Since it can take six months to truly shape a behavior, the work of his owner is not over yet. This great start came from using proper techniques to shape the behavior we wanted.

Just as I am gloating over our success with this dog, we get to the recall across the room. The young dog flies to his owner, sits in front, turns his head to the left, and the owner reaches out and gives him a treat. Now the handler is shaping the wrong behavior! In training the front, treats delivered from hands that come from the sides of our body are shaping the behavior of looking at our hands. With large dogs, treats should be taken up to your chin and given from there to shape the behavior of looking up at your face, making it much easier for the dog to sit straight. With small dogs, the treat can be given between the knees. Sometimes handlers wonder why their dog lacks attention or eye contact. They may have unknowingly shaped inattention by giving treats while the dog is looking away. If a dog turns its back on the owner and the owner then reaches out to reward him, he has just begun shaping inattentive behavior as well.

Whether you want your dog to be a competition dog or a well-behaved pet, behavior shaping will make all the difference. Puppies taught to come on command consistently before the age of four months will always do so. Shaping the correct behavior and knowing the difference between correct and incorrect is all important. Ian Dunbar, the noted behaviorist, addressed these differences by relating the story of an owner watching his dog dig at the dog park. The owner called the dog to him; then punished it for digging. In reality, he was very effectively punishing the dog for coming, and made sure he most likely would not want to come to him in the future.

An example of how behavior shaping can not only be very successful but also useful comes from a student of mine in Utility class. Her Great Dane inspired us to shape behaviors for no other reason than it is really hard to move a 150-pound dog into an exact position. When this student's dog would finish to heel position, she would point to the floor in front of her. After sitting, he would wrap his head around her to look at her right hand that usually held the treat. I suggested that she hold the treat with her left hand at shoulder height. This not only drew his attention up as he sat, but also shaped a correct sit at heel. It is much more desirable to shape a desired behavior than to try to correct an incorrect one.

Behavior shaping is the most valuable tool that a trainer can employ. Just make sure that the behavior you are shaping is the one you want. Remember, you get the behavior that you reward!

EVALUATING YOUR TRAINING PROGRAM

By Helen Cariotis, NADOI member # 372

“The perfect training program or instructor, like the perfect dog, does not exist. However, with continual evaluation and continued education, constant improvement can be achieved to offer the community the best training program possible.”

Herb Morrison, NADOI member # 257

My best guess is that long-time member Herb Morrison wrote the above around 1975 or so. I spotted his statement while reading through some “vintage” NADOI Notes articles. The date really doesn't matter, as his statement would be true in any era, and never more so than today. The modern obedience class instructor is not only expected to offer a wide range of programs to entice dog owners of every sort, we are presumed to stay up on every new advancement, idea, and training tool. We like to think we are running the best training programs around, but how do we really know? What are some good ways to test ourselves and how we are doing? The excellent instructor will always want to find the weak spots in her curriculum, and will want to improve even more on what she is doing well.

We'd like to think that poor training programs would simply die a natural death, as no one would want to use them. While it is true that many businesses fail because they just don't offer what the customer wants or needs, or aren't able to produce a satisfactory finished product, the sad fact is that many poorly run obedience schools and businesses continue to exist year after year. Absolutely horrible trainers and instructors can continue to bring in enough new clients that they can stay in business, despite bad results and bad reputations. Sometimes just being the best in your area of operations is not enough; you have to continually improve in order to rise above, and resting on past accomplishments can be risky.

Any businessperson knows that, in the end, the only one whose recommendation matters is the customer's. Finding a way to canvass your clients and get honest opinions about your classes is important. Many instructors will simply pass out evaluation forms on the last class lesson, have the student fill them out, and collect them for study. Others find that sending an evaluation form home with the students and encouraging them to complete it and return it works better for getting more detailed information, and doesn't take up class time. If you do this, you might want to provide a pre-addressed, stamped envelope, as you will get more of them back that way. If you maintain an e-mail database on your students, it is easy to send out class evaluation forms this way, and you will find many students will take the time to fill them out and e-mail them back to you. Just this year, I started a web-based discussion group for my class students. It has been useful in many ways, and getting feedback on their class experience has been one way I have used it. Naturally, if you have time, it is always good to talk to your students one-on-one and in person and get their opinion of their training experience. Human nature being what it is, however, you usually will get your most candid comments in writing, and sometimes anonymously (which is okay; you just need the info).

While client evaluation of your training course is important, professional input can be invaluable. Most of us in this business are people I would call "assertive" and "confident," at the very least, and many of us are downright "alpha!" It takes some courage and the ability to admit that you might not know everything to ask a peer to critique what you are doing. It is amazing to me what another pair of trained eyes can see that has been in front of our faces, sometimes for years. Other class instructors, because they are in the business, can cut through layers of your old tried and true (and old and humdrum) ways and give you many fresh approaches to look at. Don't be hesitant to invite your training buddies from adjoining towns to visit and give you ideas. As long as you aren't in direct competition, you may find them very willing to help evaluate your programs.

A relatively new resource that can help us improve what we do is the business coach. Business coaches, though not necessarily trainers or even in dogs, can take an unbiased look at your entire set-up and offer concrete ways to maximize what you get out of your business. Their expertise, taken with your knowledge of what to offer, how to write a curriculum and how to instruct it, can make for a powerful team.

Of course, you can be your best evaluator. Be painfully honest as you ask yourself, and answer, these questions:

1. Do I still love what I do? (Burn-out is a constant threat and will negatively affect everything you do).
2. Do my students enjoy my classes? Do they return again and again?
3. Is the drop rate acceptable? How many of my classes graduate 100 percent?
4. Am I getting personal referrals?
5. Do I supply adequate ways for students to communicate with me outside of class, and do students make use of those avenues?
6. Do I attract, train, and keep good instructors and assistants? What is the turnover rate for my helpers?
7. And, of course, the most important evaluation tool of all - when I look at my students on the last week of class, do I see that they have they completed the required commands and exercises? Are they happy with their accomplishments and with their dog?

Would you send all your students home on the last class with a t-shirt that read, "I TRAINED MY DOG WITH _____!" If not, maybe you should do some evaluation of your program and make needed changes.

THE ETHICS OF HELPING DOG OWNERS DEAL WITH AGGRESSION ISSUES

By Linda Copti, NADOI member # 762

Aggression issues with dogs and their families seem to be on the rise, or at least we are being asked about them more. The number of so-called “experts” out there is growing as well. Although each expert will swear by their own methods of solving aggression problems, their techniques may not be the best for each individual family or dog. Anyone dealing with a serious problem like a biting dog should carefully investigate the person or school they choose to help them deal with the problem. Most of the time, these students will ask their obedience instructor for help first.

As instructors, we are many times going to be most trusted authority on any and all doggy problems, from the most benign of house-training difficulties to the dog that has bitten and injured a child. Many obedience instructors do not feel comfortable working with aggressive dogs, and will refer them out to another trainer they have faith in, or to a veterinary behaviorist. Some instructors don’t have the necessary experience to work with these problems. This can be a wise decision for the instructor for many reasons. Their insurance premium may not cover working with known biting dogs, or they simply may not be willing to accept the liability of working with dogs that injure people. Some instructors, although competent to work with aggressive dogs, have a difficult time recommending euthanasia if that is the only answer.

One thing most experienced instructors can do is tell if the problem dog is simply an out-of-control adolescent who needs a leader and some boundaries, or a true danger. Often, the pet owner will view any “rowdy” behavior as aggression, and panic. We are in a good position to help this person with the appropriate training, whether it be a private session or two, or a group class.

If an instructor does handle aggression issues herself, she must be willing to look at the whole picture. Although we have all encountered dogs that would challenge anyone, aggression problems rarely spring forth on their own. Most are created or certainly made worse by the humans in the dog’s environment, and the instructor must be able to work with an entire family before a solution is reached. While most of us are not formally trained social workers, instructors who work with aggressive dogs may find themselves acting as one. Family dynamics are almost always going to be a big part of the problem and the solution.

Instructors who choose to work with aggression issues must also be good history-takers, and have an evaluation form and procedure that is proven to be able to uncover the reasons and path of the problem. Aggression in dogs doesn’t usually exist in a vacuum, and the good evaluator will be able to pinpoint the many other problems existing as well. Compassion, not only for the dog, but for the family is a crucial characteristic of the instructor who works with aggression issues. It is very easy to blame the owner for this problem, but we must also be sure to give them credit for at least wanting to try to solve it. Many, if not most dogs are mishandled into the kind of stress that gives them the idea of using their teeth as a solution. By the same token, many owners make mistakes that they are able to recognize only in hindsight, and are able to come to some understanding of how they have contributed to the problem.

Instructors who work with aggressive dogs and their families should understand that most remedial work will take time, motivation, money and much patience on the part of the owners. Problems of long standing will not be cured overnight, and the sad truth is that many people-aggressive dogs will never be able to be made safe. Re-homing is usually not going to be an option in serious cases, and sadly, euthanasia sometimes will be.

Aggression is a fascinating area of work for many instructors. It is complex and confusing, and requires much experience and the ability to recover from heartbreak many times over. As dog lovers, it is perhaps the most difficult kind of work we can do.

GOOD MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR BEGINNERS

By Helen Cariotis, NADOI member # 372

This is one of my handouts for new puppy owners. The advice certainly applies to older “new” dogs as well, including rescues and shelter dogs. Preventing problems is so much easier than going back to fix them later.

Many, if not most, of the difficulties that novice owners have with their young puppies or new dogs are directly related to management. Good management simply means planning ahead for success with your new dog. It means setting the stage so that the dog will likely do the right thing instead of the wrong thing. It means thinking ahead so that potential problems are prevented rather than continually being corrected.

Don’t allow a puppy or untrained older dog free run of your house. Until he earns the privilege, he should be confined to the kitchen or other small room by baby gates, in a crate, on a leash with you, or in the yard or run outdoors. All areas where he has unsupervised access should be thoroughly dog-proofed. When your puppy or untrained dog is out in the family room, you must be with him and watch him. You will then be able to reinforce the behaviors you want, and correct those you don’t want him to repeat. In the yard, put away garden hoses, patio furniture, the children’s toys, and tools. Store objects that may be chewed safely in the barn or garage, or out of reach of the dog. Cover things you can’t move, like the air conditioner or spa, with chicken wire or welded wire. Use chemical repellents where needed. When the untrained dog is in the family room, put up the throw pillows and TV remotes. Don’t ever let him wander out of your sight. Let him drag a house-line, or take him with you when you leave the room.

Make your dog a part of your family. By allowing your puppy or untrained dog to live with you and your family, you create a dog that feels secure and content, and you will prevent many problems that are related to isolation and stress. Dogs that live their entire lives in the back yard may be prone to boredom and stress related behaviors, such as destructive chewing and digging, barking, and trying to escape.

Provide your dog with aerobic exercise and play every day. Try to take him places where he can get both mental stimulation and a physical workout. Dogs need both to stay lean, healthy, and mentally sharp.

Every breed of dog is different, and individuals within each breed can be different, so you may have to keep these differences in mind as you plan your management strategy. For example, smaller dogs, including many toys, are often more active indoors than larger breeds. They tend to be alert and “busy,” and will need exercise like their bigger brothers. Some very large breeds, like the larger sighthounds and Great Danes, can be quite sedate indoors, but still need outdoor exercise to be healthy. Terriers will dig, and hounds will scavenge every crumb of food on the floor. Retrievers will want something in their mouths, and herding breeds may want to chase things (cats, kids) both indoors and out. Thinking ahead and planning for good management, especially in that important first year you have your puppy or new dog, will allow you to proceed much faster in your training, and enjoy your dog so much more.

SIT DOWN! TEACHING AN OLD COMMAND IN A NEW WAY

By Marlene Keay Stachowiac, NADOI member # 337

Marlene is a long-time NADOI member and has served our organization in many capacities. She lives in Georgia and is an AKC obedience judge and serves on the board of Therapy Dogs, Inc., as well as running her own busy school.

Since dogs will spend approximately 98% of their entire lives in a “down” position (I read that somewhere), it should not be difficult to get the dog to do a proper down. Herding dogs almost never go into a sit first when “working.” Hounds just plop down even when running. They see no point in wasting energy by going into a sit first! I am meeting more trainers who have eliminated the “sit” when teaching the “down.” I have not taught the “down” from the “sit” position for at least ten years and found that dogs are much quicker in accepting the down position as a result.

In years past, puppies and dogs were taught to do the down from a sit position with their front legs pulled out so the dog ended up in a down position, but no more! This method had many dogs flailing their legs and generally resisting the down position. Handlers often were falling over the back of their dogs and/or finding themselves sprawled on the floor with their faces directly in the face of a frightened dog. Some found themselves actually under the dog! It was not a surprise that instructors were ending up with a large class drop-out rate.

Many students seemed to have a hard time making the adjustment from telling the dog to “sit ‘n down” to simply telling the dog what response they wanted from him, such as a “down.” The dog, after learning “sit ‘n down”, will sit first when given the “down” command if “sit” was the method used to teach a “down.” This is conditioning and if the dog is young, and this method is repeated often enough, the dog will have what is called “muscle memory.” If the dog sits first, and with continued motion goes into a down position, this may be just fine for most people and in competition obedience it is acceptable. However, there is a time delay especially for a “down in motion.”

How can handlers get their dog to do a “down” without their dog giving them the “doggie finger?” There are variations and alternatives but the following is the #1 method that I use.

While walking along with the dog on one side, and without a fanfare, plant a treat almost on the dog’s nose. The hand next to the dog would gently rest just behind the shoulders, not on the back, while the other hand brings the treat slowly down the chest and between the front paws. This action would cause the dog to “fold” in order to reach the treat while the hand on the shoulders encourages him not to back up. While walking, the handler comes to a slow stop, slightly bends his knees while the feet are in a comfortable stride position. The handler does not go down onto his knees. The dog is going “down,” not the handler! “The leash is either held in the hand with the treat or the handler steps on the leash so the dog may not go bouncing away. I would rather have a dog take one or two steps backwards then to step forward at this stage of learning the down.

Start praising the dog as he is going “down.” By praising or using “cooing words” as he is going down, the dog will not think he is in trouble. He may just think you are weird. Most dogs will correctly perform this exercise during the first lesson that it is introduced. Do not pull the treat forward or you will be teaching an infantry-crawl and not a down. There are a number of alternatives, but for the most part this is the #1 method I chose to use. As

soon as the dog is “down,” simultaneously give the treat and say “down” followed with the verbal release command such as “Okay” and body rubbing. Eventually the handler may simply say “down” while in an upright position. Save the excited voice and body rubbing until after the “down” has been completed. Otherwise the dog may think he is there to get a body massage, and when the massage stops, the dog may immediately get up. An excited voice may over-stimulate a few dogs, and you will have a dog jumping up to share the excitement with you too soon. Set the dog up for success, not for failure.

In about one week the treat is eliminated. Giving a release from the down position is the award motivator or “treat” equivalent.

I do not use the dog’s name first because the dog would soon think that is part of the “command.” Example: If the dog had just dashed out the gate, one would not want to shout, “Rudolph Valentino, Down, Stay, thank you please!” Too late, the dog is gone! Since we are not playing “Simon Says,” drop the dog’s name.

“Down” is an assumed stay. For instance, if I tell the dog “down,” it would be redundant to say “Stay.” If someone tells me, “My dog knows how to ‘down’ but he does not know the command ‘stay.’” I have to assume the dog does not know “down,” as that was all he was told to do; so if he does anything else, then he obviously does not know “down.” That is why I teach the “release” command right up front. “Okay” just means “you no longer have to remain in a down position.” It does not mean go off and play. I advise students that during the “learning period” not to have the dog do a down more than two or three times in a row. The goal is for the dog to learn not to get up until released with another command. It is more important that the dog learns to remain down with distractions before the time of the down is lengthened.

Keep your training fun and motivating for both you and your dog!

DOG CLASS DISASTERS

By Helen Cariotis, NADOI Member # 372

If you are in the business of training dogs and people long enough, you will have your share of “unplanned events.” Wild dogs, weird people, unpredictable weather, and even our own actions can combine to create some surprising and challenging classes. As good instructors, we are professionals, and hopefully able to rise above and conquer (or at least gloss over) the biggest disasters.

Long-time NADOI member Lillian Puchalski, # 250, wrote to tell me about the class she was teaching in a parking garage. Ahhh yes, the good old days before 5,000-square-foot, climate-controlled buildings! Lillian said it was the first night of a Beginner class, and only about 10 minutes before start time, when she walked into the garage and tripped on the uneven concrete floor. She not only landed hard, she landed on her face! As she tried to recover, she was told by those helping her that her nose was lacerated down to the bone and bleeding badly. Not to be deterred, Lillian asked for whatever bandages could be located, and marched out to confront her class! She wrote me, “Once they recovered from their initial shock, they did great and in fact some are still training with me to this day!” Of course they are; they knew that Lillian was either nuts or the best and toughest instructor they’d ever find! And to think I once cancelled a class because I had a bad cold.

Speaking of injuries, the only time I ever had a dog hurt in a class was when one got caught in a big metal door.

We were meeting in a new site, one that was less than perfect for a lot of reasons. I never dreamed a dog could get a paw stuck under a metal door, but that's what happened. It was such a total fluke that to this day I don't think we could get the same thing to happen twice. A nice black Lab caught a rear paw between the door and the concrete porch, and neither the door nor the paw could move. When we finally got the paw loose, we were sickened to see huge, deep cuts that, naturally, were bleeding profusely. I grabbed a towel out of my tack bag (it was a clean-up towel but it had been washed) and wrapped the paw. We carried the Lab to the owner's car, and sent her to the emergency veterinarian. What is so amazing about this entire incident is that we were panicky, but the Lab, bless her, stood quietly and let us help her. What a dog! By the way, she did fully recover, came back to school but not in that location.

Outdoor classes give instructors plenty of opportunities for disaster, or at least a try at them. It took me several years figure out that we needed to ban buckle collars at outdoor classes. It was just too easy for the dogs to back out of them, and I was getting too old to go chasing them around the park and through the neighborhoods. "Auditors," or loose dogs, are always a possibility at outdoor classes. Most just come to watch, and then go on their way. Some, however, come to play; and even worse, some come to cause trouble. I usually carry an air horn, as it seems pretty effective on both types. Sometimes just tying up the non-payers until class is over solves the problem. We won't even discuss "loose" humans, both kids and adults. It is not fun to try to teach a class next to some jerk in a 4-wheeler showing off next to you!

The unpredictable nature of the weather probably is the cause of most outdoor dog class disasters. I can't count the times I have driven to class under fair skies, only to unload and have the heavens drop on the arriving students and me. Of course, the reverse is true as well. I sometimes cancel a class because it is raining at my house, only to find out later that not a drop fell at our class site. Even if there is no rain, classes are sometimes cut short due to the threat of lightning strikes. If you think these aren't disasters, you have never had to reschedule every class or placate unhappy students!

Even indoor classes aren't safe from the weather. About five years ago, I taught an hour-long class under a stairwell. We all huddled, bent over and uncomfortable, in the "tornado safe designated location." Collies and Chows, Pugs and Paps, and people, all doing the best we could while waiting for the all clear to sound. Then there was the time I arrived at my indoor site in a driving rain, only to discover that my keys to the building were nowhere to be found!

All in all, most of us do pretty well and manage those unpredictable events. I have never had a student get hurt, or lost a dog, and although I have been bitten, it's always been my fault not to see it coming. I am sometimes amused at non-dog folk who seem to think what we do is dangerous. I would agree that driving on the freeway in late afternoon traffic for 45 minutes to get to my class site across town is darn risky!

DESENSITIZATION PROGRAM TO OVERCOME FEAR OF PEOPLE

Anita Crafton, NADOI member #463

Idaho member Anita Crafton tells me that this protocol, although possibly time-consuming to carry out for the pet owner, has worked well for her many times. Anita's personal experience covers many disparate breeds, from the flock guardians to the herders.

This article describes a desensitization program that I gleaned from John Rogerson in the mid-90s. Because it requires the help of a person whom the dog already trusts, as well as a significant time investment, I've found it useful primarily in cases of an extremely fearful dog where the owner is totally committed to the dog's rehabilitation.

First, you need to determine what the dog's fight-flight distance is by watching her behavior when a "Scary Person" ("SP") comes into view. The "safe zone" is the distance where the dog notices the "SP" but does not react unduly. It may be quite a long distance at first. For example, indoors, the "SP" may have to be in another room at first.

Next, pair "Pleasant Things" with the presence of the "SP". Pleasant Things are – games, special attention, treats, regular meal, anything this dog likes!

Here's the hardest part: Withdraw attention from the dog so that the only time she receives attention is when that attention is paired with the presence of the "SP" (although at a "safe" distance as determined above). When the "SP" is not present, ignore the dog as much as possible.

As the dog begins to accept the presence of the "SP" at a distance, reduce the distance just enough to create mild worry to the dog. If the dog is overcome with fear, you will lose what gains you have made so far.

When you are able to have the "SP" in the same room without overly stressing the dog, you can pair the dog's regular mealtime with the presence of the "SP" as often as possible.

Always start with a hungry dog! Prepare the dog's meal as usual, allowing her to watch. Set up the room as follows:

Trusted Helper & dog ----- [X] ----- Owner & "SP" with dish and food

The Trusted Helper will stand with dog on leash just out of sight in the next room (distance of six to ten feet if possible). "TH" should hold leash quietly, unobtrusively, so as not to distract the dog. Owner and "SP" will be at a position near a counter or table, seated in chairs.

- A. Break the meal into 10 portions.
- B. Owner and "SP" together place one portion of food into the dish, walk to point X and place dish on the floor, then retreat to their chairs and sit down.

C. Helper brings the dog in, allows her to enter the room with as little restraint as possible. The idea is that she stumbles upon - dinner! But just one bite. Dog is allowed to eat that food, and then helper takes her back out through the doorway. If the dog isn't interested in eating, that means that her stress level is too high and there needs to be more distance between the "SP" and the dog's dish.

D. When the dog has been taken back out of sight, owner and "SP" approach the dish, pick it up (have the "SP" pick up the dish so his scent is on the dish), place another portion of food inside, and place it back down on the floor in the same position. Return to chair and sit down. Dog brought in, allowed to eat, then taken back out.

E. This is repeated for the remaining 8 portions. If the dog is too upset to finish any portion, she is taken out through the door, and the remainder of that portion "goes away forever" (dumped back in the bag, if dry food). The dog is only exposed to the fearsome "SP" at a safe distance and seated (non-threatening). At this point she is not allowed to see the "SP" approach and pick up her dish. The food is always in place when she enters, but the "SP"'s scent is on the dish.

Next Meal

A. Dog is taken out the door on leash, but door is left open so the dog can watch. Prepare dog's meal as usual. Have the "SP" put one portion of food into dish, then carry the dish to point X and put it down. Return to the chairs and be seated.

B. Dog is brought in and allowed to eat the portion, then taken back through the doorway, but allowed to watch. Repeat for the remaining 9 portions. Same rules apply. If she is too nervous to eat a complete portion, that portion disappears. (Note: The dog should not miss more than 50% of her meal. If she is refusing to eat 50% or more, the stress level is probably too high.)

When the Dog is Handling this Well

Next Meal

A. Chair is placed one foot closer to X. Repeat with half the portions, with the dog being taken out the door but allowed to watch between each portion. If all is going well,

B. Move the chair one foot closer.

Repeat this procedure until the dog is able to eat her portions right next to the chair. This sounds like it is more trouble to set up than it really is. It usually does not take all that much time, and it works! When a life necessity is paired with a fear, it reduces the fear tremendously.

The Final Step

When the dog is doing well eating the portions chair-side, it is then time to modify one step further:

A. With the dog remaining at her dish, unrestrained but wearing the leash, owner adds one portion of food to the dish while the "SP" stands next to her.

B. If that goes okay for 5 portions, have the "SP" place the remaining 5 portions in the dish, one at a time. This, then, pairs the scariest thing in the world with a life necessity - and makes the dog realize that the "SP" is actually responsible for her receiving the food.

A side benefit to this stage is that it also helps teach the dog that when hands come near her dish, it is not to take away, but to give. This can help change the dog's attitude from possessive to anticipation.

If the scary “SP” happens to be a small child, the toughest part is that they are not puppets, and the chances of them remaining quiet through the whole procedure are slim! I take whatever I can get and call it good. If the child gets fussy at any time, it is better to call it off than to allow the fussing to further scare the dog. Just feed the dog the rest of her meal as usual, minus any portions that she lost. (It never hurts to sharpen the dog's hunger pangs just a bit.)

How long it will take to achieve success and the level of success depends on the dog, the level of fear, and owner commitment. The whole process could take anywhere from a couple of weeks to just a few days in cases of moderate fear. However, in order for the dog to “generalize” the behavior to other “SP”s, this whole process must be repeated with additional people. Introduce additional individuals to the dog in the same manner, starting at square one. The more friends you can get to help you, the more likely the dog will be to generalize her behavior to most people.

SOFTBALL FOR DOG TRAINING!

Noelle Nasca, NADOI Member # 1059

*New York member Noelle lives with, trains, and most of all loves
the Bully breeds, and is also a busy obedience instructor and
mom.*

My husband and I have truly been blessed with two wonderful daughters, Alexis (14) and Carley (12). Gosh, just writing those ages down ... oh how time does fly! Our girls have grown into the type of young ladies parents dream to have. They are Honor Students, social with their peers, adore and respect animals, they're helpful around the house (okay, maybe that's an exaggeration), and they absolutely LOVE softball. Interestingly, both of them have excelled as pitchers. Each has a natural talent within themselves, (it helps that their Dad has always been Mr. Athlete) and a drive to continue learning and getting better each time they play.

This great love and determination they have within them to build their skill, motivated us to enroll them in a once in a lifetime opportunity - the Jennie Finch Softball Camp in Williamsport, Pennsylvania early last December.

The Camp was held over a two-day period. It was “staffed” by instructors who are not only good in their field, these girls are the best in the world - Olympic Gold medalists! These Olympians were imparting their knowledge and experience on our kids! Again, the opportunity of a lifetime.

As we progressed through the clinic, I gained a greater understanding of softball and the mechanics necessary to help further success and encourage better performance within a player. However, what really resonated, what the big surprise, the icing on the cake turned out to be for me, were the constant parallels I found myself drawing to dog training!

The feelings of Motivation and Invigoration were coursing through my every vein! I felt as though I'd just been

hit in the face with an awareness that, though the sports were different, the foundation remained the same! The principles which allowed these softball Olympians to have peak, stellar performances were indeed the same principles that make for great and progressive dog training!

The experience was extraordinary – inspiring, inclusive, binding - so much so I wanted to share with my dog friends some key points to take away for your own training if you aren't already implementing them. If you find that you use them already, kudos to you and consider this validation of your fantastic choices and wise training protocols!

Some of the broad, generalized ideas that I'll jot down are as follows:

- Practice like it's competition; compete like it's practice. In softball, a fellow player telling her teammate, “If this were a real game, I'd have dove for the ball.” The translation for dog training might be, “If you want focused heeling, straight fronts, and square sits, practice them that way! Insist on that precision, only “pay” or reinforce the behaviors you want to see more of. Just because it's practice or training doesn't mean you should settle for less! Stop allowing crooked fronts or sloppy finishes to earn reinforcement! Help your dog get it right, or fix it when it happens!
- Don't settle, train it right!
- Practice at 110%. Bring your A game! Practice with gusto. Make practice harder than the real thing! Put the challenge into your workout! Make your brain and body expect greater difficulty. The translation for dog training might be, “Add challenge to the exercises your dog knows well.” If he knows how to Sit/Stay in the living room on the rug, practice a Sit/Stay with his leash underneath him, or on some damp grass, or a slightly sloping hill. The point being, make it more difficult than it will be in the formality of competition. That way he'll be so accustomed to these added challenges, when he gets to compete in the ring it will feel like a breeze!
- Small Pieces! The stride a pitcher takes often attracts attention. If a pitcher has a great big stride, they often have intense power behind the ball when it is released. Many coaches encourage the girls to take a great big stride (for the glam and the Wow factor) not realizing many of the other components which make a good pitch may be compromised because of this big stride. They want that glamorous, finished look before the pitcher is truly ready to make it all come together and work. It was advised at the clinic to keep the girl's stride short, to get her really comfortable and reliable with her pitches using the short stride, and then add some length. With this approach, if a problem occurs, it is much easier to locate the error and fix it.

The comparison for dog training might be heeling. Heeling was glaring at me with this one! I have often witnessed handlers taking dozens, if not hundreds of steps in heeling, when the reality is, the dog can barely execute proper heel position for three steps. Working forward in small increments of heeling is critical for your dog's understanding and success. Taking it literally one step at a time, and adding to those steps only when you see the perfection you wish to see as the finished product, will you add another step. If at any time you encounter a problem with focus or proper position, it is much easier to identify it and pinpoint the moment it happens when using the small pieces approach!

- Muscle Memory. Practice in batting, pitching, catching. There are specific mechanics a player must perform to get the best results. Practicing over and over again in poor form or incorrect position will only create a bad swing, poor pitches, missed balls, etc. Whatever muscle movement you are working on is precisely what the memory of the muscles adopt. I think the translation for dog training is obvious! If we want our dogs to have

nice square sits when we halt in heel, then we must practice those square sits each and every time we train! Create that muscle memory. Make it happen. Point out the position to the dog, lure them there, do what it takes to get their posture as perfect as you wish it to be. Then this is the posture the muscles will assume with ease. Take advantage of the programming that is happening each and every time you perform a repetition. Use it to your advantage; avoid having to go in later and fix the established poor behavior.

These are just a few examples of the common threads I couldn't help but notice. There are many more that my wonderful students have listened to me carry on about! They have indulged me selflessly, allowing me to express the excitement and inspiration I experienced. I honestly feel a renewed sense of commitment. A sense of, "Hey! I was actually doing something right!" The experience left me with the urge and commitment to carry on applying these sound foundational skills to our dog training! I felt honored to be in the presence of such greatness, talent and dedication, and I was truly inspired. I hope you can feel some of the same validation and encouragement in your own training just by reading this passage. To say it was encouraging being in the presence of these women who sought, found and continue striving for perfection is an understatement.

Enjoy your training adventures! Keep reaching for the best performance you can imagine, and you will get there!

TRAINING TIPS: BACK TO THE BASICS

By Jeanne Hampl, NADOI member # 962

Jeanne is a Washington member, chair of the NADOI Committee on Disabled Handlers, and writes about that topic in many forums. This article should remind us that it is always good to remember and apply our basic training and teaching.

Not too long ago I did a presentation at the Humane Society of Tacoma and Pierce County on teaching a reliable recall. I demonstrated with a darling Australian Shepherd mix. Teaching a reliable recall is necessary for your dog's safety. Unless a dog has a reliable recall, he will never be able to enjoy off leash play. This exercise can be taught to any dog, no matter what age or breed. I teach from the outline below over a six-week class.

Name Game

Say your dog's name, only one time. When your dog looks at you, use your verbal marker, "yes," or click and reward with treats, toys and verbal praise. Keep rewarding as long as your dog is looking at you. Stop if he looks away.

Repeat several times a day.

Gradually add distractions. Make sure your reward is better than the distraction.

Play often and reward generously until your dog spins on a dime when he hears his name.

Hide and Seek

Fill your pockets with really good treats or, if it is close to dinner time, take the dog food bowl with you.

Have someone hold your dog while you bid him good-bye.

Hide someplace easy for the dog to find you.

Call your dog only using his name.

When your dog finds you, feed and praise!

Continue to play the game, making it more difficult as you go on. Play indoors and outdoors.

Notice that we have not yet added a recall word like "come" or "here".

Once the dog has the name game and hide and seek down pat, add your recall word only when the dog is committed and coming toward you, and you are sure that he will come. Only say your cue one time. Continue to reward lavishly.

On Leash Recalls

Put your dog on a long line or retractable leash. Allow him to explore, then suddenly say the dog's name. If you have played the name game, your dog will turn and look at you. Say "yes" or click. As the dog starts moving toward you, add your recall cue (come or here) and say it only one time. Repeat the on leash recall several times during your daily walks.

Round Robin Recalls

This is a good game for multiple member households to play. You may use a long line if necessary, and be sure to give the best treats to the children. Adults can stand behind the children in the beginning. Make a circle and call the dog back and forth between family members.

Long Line Recalls

Allow the dog to drag a long line in the back yard or other safely fenced area. If you call the dog and he doesn't respond, bring him in to you by using the long line. Praise and release the dog to go back to exploring.

Distraction Interrupters

Use a tennis ball or a squeaky toy to get a distracted dog's attention. Until you are sure your dog will come when called, do not use your recall word unless you can enforce the recall. Just say the dog's name and if necessary move away from the dog. Moving away will usually entice the dog to move toward you, and moving toward a dog will many times cause him to move away from you. When the dog comes in to you, ask him to sit in front and slip your hand into the collar. Treat and praise.

At some point we do have to make a leap of faith and allow the dog to be loose. I do this in a secure area, and have a good recall dog as a partner. I start to walk the field and reward the dog whenever he runs back to me. Then I add a name and reward since he is usually following the other dog back to me. Next I add the "come" or "here" and reward. The rewards may be treats, a tennis ball, or a squeaky toy. Of course the biggest reward of all is that the dog is released to play again!

If the dog decides not to play my game, I won't waste my voice. I play with the second dog and when the first one checks us out I will put him back on lead and go back a few training steps and try again in a week or so.

Whistle Training

Once the dog is coming reliably when called you may want to add a whistle as a long distance cue. Remember, new cue followed by old cue equals behavior! This is an easy way to teach a new cue for an old behavior because dogs are anticipatory learners.

It is never too late to teach or re-train a reliable recall, so start today!

KEEPING EVERYONE HAPPY?

By Helen Cariotis

NADOI Member # 372

Keeping everyone happy? That is a pretty tall order! If you are running a training school or serving as Training Director for an obedience club, a big part of your job description is keeping your students happy. Happy (satisfied) students stick with the classes and the training, tell everyone about their experience, and come back again and again.

One unhappy client can do a lot of damage to your business, and while we know we really can't please everyone, it is to our advantage to try to please most. Others in our network need to be kept happy as well,

particularly those businesses and professionals who routinely refer to us. Keeping students happy really starts with that first contact, be it on the phone, by e-mail, or in person. It goes without saying that you should answer every honest inquiry. I am always amazed when I get a student who tells me, “you were the only one who called me back.”

You can't get the student if you don't make contact with the student. Although I like to speak to everyone on the phone before they come to class, I am finding that I do more and more communicating by e-mail and it seems to work out well. You need to let prospective students know that you want them to come to class, you are interested in helping them with their dog problems, and that you are the place they should choose to come to school. These first contacts will not always lead to a registration, but if you don't follow up on them, none of them will result in a training fee. I frequently hear from peers how they hate to talk to dog owners who are just calling up for information, possibly shopping around, or (many times) looking for free advice. Time on the phone can be a huge chunk out of our day if not managed properly. Some instructors will set a certain time aside to return calls, some take them as they come but put a time limit on them, and some just hire help to answer calls. Do what works best for your business schedule and what you like best.

If you enjoy talking to people, “selling” a service, and can manage your time efficiently, then taking the calls yourself as they come in may be a good way to go. Regardless of what you do, do return calls and e-mail inquiries as promptly as possible. If the caller is not in your area, or wants a program you don't offer, be prepared to give a referral. This makes you look good, and will pay you back later. Once your student has registered for class, follow up by a quick call or e-mail to let them know their paperwork and check have arrived, and you have them on the roster for the class they wanted. This can take all of 20 seconds if you simply leave a message on their voice mail or inbox, but makes a good impression.

Nowadays, a big complaint of just about everyone is that personalized service has gone down the tubes. You want to let students know that your company will excel in service where others may not, and that you will personally see to that! A reminder call or e-mail a day or two before class is a good idea as well. Setting up a class list with everyone's e-mail addresses can be a big help. At your orientation class, let students know that although they are learning in a group format, you will always be happy to give individual help. Our students are encouraged to come to class 30 minutes early to practice and get one-on-one time with instructors and assistants. Let your students know a good time to call you between classes, or encourage e-mail questions. We have a business nearby that offers help outside of class, but they charge for it. Personally, I don't like “add on” fees but if this works for you, that's fine. My theory is that people appreciate and remember if you go the extra mile for them, and I find that I reap new and repeat business “down the road” when I do that. Treat each and every question with respect.

When we trivialize our students' problems we tell them very clearly that we really don't think they are important and we don't want to talk to them or help them. Try to remember that no one falls to Earth knowing all the answers, and if they did, you wouldn't have a training business! Although some things will seem simple and straightforward to us, they may be big issues to the student who is asking, and our answer (and the way we present it) may even mean life and death to a dog. Learn your students' names, and the names of their dogs. If you run many classes each week this can be a challenge, but it is well worth the effort. No one wants to be pointed to or addressed as “Sugar's mommy” in class. This little bit of professionalism will tell your students that you care about them as individuals and will go a long way to keep them happy. If you have a bad memory like I do, just carry cheat cards or refer to your class roster. Learn to say something nice about every dog in your class. If

you can't think of anything (and believe me, I have walked in your shoes), comment on "Maxie's soft ears," or "Blondie's white feet." Everyone is proud of their dog, and although he may be about as far from the breed standard as he can be, he is still theirs. Look at the photos they bring to class, and yes, that means the ones on the cell phones too! It goes without saying that the best way to keep students happy is to give them what they paid for, and that means a good start to a well trained, under control, and happy dog.

Be prepared to give help on management issues and common home problems in addition to your training curriculum. Of course, behaviors that are going to take extra counseling to solve, or serious issues like aggression will warrant extra time and an extra fee. If you have a student who finishes your course but still gets rid of the dog because he wasn't housetrained, he will not be happy and will be unlikely to recommend your programs. Sometimes just having handouts available to give out or on your web site will solve common problems and create satisfied students. Make sure your students know they are important to you even after they finish their course. Tell them you want to hear from them and hear how their dog is doing. You will be surprised how many holiday cards you will get from "Lobo" and "Kisses!"

And lastly, keeping your referring veterinarians, groomers, and pet store owners happy is huge! If you don't get their referrals, you won't have a business for long. Take the time to call or send a note of thanks occasionally. Holiday cards are a good idea, as is taking by a cookie tray to those really good ones. I have one vet who puts every client of his who graduates from my class up on a bulletin board at the office ... I would say he is happy with how I treat his patients, and the satisfaction has just come full circle. Giving a discount or even waiving the fee to vets and their staff can create lots of happy people and lots of referrals. Many instructors will give business like these a newsletter to put out for their clients, handouts on common problems, or offer to come in and provide info/training to staff at a reduced or no charge. It is often said that you can't buy the best kind of advertising ... the testimony of a happy client. I think this is true, and with good "customer service" of every kind becoming rarer, it is more important than ever to keep 'em happy

THE 60-DAY REMEDIAL HOUSETRAINING PROGRAM

by Anita Fahrenwald-Crafton

The "Remedial Housetraining Program" is for those who want to train their dogs to eliminate outdoors. Litterbox or paper training are separate issues. The program assumes that you have already ruled out health problems as a possible cause with a veterinary exam. Urinary tract infections are a common cause of house soiling.

This program was originally written for a toy poodle named "Sassy", so I've continued to use this name throughout the text to avoid the boring use of "your dog".

For dogs that consistently soil the crate (more than three times), you will need to use 100% "umbilical cording".

"Umbilical cord" means that a leash or house line is attached from the dog to a human at all times unless the dog is in her crate or exercise pen (playpen).

"House line" is a 6 to 8 foot, light weight nylon cord with a snap fastened to one end. It should have no knots or loops.

"Praise" means to give verbal encouragement rather than petting the dog.

“Sassy” - Generic dog

WEEKS 1 AND 2

“Sassy” is not to have ANY freedom AT ALL to roam the house unsupervised. Whenever she is taken out of her crate, snap the house line on and attach the other end to your belt. Thus attached by this “umbilical cord”, she can never be out of your sight.

WEEKS 3 AND 4

If she has had no accidents at the end of two weeks, you may stop attaching the line to your belt and just let her drag it around the house. (Note: the house line should be a lightweight cord with no knots in it so that it slips easily around the furniture.) If any accidents occur, go back to the beginning using the umbilical cord. If no accidents occur, which means Sassy has been accident-free for four weeks, you may remove the house line altogether.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE NEXT 60 DAYS

You must always accompany Sassy outside to make sure that she eliminates. Don’t just put her out in the yard and assume that she has pottied. During this retraining process, you need to know for sure.

1. When you first get up in the morning or get home from work, take Sassy outdoors to the potty area on the long line. Stand still and do not talk to or play with her.

2. The first few times, just as she begins to urinate, say “go potty, good girl - go potty, good girl”. When she stops going, stop praising and walk away from the potty area. Do not interact with her at all for about 30 seconds. Then take her for a short walk – 5 minutes of controlled walking – or play a game with a toy.

3. After the first three or four sessions, you won’t have to give so much praise. You can begin to separate the “go potty” command so you are giving it just before she begins to urinate. Watch for the signals – sniffing the ground intently is a common one. Some dogs also walk in a circle. It then becomes, “Go potty”; wait until she is almost finished urinating, then say quietly, “Good girl”.

4. If she has not pottied, take her back indoors and crate for 10 to 20 minutes. Then try again. It is possible she will soil her crate the first time or two. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT! She must not have any freedom if you have not seen her eliminate.

5. Notes on timing: When you first take her outdoors, do not play games with her before she potties, then take her back indoors the minute she’s done. This could teach her that as soon as she does her business, the fun stops. She’ll begin to dawdle and play longer and longer before taking care of business.

6. After “potty” and a short walk, return indoors, crate her and, if this a mealtime, feed.

7. After 10 minutes, remove the food and take her back outdoors on the long line to have a bowel movement. Give her five minutes to take care of business. If she does go, remember to say, “Go potty, good girl”. (Note: You can use the same command or pick a separate one.) If she doesn’t go right away, walk her slowly around the potty area, because exercise helps stimulate the BM.

8. VERY IMPORTANT: If she does not go, bring her back indoors and CRATE HER FOR ANOTHER 20 MINUTES or so. Then try again.

If Sassy did not go while outdoors, it is vital to this program that she have no freedom after coming back indoors. I cannot stress this strongly enough!!!

If using a crate for confinement instead of the “umbilical cord”, be sure to remove all the bedding from her crate and use just a bare crate. If she has an accident in the crate, it is more offensive if she can’t hide it in the bedding. (If it disappears into the bedding, it’s of no consequence to the dog, and crating then loses its effectiveness as a housetraining tool.)

Plan on several accidents in the crate before she catches on to the timing of visits outdoors. Dogs usually have no more than three accidents before figuring out that they have only “so much” time in which to do their business. If more than three accidents occur, let me know, because that may indicate we need to try something different.

SHE MUST BE ALLOWED NO UNSUPERVISED FREEDOM IN THE HOUSE FOR THE NEXT 60 DAYS. THIS IS VITAL. If you get lax (by not accompanying her outdoors or letting her roam indoors out of your sight), accidents will occur and you will have to start at the beginning again.

Remember: Accidents cannot occur if someone is watching the dog at all times. The umbilical cord will help you learn to ‘read’ Sassy’s body language when she is signaling the need to go outdoors. If you are diligent about following these rules for 60 days... AND... if no accidents occur, Sassy should be reliably housetrained at the end of the 60 days.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF TRAINING TOOL

By Marti Kincaid #621

Idaho member and Norwegian Elkhound owner, Marti Kincaid reminds us that it is sometimes profitable to think outside the box and into the circle!

Can you see this TV ad aimed at dog obedience instructors? “Hula hoops! Cheap and easy to use! Available for just a few dollars! Portable! Comes in different sizes and colors! Achieve amazing class control and focus! And if you call now, you can order as many as you want! But wait, there's more. We will double your order, etc, etc!”

Maybe that fictional ad would be a little over the top if we wanted to describe the many uses of a hula hoop in dog training classes. Or is it? Imagine your first night of obedience class with the dogs. Your hoops are laid in the training area so that each handler will have his own predetermined place. You greet each new student and send them to their spot with “please get to the large yellow and blue hoop” to wait until class starts. You have helped to make sure that their dog is not on top of another dog or handler, and you can be relatively sure that they will stay in that space. With this simple directive you've accomplished something major, class control.

You have also helped each new student with something else that is just as important, owner confidence. No one likes to feel at a loss when walking into a new situation. You have given them something to do immediately, and have success doing it. Once they get to “their” space, they can begin to look around with some confidence.

Hula hoops are also a great tool to use to teach circles and figure 8's. Directionally challenged students (and instructors) can understand the instruction, "dog by the hoop" or "handler by the hoop." It also helps eliminate the problem of one student overlapping the circle of another handler.

When your class is practicing leaving the dogs on stays, placing the dog inside the hoop helps to focus the owner. By instructing that the dog has to stay in the hoop, the owner actually watches the dog! If the dog does move, the owner will return the dog to the place he was left, rather than allowing the dog to continue to move towards the trainer. You can also practice heeling with the hula hoops. With the hoops laid out in a large circle shape, have each handler stand by a hoop. Then send the group at heel to the next hoop and stop for an automatic sit. Wait for the group to be ready, and then send to the next hoop. Laying out the hoops in a "jellybean" shape allows the instructor to stand at one side.

Hula hoops lend themselves well to playing games. For example, split the class into two teams, set a series of hoops out for each team and see which one can get all the team members through the series first. Maybe you can have them do a sit stay for a count of five, then the second hoop is a down stay for a count of five, the third hoop is for automatic sits, and so on for however many hoops you have. And when you teach tricks, the hoop becomes a jump-through-the-hoop trick! For the 1st class, just for the fun of it, see if any students can actually use the hula hoop AS A HULA HOOP!

Sometimes you may have a dog that is worried about the hula hoop. Simply instruct the owner to have the dog stand by the hoop. It is not important that the dog step into the middle of the hoop. If the dog picks up the hoop to play with it, tell them that the hoop is for training not for play. Promise them that they can play with it at the end of the class, but not until then. If a dog continues to have problems with the hoop, have an alternative marker handy. A toilet bowl plunger works well, or an orange cone. Without a fuss, remove the hoop and put it away. Why not start with cones? Normally, dogs will lift their legs faster on cones than hula hoops!

At the end of your class, pack up your hoops (which fit easily in any car) and off you go with your low-cost, but truly versatile training device!

NADOI

**National Association
of Dog Obedience Instructors**

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Self-Confidence for the New Instructor

Helen Cariotis
NADOI Member #372

The recent NADOI Meeting in New Mexico was all about instructing skills, developing a curriculum for beginners, managing our classes effectively, and solving commonplace class problems. One of the best things I came away with were the questions asked by our newer instructors. There just wasn't enough time to cover them all, so I am hoping we can use NADOI Notes to address some of the rest of them.

One very good question posed was, "If you are a new instructor, how do you project self-confidence to your first few classes?" We have all been there: that first class that is truly "ours," the night when we are front and center and expected to handle everything on our own, and do it right. I think that no matter how long we are in the business of teaching obedience classes, we will always remember that first experience! Maybe it came in a call literally a few minutes before class time when we were told that the head instructor was ill or caught in traffic and couldn't make the class. Maybe we prepared for the opportunity for weeks. Either way, that first real class can be a dream come true, terrifying, exhilarating, and nerve-wracking, all at the same time.

So what is the best way to build self-confidence in the new instructor? There may be as many answers as there are instructor personalities. I suspect that most of us "in the biz" are pretty alpha and outgoing types. We love to talk, love people and dogs, and enjoy being in charge! But we may not have started out that way, so recalling some of the things that gave us just enough moxie to get out

there on our own may be helpful to our new instructors.

- **Preparation.** Nothing will ever take the place of excellent preparation as a good confidence builder. Most of us will need to put in time as assistants to good class instructors. An outstanding mentor is worth his or her weight in gold! You will always learn more, and learn faster, with a good example to follow than you will with a mediocre one. Have a good curriculum and follow it. When you are more seasoned, you will be able to be creative, but your first few classes may be less so. Carry notes or a lesson plan for every class session so you won't forget what to do. Wear a watch so that you stay in your time frame for each part of the lesson plan. Work to keep students on task and be wary of those folks who will way-lay you with questions, stories, or problems. Have help if you can. A good assistant will make everything go more smoothly. Get your class site prepared ahead of time, and pay special attention to outdoor sites. Think of every possible thing that you will need as a tool or prop, and have it readily accessible. Likewise, try to look ahead to any "potholes" that you might fall into during the class. These could include: problem dogs or students, crowd control, barking, weather issues if outside, and many more. You might go for years and not need the first aid kit, but it's better to have it anyway! Rehearse your "performance." Even if all you do is a pretend class for your family or in front of the bathroom mirror, repetition will help you just as it does our students and their dogs.

- **Be a student or a teacher in other venues.** This might sound silly, but it really can build your confidence if you

teach a Sunday school class, give a talk to the PTA or Lion's Club, or enroll in a community college class. As an instructor for subjects other than dog obedience, you will not only practice "instructing skills," but you will gain the confidence that repeating a successful behavior brings. If you are a student, you will have an opportunity to observe and critique professional teachers. Watching and learning from an excellent teacher is valuable, no matter what or who you end up teaching yourself. Find out, by watching and learning, what system works best for you. I tend to run a very "tight ship" in my classes, but I have friends who are excellent instructors who are much more laid back. Usually, we won't be successful in the long term if we force ourselves to be something we are not.

- **Practice public speaking.** Classes are available from organizations like Toastmasters where you can learn this art. Talk to your pastor about borrowing books on "Preaching 101," or similar curricula. Even the most talented speaker can learn from others and perfect communication skills. Find out what tips and techniques best fit your personal style and how to use them. Humor and joke telling might work for some, but may not be your forte' if you are more serious.

- **Succeed with your own dogs.** Nothing builds our confidence faster than being out with our well-trained and well-mannered companions! I have had to go to class before without my dog and it is amazing how nervous I feel. I have a new puppy now and naturally he is not as trained as I hope he will be in the future. He comes to class with me, but I do yearn for the days when I could take my "old" dog! Nothing will impress your students faster than seeing your dog!

- **Look good.** OK, maybe you can't lose those last 20 lbs. or pretend there's no gray in your hair, but you can present yourself professionally. Being well-groomed counts for a lot, whether it's for the men or the ladies. This is true in any business, and with competition around the corner for all of us, it's more important today than ever. This is one area where an unbiased opinion can really

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Help Your Groomer Help Your Dog

California member Caryl Wolff is a busy trainer, instructor, speaker, author and competitor. She also works with problem dogs.

By Caryl Wolff NADOI #1043

There are things that happen in our lives that we don't like and situations we are afraid of. But the more prepared we are, the more secure we feel. Behavior under stress is exaggerated. If your dog is normally calm and confident, in your groomer's shop she may be shy, cautious, panicky, or aggressive.

She is in a place with new smells, unfamiliar sights, strange sounds, and different surfaces to walk on. She also picks up on the emotions of the other people and animals surrounding her. She needs your help and guidance to prepare her for new things.

If your dog spends the majority of her time in your house and yard and does not meet people outside your family members, then chances are that she will be nervous in or fearful of new situations. Getting her used to new sounds, sights, smells, and flooring will not only help her at the groomer's shop, but it will help become a well-adjusted and calmer dog at home.

Introduce your dog to people of all ages who wear different kinds of clothing and who carry all sorts of objects. Take her to different environments. Let her walk on new surfaces (concrete, dirt, rocks even mud ugh!) and let her see and hear different sights and sounds such as trucks backfiring, motorcycles, umbrellas opening, and children playing.

Obedience training is trust training your dog trusts you to keep her safe when you are her leader. You set guidelines and boundaries for her, and she feels safe within them. It gives her some-

thing familiar to do in an unfamiliar setting and helps calm her down.

Train your dog to sit, stay, and stand on command. For the sit command, your dog is standing in front of you. Take a treat and hold it at her nose. Slowly move the treat just above her head between her eyes. She should follow the treat with her nose, and that movement will make her head come up and her rear end go to the floor. Praise her and give her the treat.

For the stand (now that she is sitting), hold the treat just in front of her nose and bring your hand towards your body so she has to get up to reach for the treat. When she stands, praise her and give her the treat.

For the stay, just continue to give her treats when she is in either of these positions until you release her. Begin making her stay just a few seconds. If she moves, guide her back to the exact same spot.

You know how terrific your dog looks after she has visited her canine beautician, but do you know all the things your groomer does to get her to look that way? Your groomer begins by brushing your dog and getting the mats out. Then he clips her before her bath and may express her anal glands.

The temperature of the bath water is warm. He wets her all over and then begins to shampoo. He pays special attention to cleaning inside the ears, around the eyes and mouth, between the pads of her feet, and around the anal area. Then he puts a conditioner on her and rinses it off.

Next he towels her off and then either dries her with a hand-held dryer or puts her in a crate with a dryer. After that, he

begins brushing and combing her coat. During this entire process, he is checking for parasites (such as fleas and ticks) on her skin.

Then come the final touches. He cleans her ears and removes the hair. He cleans the tear stains. Then he cuts the hair between the pads of his feet and around her anus and groin. He trims and files her nails. Then a final hand scissoring and brush and comb out.

HANDLING: While you are at home, you can handle your dog as your groomer would during grooming. Choose a quiet time and a quiet place, and *give her treats during this whole process*. Begin by just touching all parts of her body as if you are giving her an all-over body massage. Scratch her tummy, under her chin, and behind her ears. Pet her with long, gentle strokes.

As she becomes comfortable with that, touch her ears, look inside her ears, stroke her muzzle. Pick up her paws, run your hands down her legs, gently squeeze her feet, toes, and tail.

CLIPPING NAILS: Some dogs do not like having their nails clipped. Take some wooden matchsticks, and cut the matchsticks to get your dog used to the sound, giving her a treat with each cut. Handle your dog's feet several times a day, giving her a scrumptious treat as you touch them. Then take the nail clipper out and put it on the floor near your dog. Give her a treat every time she looks at the clipper. Pick it up and slowly bring it closer to her giving her treats the whole time.

Hold your dog's foot and put the matchstick underneath her foot and cut the matchstick. When she gets used to this, then put the clipper to her nails and pretend to cut them.

THE WATER: Sometimes the first experience that dogs have had with water is when they go to the groomer, and, in a word, they freak out. So get her used to the water at home. Leash her and put her in the sink or in the bathtub or even on the ground. Splash warm water on her feet and give her treats. Start working your way up her legs with the water, a little bit at a time, and then the rest of her body.

There's nothing that says that you have to do this all in one lesson. Ideally,

you want to stop before she is uncomfortable or begins to struggle. If she has a nervous temperament, then start really small by doing only one paw at a time.

THE SOUNDS: The two sounds to get her used to are the sounds of the hair clippers and the dryer. Begin with the dryer. Put the dryer several feet from her. Turn it on and off very quickly. Toss her a treat every time it is on. As she acclimates to the sound, leave it on for a few more seconds and gradually it move closer to her. Remember the treats! When you finally get close to her, let it blow on the least sensitive part of her body and give her a treat. Leave it on for longer periods. When she is used to the dryer, repeat the entire process again with an electric razor or other appliance that simulates the sound of hair clippers.

THE TABLE: Get her used to being on a raised surface. Several times a day, pick her up and place her on a table, a countertop, your washer or dryer, or some other raised surface on top of which you have put a rubber mat.

THE CRATE: Make her want to go into the crate. Put her favorite toys in the crate and close the door so she is outside

and the toys are inside next to the door. Now she wants to go into the crate to get her toys. Open the door and let her in to get them. Leave the door open. Gradually put them further back so she has to go further inside to get them. Do the same thing with her food, and put her dish further back. Begin swinging the door while she is eating. As she gets accustomed to the noise, then close it for just a short period of time. Slowly lengthen the time the door is closed.

The National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors is interested in improving dog obedience training and instructing. Won't you join us? For more information on NADOI, the requirements for membership, or the name of the NADOI instructor nearest you, visit our web site at www.nadoi.org. You may also write us at: NADOI, PMB 369, 729 Grapevine Hwy, Hurst, TX 76054-2805 (attn: Corresponding Sec). Please address reprint requests to the NADOI Notes editor.



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unpredictable. Imagine when this happens with large breeds like Pit Bulls or Rottweilers. How scary is that situation? Some people do recognize the source of their dog's behavior once it is pointed out to them. A woman recently came into my place of business to talk about training her male unaltered Pit Bull that she couldn't take for a walk because he kept was aggressive every dog he saw. As she talked, she mentioned having had a male littermate who had already been placed in another home because of their constant fighting. When I asked her if she realized that fear could be the cause of this aggressive behavior I saw a light come on, and she knew what the problem was. His behavior was purely due to his lack of confidence. A conscientious breeder would never place two puppies in the same house if they had any idea of the outcome of this action.

Every dog, whether we intend to show it in breed, obedience, agility, or simply want a good house pet, will have a much better chance of success if it is confident and outgoing. The vital socialization that is required to insure this result is virtually impossible to achieve if littermates are raised together.

Self Confidence from page 57

help, so ask a trusted friend how you can improve. If you are able to do it, having someone video you as you teach a class can be a hugely effective tool in helping you "see yourself." It will take some courage and you can't be thin-skinned, but this can be a great way to spot problem areas, both in appearance and delivery.

As an instructor and teacher of instructors, I would be interested in

hearing your ideas, so please post me. This is a big subject and it might be fun to go a little deeper with it. And if you know a new instructor, give him/her a compliment today. It might go a long way toward building someone's self-confidence!

The National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors is interested in improving dog obedience training and instruction. Won't you join us? For more information on NADOI, the requirements for

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Helping Your Clients With Puppy Biting and Mouthing

By Helen Cariotis, NADOI member # 372

When our clients get a new puppy, the first thing they want to know all about is housebreaking. The second thing they ask about is usually puppy biting and mouthing, and what to do about it. Being prepared for this question when they call up, catch you after class, or even having a handout ready can make you look good and save time as well.

Naturally, this is a behavior which will vary a lot based on the puppy's age, breed, and the experience of your client and how they handle the behavior. I have found that many new puppy owners, especially those who have never had a puppy before, really worry a lot about how the puppy uses his mouth. Reassure your clients that the little piranha dog they see is probably completely normal. Using the mouth for play, chewing, greeting, exploring their world, loosening baby teeth, and practicing those hard-wired prey behaviors is something we observe in just about all puppies. Just watching puppies play with other puppies will convince you of this. If your clients understand that this is a normal developmental stage of canines, they may be a little more comfortable with it.

I tell my clients that even if they did nothing at all to change or redirect puppy biting and mouthing, most dogs would not still be doing it a year later. I will say that I run into more serious cases of this in puppies and dogs that are taken from the litter and their mother way too early. I suspect that a lot of bite inhibition and how to properly use their mouth is learned there. In any event, we don't want our clients to be chew toys for their dogs for a year, for all sorts of good reasons, so we need to be able to give them some good suggestions.

Many instances of puppy biting and

mouthing can be prevented or redirected. Demonstrate to your new puppy owners how to properly hold the puppy and how to handle and pet him without having their hands continually around the head and mouth. A good demo is to show how merely touching a young puppy's muzzle will most times cause him to turn to your hand and attempt to grasp it. Even children can learn to imitate what you do if you show them how to scratch the belly or stroke the back, away from those sharp little teeth. Explain how rough-house games or tug can sometimes get a young puppy "wired" and that excitement leads to biting at your hands.

Letting your clients know about other ways to interact with their new pup, or "constructive" games to play with him will prevent much puppy biting. Retrieve and "hide and seek the cookie" might be better options than "who can take who down first." Tell your client to accept that most puppies will use their mouths on everything, so be prepared to offer acceptable alternatives to fingers, throw pillows, and remotes. Sometimes the easiest thing to do is offer the puppy a chewie, hold it for him to keep him engaged, and pet or stroke with your other hand. Although your hand is in close proximity to his mouth, the puppy learns he is to chew on the "OK" object.

Nowadays, ignoring unwanted behavior is popular advice. While ignoring sharp little teeth can be a challenge, there is some merit in the method. If you are chomped upon, try not to pull away or you may find that the pup simply bites down harder, risking more damage to human skin. Say "ouch" and redirect the puppy to an acceptable chewie or toy, and praise him for taking it. If you find that the pup is just too excited to stop biting, sometimes just putting an end to your

interaction and allowing him to settle for a while makes good sense. In very young pups, just picking up a back foot will cause him to let go with his mouth.

If all else fails, particularly with a pup older than 12 or 14 weeks or a dyed-in-the-wool mouther, a mild punisher may be used. These may include a verbal "aaagh," a little scruff shake, shaking a metal can with a few nuts and bolts, a spray of ice water in the face or mouth, or even a squirt of lemon juice or breath spray on the lips or in the mouth. You will know your client and their puppy and be able to suggest what will likely be most effective. What works on the Golden may not be what you want to try on the JRT.

If clients understand that puppy biting and mouthing is normal, doesn't last forever, and can be many times simply prevented or redirected, they will be far less likely to worry. Owners who have been convinced that their mouthy baby is "aggressive," or soon "will turn on them" give up many perfectly sound pups. Give your clients the tools to handle puppy biting and mouthing and they will soon learn to enjoy their puppies!

The National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors is interested in improving dog obedience training and instructing. Won't you join us? For more information on NADOI, the requirements for membership, or the name of the NADOI instructor nearest you, visit our web site at: www.nadoi.org. You may also write us at: NADOI, PMB 369, 729 Grapevine Hwy, Hurst, TX. 76054-2805 (attn: Corresponding Sec.). Please address reprint requests to the NADOI Notes editor.



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Selling Leadership To Your Students

By Helen Cariotis
 NADOI member #372

We know what good leadership is and why it is essential to raising sound dogs that will stay in their homes for a lifetime. We know leadership prevents bites to humans, and saves the lives of dogs. We know leadership creates dogs that are good workers, dependable, happy, content with their lives, secure, and confident. But how do we sell the importance of good leadership to our students? We live in a time when dogs are looked upon as children, and companies make money by selling strollers for dogs. As instructors, how do we make sure that our students understand that it is in the best interests of both human and dog to learn about and respect that ancient relationship we have shared for millennia?

Many years ago, I got permission from fellow NADOI member Terry Ryan to print her “Alphabetize” handout for my classes. For students, I consider it the best explanation of leadership that I’ve come across. I wrote the following as an introduction to that, and still use it today:

Most dogs seem to just naturally fit in with our families and our households, assuming you are not isolating them. They quickly learn where their “place” or rank is within the pack (your family) and are content to stay there. They are secure and tractable because they know where they stand in relation to you. The relationship you have with your dog is everything; without a good relationship, all training you do will be more difficult and sometimes impossible.

It is vital that you and your dog have the right kind of relationship. You must always be his leader, and he must be

subordinate. You must be the one who calls the shots, makes the decisions, and gives the orders. He must be willing to be the “low man” on the totem pole, and be happy about following your directions. You will lead; he will follow. You will direct; he will comply. You will control territory, food, toys and play, petting, and resting areas. You will be fair, dependable, and consistent. In return, he will trust you to make good decisions for him, protect him from harm, and provide him with all that he needs. He will be loyal to you for life, and ask little in return.

It really sounds uncomplicated, and most of the time it is. Sometimes, for any number of reasons, a dog may attempt to take on more responsibilities than he deserves. He may ascend the “status ladder” until he comes very close to taking over from you (or maybe he even does take over). I call this “running for president,” and like all campaigns, it doesn’t happen overnight. Often humans don’t even realize that their dog is taking over! We sometimes don’t see the signals that the dog sends us until something happens that we can’t ignore, i.e., a growl or even a bite.

A dog assumes a leadership role among “his” humans because the humans allow it to happen. Sometimes the owners are just uneducated about what they must do to maintain a good relationship, sometimes they don’t have time for the dog, and sometimes they are just weak leaders. The dog, if he is assertive at all, simply takes advantage of that. Remember, dogs are highly social, pack animals. They are genetically programmed to live and work successfully within a group. To make this work, they need to know their place within the group, and they must

have a group leader. If you cannot or will not lead your dog, he may think that he has to lead you.

So, you have a pushy dog that is demanding and not obedient. Maybe he has “selective” hearing when it comes to your commands, or maybe he even tries to “order you around.” Maybe he thinks it is OK to discipline you if you don’t do what he wants you to do. He decides when and how much he eats, who comes into your house, and who can pet him or groom him. He won’t move off his bed when you say to, or maybe he even has taken over your bed! He won’t allow you to clean his ears or clip his nails, leads you around when on lead, and heaven forbid that you try to take something from his mouth. He jumps up on you, mouths your hands or clothing, and uses his body to move you around. He may be aggressive to other dogs or even people, all while ignoring your pleas to behave. He needs to have an owner who is following the leadership program! Remember, your dog must always be responsible TO you, not FOR you!

Teaching Touch

By Noelle Nasca
NADOI member # 1059

IMAGINE BEING ABLE to guide your dog into perfect heel position without ever having to yank on his leash! Imagine being able to direct your dog to “his place” or “settle rug” without ever having to drag him there! Imagine teaching your dog to turn on light switches, push in drawers, and close the cupboards all with ease! You can do it and have loads of fun in the process if you just begin with these simple steps.

First, understand that the basic behavior we are looking for from your dog is to simply have him touch his nose to the palm of our open hand. Let’s take a look at how to get started.



Begin in a relatively quiet, “distraction-free zone.” It is always helpful to train before your dog’s meal time. In fact, you may even wish to use your dog’s meal as his reward. Instead of delivering his daily ration in his bowl, get it into your training pouch. Stand or sit facing your dog. Your dog may be lying down, sitting, or standing, whatever feels most comfortable. Have both hands behind your back; the left hand with some treats in it, the right hand empty. Present your empty right

New York resident Noelle Nasca has enjoyed being involved with bully breed rescue and foster care for more than nine years; has been certified as a NYS wildlife rehabilitator; and has also had success competing in agility, obedience, and rally with her dogs. She believes that training should be fun and successful at both ends of the leash!

hand out in front of your dog, palm open. Offer your hand about 4 to 6 inches away from your dog’s nose. Curiosity will likely cause your dog to sniff at your open palm. The moment you feel that wet nose bump your hand is the precise moment you will say “yes” and immediately deliver one of the food treats, which are in your left hand. Reposition your hands so that they are once again hidden behind your back and you are ready to do another repetition of the same pattern. You must remember to present your flat open hand in a very “crisp” fashion. Very clearly and deliberately place your palm relatively close to your dog’s nose. Again, you will say “yes” the moment you feel the dog touch his nose to your hand and then immediately deliver a food treat from the opposite hand. Continue repeating this process. Once you begin to get some good responses from your dog, switch to offering the other hand as the target. All the same rules apply.

A common mistake to avoid is to allow your hand to “drift” closer to the dog’s nose as if trying to “make” the touch happen. You must remind yourself to deliver your open palm at a specific proximity to your dog and then leave it there. Let your dog do the work of bringing his nose to your hand. Occasionally, some dogs do nothing when the hand is presented. If this happens, allow about 5 or 6 seconds to see if the dog becomes interested. If not, simply hide your hand away behind your back and present it again with a bit more enthusiasm as though you are showing him something he’s never seen before. It may also help to offer the hand slightly closer to his nose so that he doesn’t have to stretch very far to touch it. Should your dog still show no interest, you can “bait” your hand with a little tidbit of food. Hiding a tiny piece of cheese or chicken under your thumb is often all the added incentive your dog will need to get the ball rolling!

Once your dog begins to get the idea and he is giving you the same, very intentional nose touches each time you put out your hand, you may begin presenting your hand at increasing distances from his nose. You should also offer your hand at varying heights. Ideally, your goal is train your dog to actively, deliberately, and enthusiastically target or touch your hand no matter where you present it. Sometimes you will offer your open palm parallel with his shoulder, sometimes you’ll present your hand just above and to the right of his head, sometimes you may wish to have him touch down low near your feet. The point is: you will keep him guessing where he needs to drive his nose!

I am sure you’ve noticed that there has been no instruction to command your dog verbally. I’m of the school of thought that when training anything new we should concentrate on getting the actual behavior first. Get the dog so comfortable and confident with the desired action that you will bet your paycheck he’ll get it right! Then you will be ready to add the verbal cue. Practice using the word “yes” at the exact moment your dog’s nose comes in contact with your hand as this will help you install a “reward marker” to your dog’s vocabulary. Reward markers improve the efficiency and effectiveness of any training regime.

You want your dog’s touch behavior to be the gateway to bigger and better things! You will have an invisible connection between you and your dog at all times. You will be able to easily and effectively communicate to your dog just where you want him to be. Aside from using it during training, touch can be an excellent way to remain engaged with your dog without having to work on technical or difficult obedience commands.

Now go get your dog, his favorite treats, and get teaching! Remember to keep your training sessions short, sweet, fun, and motivating! And above all else, enjoy the time with your dog!

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Becoming an Obedience Instructor

By Charlotte Schwartz
 NADOI member # 119

Editor's note: This Notes article was originally published in 1974, and therefore qualifies as a "vintage" NADOI Notes. I am submitting it again after its little rest, as it proves how many things in our business change, yet also stay the same. Florida member Charlotte Schwartz is a lifetime member, and one of our earliest and most treasured.

So, you want to be an obedience instructor? Great! I think you will find it one of the most rewarding things you can do. To watch a feeling of harmony emerge between a dog and his owner, and know that you helped create it, is a good feeling. And what's more, it's lasting. Being an obedience instructor is a little like being a kindergarten teacher. The teacher teaches the children and their children and their children's children. And with each generation, she renews her feeling of having contributed something worthwhile to someone.

An obedience instructor teaches an owner and his dog. Frequently, a few years later, the owner returns with another dog. More often than not, the second one does better than the first because the owner remembered the basic lessons and taught them at home long before coming to class. And when the owner and his second companion graduate, the instructor once again experiences that feeling of meaningfulness. As for you, my friend, I think you will make a good instructor. You like people and you have a way with animals. You present a nice appearance, and your vocabulary is above average. You have the time and the physical stamina as well. You are patient, kind, determined, and understanding. You are always eager to learn. But most of all you *want* to help people and their dogs.

Don't worry that you might not be able to distinguish between a Shih Tzu and a Lhasa Apso. The owner will proudly inform you as soon as you show an interest! Or that you can't remember whether a Boston Terrier belongs in the Terrier or Toy Group. You might suggest you and the owner look it up together ... then you will both learn something. These things are incidental to the job. As time goes by you will find yourself playing the role of settler of family arguments regarding the dog, veterinarian, dog behaviorist, and advisor to puppy purchasers. And then there's the caller who just found out he's being transferred to Europe and wants you to ship his dog for

him and get around the quarantines. To all these and more you cannot turn a deaf ear. You must listen; in fact you will become quite good at it. And then you must objectively recommend a solution in the most tactful manner you can muster. If you are smart, you will let the dog owner make the final decision. In most cases, you will find that all he really wanted was just someone to talk it over with.

Some questions then. One day, in a beginner's class perhaps, what will you do when two owners get careless and there is a dogfight? What will you tell the little old lady who brings a huge, lunging dog to class and can't handle it? How will you deal with the handicapped owner who is determined to train his dog? Will you be overly sympathetic or tough? And what about the owner who stubbornly refuses to give a proper correction to an over-indulged dog? The shy dog and the quiet little woman ... how will you handle them? In your advanced classes, how will you handle the owners bent on high scores at the expense of their dogs? Can you teach them the difference between dog obedience as a sport and the sport of scoring high? Can *you* take it when a know-it-all student begins to tell you how to run your class? On the other hand, can you learn from your students and be gracious about it? What's more, are you willing to admit that there *are* other ways of teaching a particular exercise?

These comments are not meant to offer advice or answer questions, but to stimulate your imagination. To set your wheels turning. To show you how important it is for you to anticipate. Be alert. Be ready for the unknown. The unexpected. For surely, one day it will happen. And when it does, I know you will handle the situation with common sense, because you are the kind who can keep his cool. Like I said, I think you will make a good instructor. And, like good wine, you will improve with age. In the end, you will leave behind a legacy of owners and dogs who enjoy living together and show it.

SECTION 3 • BEYOND BASICS

COMPETITION TRAINING

LOCK-STEP DON'T GET CAUGHT!

Marlene Keay Stachowiak, # 337

Marlene is a long-time member who owns a school in Georgia.

*An experienced instructor and dog writer, she is also
an educator and AKC judge.*

Sometimes I hear handlers say that they are not training beyond the Companion Dog level. What does that mean? In this age of education and research into canine behavior and teaching techniques, I would not expect to hear thinking in that mold. Dogs need mental and physical exercise, and there are so many avenues one can take nowadays besides obedience. What does such a person plan on doing with their companion dog for the next ten years?

Sometimes clubs and schools may think they lose control over their students if they don't keep them in "lock-step." They may be using outmoded lesson plans and boring training schedules. For example, I used to think that only private trainers could move a handler along and avoid boredom for both handler and dog. I must admit there are some basics that need to be routinely done. I used to be a dance ice skater, and we had to practice the "compulsory figures" over and over. Dog training has its "compulsories" as well, but there are ways to move through them with fairly rapid success.

Since I do not know what your "basics" consist of, I will tell you what we do in my school. Some of my staff are actively training in our local dog training club, so I know that these techniques will work in that format as well. The secret lies in introducing exercises beyond the traditional basics early on. Do not get caught up in waiting until one level of obedience is accomplished before starting training exercises that are in Open and Utility.

When it comes to obedience, I believe the handler will gain satisfaction when a focus is on advanced exercises if they are presented without pressure and in a relaxed manner. That is where the fun is even for people who do not have the goal of earning titles. Not everyone wants to compete, but most want their dogs to gain skills that will be both fun for the dog and useful for the handler. The advanced exercises are fun, and mentally stimulating for the human and the dog! Too many people stop training when they have completed their Companion Dog title and that is just when the fun can really begin. Don't spend all your time drilling, as that can bore both of you. Introducing new things to your dog will make the "drill work" easier.

Before your dog is actually working off leash, start teaching a retrieve. Who said you have to wait and get into "lock-step"? I have yet to meet a dog that has learned to retrieve that has also not learned to enjoy it. Don't say, "But I have a" I had retrieving Pharaoh Hounds, retired racing Greyhounds, and many students with non-traditional obedience dogs that enjoyed retrieving. Once a sound retrieve is established, then the team of handler and dog are well on their way to learning exercises that will "knock the socks" off of their friends! For example, prepare for Utility by starting on the scent articles. You don't need to go out and buy a competition set of articles. One of our staff members used metal rings from canning jars for her Champion Shiba Inu in the Utility ring in both UKC and AKC trials. If a dog does a stand, one might as well start preparing for a moving stand and a stand in motion. From this point, it is not a great leap to learn a Utility examination. Try training for the Utility go-out. In the beginning I use food or a toy, so there is no pressure, and the dog may not have even stepped into the Novice ring!

My Boxer, Samson, kayaks with me in “safe water.” We live in Georgia, so we have to watch for alligators! He knows how to balance getting into my kayak or canoe due to his balance training on the teetertotter. He is allowed to run the trails or islands due to his reliability to the many commands I have taught him. This gives us both freedom that we can enjoy together.

Research has shown that humans start losing brain cells at around 40 years of age. I know; I am in BIG trouble! However, there is a way to slow down this loss ... you must learn new things! This does not mean to do a few things very well. It means to try to learn new things. I don't know at what age our dogs begin to lose brain cells, but it probably works much the same as in humans. There are so many ways to do crossover training with your dog that your training sessions will remain interesting and stimulating for both of you, and many new things will be learned.

The bottom line is - don't get caught in lock-step. Advance!

WELL, ASTRO, I GUESS WE AREN'T IN TEXAS ANYMORE!

By Ginny Conway, NADOI member # 633

Ginny lives across the big pond in England with Cardigan Corgis, Astro and Bucky. They are the first international CGC and pet therapy dogs. Ginny is also a tracking judge.

I moved from Texas to just outside of London about three years ago. I am still overwhelmed by the differences between Americans and the English. One can only imagine that those differences include dogs, dog training and obedience.

As in any locale, there are dog events on almost any given weekend, especially if you are willing to travel. England is no exception. Let's go to a dog show! Particularly in the south, trials are held almost exclusively outdoors in large pastures. Parking is in another nearby pasture. I've yet to need a wrecker called out to pull my car out of the mud and grass.

Each ring is marked by stakes and surveyor's tape, much like a ring in California. There will be at least one, and possibly four rings adjacent to yours. That's right, sharing the same walls! The nice thing too is that trials are often family affairs, so there may be three young lads sitting right by your “go out” spot. What jolly fun this can be!

If it's a proper trial, as opposed to a match, you will send in your entry in advance. It is wise to enter early, as closing can be as much as three months before the trial. On the other hand, if you enter too early, you will be in the “running order.” That's a list of the first ten dogs, in catalog order. On the day of the show, these first ten dogs must arrive early in order to check in and be shown, ideally in catalog order. If you arrive after the dogs listed behind you, you may be marked absent. And that's after traveling thirty or more miles! (Distances are smaller over here).

It also pays to read your judge's program. It will tell you when “stays” are, and stays may be held before the running order in your ring. All dogs are shown in the stays at the same time, even if there are 54 entries in the

same class! If dogs and bitches are shown in the same class, they are separated during the stays in different rings. A judge will be present, as well as one steward for about every six entrants. The stewards will position you in the ring, and they will monitor their six dogs for any behaviors that might mean a deduction of points. During a typical stay, you will hear a steward call “time” anytime they see one of their charges move. The judge will note what time into the stay it occurred. It is very rare to receive no points for a stay. This exercise is graded on a sliding scale. If your dog doesn’t move at all, you will get all the points, but if he gets up with three seconds left, it might mean a 1 to 5 point deduction. As in any obedience competition, one should always receive full points on the stays.

Now that you’ve entered, traveled and prepared for a trial, let’s look inside the ring. Oh my golly! Look at those ugly turns! The handler will go at a fairly good, normal pace, and then come to almost a complete stop at every turn. What’s going on here? If a British dog trainer saw you and your dog heeling, they might immediately begin to criticize your turns. Rounded, rounded, rounded! A proper English turn looks rather like something out of band camp or ROTC. One heels forward, positions the feet to make a 90-degree turn and then steps forward in the new direction. This kind of turn is almost impossible to do on the fly. By the third or fourth step, you might be back into full, normal speed.

Oh yes, I forgot to mention the classes and exercises. Even if you arrive in Britain with an OTCH, you first must get out of pre-novice. This elementary class consists of heel on lead, recall, heel off lead, and stays, for a total of 75 points. Quite often there will only be a right and an about turn in this pattern. One must win a first or a third or better in an higher class to move up to beginners (I’m told that technically “an” precedes a word that begins with the letter “H”, although you rarely hear it said as such. When the “an” is there, Brits often drop the “H” sound of the word, as in ‘igher). By the way, there are no jumps in any of the levels of obedience in the UK.

Handlers can talk to the dogs, and make sounds like those heard in a training class or a rally ring. This can sometimes be a good thing, with the handler happily talking to the dog during the exercise. On the other hand, it can be quite annoying to hear, “stay, stay, staaaaayyyy, stay, wait, come here, Fluffy, come here, wait, wait, finish, straight, sit!” This can sometimes have points deducted, depending on the judge.

Is heel position any different? Yes and no. Yes, the dog shall heel off the handler’s left side; however, your arm must be stationary, no swinging, please. You may have your elbow out, away from your body. The ultimate dog shall wrap his head around your thigh, knee, or shin, all the while maintaining the same distance from your body. I have seen dogs over here that looked like they would fall over if the handler moved out of position. The dog’s feet were six inches away from the handler, but the head was attached to the leg! I guess an apt description would be co-dependant or Velcro™ heeling. Yikes!

Let’s do presents! What? Gifts in the ring? No, fronts are called “presents,” as in “Westinghouse presents the Secret Storm.” The dog presents itself in front of the handler. A proper Brit front consists of the dog’s paws landing in between your feet. Ideally, the back toes will touch the front of your toes. In a perfect retrieve, you just slide your hands down your thighs to receive the dumbbell. Guess what happens if you have a small dog who prefers to sit a little ways out from you? You’ve got it; points off. Don’t even ask pregnant handlers!

By now you may be asking yourself, does she like British obedience or not? Well, I am much more used to the North American variety. I have found that I can play with whatever rules a kennel club says I should use, as every kennel club’s rules have their good points and bad points. It is best to make the most of what one can.

THE FIGURE 8

By Fran Tardif; NADOI member #691

Maine member Fran Tardif has been active in and instructs most dog sports, from competitive obedience to agility, tracking, flyball and herding. She presently serves on NADOI's Board of Directors, and also serves as Membership Regional Administrator and on many other committees.

Several years ago while announcing at a horse show during the barrel racing event, I overheard a coach/instructor shouting directions to the rider, "Watch the barrel, look where you are going!" As a rider from way back, I knew the horse will follow your eyes, so I could easily follow the coach's instructions, but thought nothing more of it at the time.

A few weeks later in my competition class, I noticed a handler wandering all about the figure 8 pattern encouraging her dog to catch up, then pulling back to slow it down. The poor dog was lagging, forging, going wide and crowding while the handler moved at different speeds, sometimes going closer to one post and wandering wider at the other. At this rate she'd lose points all over the place, and definitely not present a good picture of teamwork. Without thinking I started instructing, "Watch the post, look where you are going!" So was born my technique for teaching a good figure 8.

I start my students a step, or about a foot, behind the center line between the posts. The majority of dogs will lag that first step or two of heeling, so starting up close minimizes the lagging before the exercise even starts. I instruct my students to take a half-step forward on their right foot in the direction they wish to go, followed by a regular-sized left foot stride. At the same time, they are to look at the outside shoulder of the first post (or if moving to the left it will be the post left shoulder). The handler should turn their eyes and head towards the post shoulder while moving in a smooth, even pace about a yard's length around the post. The reason for this is that stepping out first with the half step will signal the dog to move a nano-second earlier, and usually gets rid of lagging on that first full step. Stepping in the direction of travel with the right foot signals the direction of travel to the dog. With the eyes and head turned into the post, the handler's shoulders, hips and feet are all naturally turned in the same direction. This signals the dog to turn in that direction. Walking about a yard, or an arm's length, around the post gives both the dog and the handler a comfortable distance in which to maintain a nice smooth pace.

When the handler gets almost opposite of the second shoulder, I instruct him to look forward to the opposite post shoulder at about a yard out, and walk a straight line keeping the same length of stride and cadence. The reason for this is that turning the head and eyes forward straightens out the handler's body and stops the circular motion. It keeps the dog in heel position, and if asked for a sit at heel, they will get a straight sit. As the handler approaches the point even with the post shoulder, they should be looking at the shoulder, moving to the back of the neck, and on to the second shoulder. Repeat the last steps.

Here are a few tips.

- Have handlers practice walking the figure 8 without their dog until they are thoroughly comfortable with their new body positions.
- Make sure that handlers don't "airplane" around the posts (i.e., bend with their upper body into the curve around the post).
- It will take several sessions for the dog to learn the new pattern of handler body language. Have the handlers avoid looking down at the dog while heeling through the figure 8 as this will cause the dog to lose heel position, and the handler will lose the smooth heeling path.
- Be sure to tell handlers to keep a loose lead.

As for which way to start out (direction of travel around the posts), I suggest that normal-paced dogs go to the left post, and dogs that jump forward into heel start to the right. Most dogs start off slowly into heel position, including the "attention dogs." By moving the dog to the left, he will stay in heel position and be ready for the straight-away. Fast dogs who jump forward on the heel command do better with the handler moving off to the right. They will keep their heel position and calm on the outside circle before the straight-away, and won't crowd on the inside turn.

This technique can also be useful on the heeling turns. Just have the handler look in the direction of the turn a step or two before. This signals the dog to the impending change of direction.

TEACHING A MOTIVATIONAL RETRIEVE

By Donna Pashia NADOI Member # 1020

Missouri member Donna Pashia says this method of teaching the retrieve works well with puppies as well as beginners. Donna runs a training school and boarding kennel, and is also serving as NADOI's Corresponding Secretary. She has German Shepherd Dogs and Goldens, and is active in obedience and agility competition.

There are three behaviors that are part of a dog's retrieve:

- go out and get the object
- pick up and hold the object, and
- bring the object back to the person who sent you.

I ask my students to use a primary reinforcer as a marker. We use a clicker, which has already been pre-conditioned to tell the dog he is right and serve as a promise that food is coming. I also like to use a secondary reinforcer such as the word yes. The click means the dog will always get food. The "yes" means that I am really happy with him and he is to keep working (and food will be coming at some point soon).

First we condition a "come." To do this I will have food in my hand near the dog's muzzle. I will hold the clicker in the other hand. In a class situation, the dogs need to be on lead, so the hand that is holding the leash will also have the clicker. I hold the clicker between my thumb and forefinger, and my other fingers loosely hold

the leash. I trot backwards as I say the dog's name and "come." As the dog comes along, I click and treat. Because this is the showing phase, I won't use any pressure on the leash; I want the dog to offer the behavior (after all it will happen because I am luring it). In class, we will work individually on this first, then the group will be ready and eager to learn the motivational retrieve.

The food we use to teach the motivational retrieve is soft and easily swallowed. I do many repetitions on this part of the teaching plan, and for my own dogs I will sometimes even use their own kibble and give the rest of their dinner for doing something like coming back really fast or from a longer distance. Obviously, in a class format this wouldn't be practical!

Practice on a surface where the dog can easily see the food. You might use lighter-colored food like string cheese on a dark floor, and darker food like hot dogs on a lighter colored floor. With my dog at my side sitting or standing and facing the same way I am, I show him the treat and say, "ready, set." If he moves, we start over. The dog's cue to move is "get it!" In the early stages I will throw the treat only three or four feet away, and I will click as he is about to eat the treat.

As soon as the dog eats the treat, I call his name and "come." Initially, it may be necessary to go back to the dog with your treat at his nose so that he is reminded that he should come to you. As he comes in to me, I click and treat to reinforce that behavior. When the dog starts to understand what I want and is going out and coming in to me quickly, I will add some distance to my throw. You can also play this game by sitting in a chair to encourage the dog to come in to a nice front, and to keep things interesting.

Picking up and holding an object is trained separately. I like to use an object that is soft and fuzzy and that can also hold food, but you can use any object that the dog likes to pick up. First I present the object, and click and treat if the dog shows any interest, i.e. bumping, sniffing, or even just looking at it. In the early stages, the treat can actually come out of the object, as this will make it even more interesting. If the dog looks at the object, for example, I will click and treat for that no more than three times, then wait for a sniff and go on. If the dog tries to offer at least minimal effort, I will give my secondary reinforcer ("yes") to keep him working, but he won't get the treat until I can get him to work at the most recent behavior I have seen him offer.

After several sessions with the dog offering the behavior of grabbing and holding, I will withhold the click and try to get him to hold on a little longer. If he drops the object, I will say "oops" or "wrong," and we'll try again. I always work to get the dog to hold the object for different (small) amounts of time. Sometimes I will click after a three-second hold, sometimes for a five-second hold, etc. This way the dog won't know how long you will wait before the click and giving the treat.

One point to keep in mind is that the click marks the behavior but also ends it, so as soon as you click, the dog will let go of the object to get his treat. This would be a good time to add your release word, such as "give," or "out." Release cues are just as important in terms of information for the dog as the original cue of "get it." It lets the dog know the exercise is over. I don't want the dog to have to guess! Also important is having the dog take the object and hold it in different locations (in relation to you). For example, you could have the dog trotting at

your side or you could move backwards and as you stop, give your release word, take the object, and give a treat. At this point, you can trade for the object, sometimes clicking and treating, sometimes just treating, and sometimes just praise and petting. Try putting the object on a chair or close to the floor. Click and treat for the dog taking the object. Finally, put it on the floor with one finger on it and lastly put it alone on the floor. Remember to always positively reinforce every new step of the way, and often in small steps. Whatever we reinforce we are likely to get again! Vary the objects you ask your dog to get, and use many things that he likes.

Now you are ready to put it all together. With the “ready, set, get it” game, you will use the object you have been training with instead of the food treat. Keep the distance you throw the object short at first. You no longer will have to click for going toward the object or getting it. Trade the object for a treat; then wean him off the treat by sometimes offering just praise, sometimes praise and petting, and sometimes a treat. Sometimes offer another of the dog’s favorite objects and play the game again.

On graduation night, play games like Charlotte Schwartz’ Grab ’n Go Race (Forward, Feb. 1998), or for more advanced dogs try some of the retrieving games in Terry Ryan’s Games People Play to Train Their Dogs (chapter 3). The goal is to have fun with your best friend while teaching him something useful. Get it? Got it? Good!

JAPANESE SHEEPDOG TRIALING

Pam Wolf, NADOI # 630

Pam has earned 13 HX titles on 6 different breeds, and also works her Border Collies in obedience and tracking.

A couple of years ago my husband and I took a trip to visit his brother who was then working in Tokyo. Prior to our visit, I had started a correspondence with a Japanese sheep herding enthusiast who had asked a training question on an internet list. This led to some great adventures in Japan watching a couple of trainers, and even working with one, and finally it culminated with me giving a sheepdog training seminar this spring.

My first experience left me with a feeling of amazement at the dedication of the handlers in Japan and the surprising number of them, especially considering there are only 20,000 sheep in the whole country!

Some time this past winter I was contacted by my hosts, Minori Kigawa and her husband Shin, about journeying to Japan to work with some sheepdog handlers there. After working out the logistics, including finding an interpreter, I was on my way to Japan.

Arriving in Japan with no sleep for about 24 hours, I was met by my hosts and driven across Tokyo (which is a huge city!) to their house where they picked up a second vehicle and their dogs. Off we went to the Asigiri Highlands. After a wonderful sushi dinner where I met my interpreter, Hiroshi Nakagawa and his wife Akiko, we headed off into the night. All I could see was that Mt Fuji was getting closer.

Along the way I learned that we were going to a campground. Okay, I grew up in a family that loved to go camping, but I just hadn’t thought about it in Japan. We arrived at the ‘lodge’ which had been a dormitory for the Agriculture College before the University sold the land to a private owner. We unpacked and went to bed.

The next morning for some reason I awoke quite early and wandered into the communal kitchen to find Minori cooking breakfast. I looked outside and saw IT, Mt. Fuji - WOW! It was close and so beautiful and there wasn't a cloud in the sky - very unusual.

Japan has had about two trials a year for several years now. One of the top handlers ran a dog in a trial in Wales last year. After the seminars, I was to judge an Open trial without a shed, and a beginner's course which I designed.

The first seminar consisted mainly of very beginner handlers. I was soon to learn that most had very little knowledge of sheepdogs, trials, nor training. Working with an interpreter was an interesting experience, and I found I had to break down things to the tiniest detail for a good interpretation. Talk about a learning experience, and that was just for me. I think I must have been clear enough because I got some good questions and everyone seemed to comprehend.

By day two, Hiroshi and I were working together better and things flowed much easier. This seminar ended up covering more basics than I had thought it would have, but it was information necessary for these participants. Most of the dogs were show Border Collies and some had never seen sheep before. There was one Australian Shepherd and a couple of sport bred Border Collies. The Japanese categorize the Border Collies over there as Show - mostly Australian show lines, Working - with some of GB's finest working lines, and Sport - a mixture of the two usually used for agility, flyball or disc.

After a two-day break where we did some sightseeing and some private lessons, we started seminar #2. This group of handlers were, for the most, already familiar with much of the basic terminology and background information on trials and were more interested in the training aspects.

For those who haven't tried herding, it can be a quite complicated venture. First, there is all the jargon, and this varies from place to place so it makes it even more confusing. Then there are the sheep. Sheep are the most important aspect of a trial, for without them (or similar stock) there would be no trials. I tried to impress upon everyone to have a great respect for the sheep, as on my last visit I had seen sheep which had been badly managed by having too many dogs work them too poorly.

Anyway, herding is difficult, and explaining the training can be equally difficult because there are so many variables. First, there is the handler and his abilities, mood and relationship with his dog. Then there is the dog, his innate ability, his trainability and willingness to obey, or biddability. Finally, there are the SHEEP! This is a whole month of information and trying to condense it into two days is almost impossible. Let's just say, to be good at working sheep with dogs, the handler has got to know as much about sheep behavior as he can!

The second seminar consisted mainly of working bred Border Collies, and there were some very good dogs. Most had major glitches in their training, but were things relatively easy to fix if the handler knew the right procedures. With such a complex subject, I tried to outline a step-by-step procedure for training the dogs, stressing that training was not linear.

The main method I use usually takes up to five days to see real progress; it is primarily positively based; however, you have to respect that sheep are living creatures so some negatives may be necessary. We saw real progress in a couple of dogs in two days. Fortunately we had a wide variety of dogs/problems and it gave everyone opportunity to see various techniques and how to apply them.

At last trial day arrived. The weather was chilly and threatening to rain all day, but fortunately the rain held off for the entire day. There were eight competitors in the Open class. The field gave us about a 200m outrun, with about 80m on the drive legs. The handlers had to bring the sheep through a gate into a smaller field for the pen. I held a handler's meeting, as is usual, and when the first competitor ran I realized my big mistake. The handler didn't realize that in Border Collie trials you only get ONE attempt at the 'gates' and he was retrying and running sheep back and forth in order to make the first set of gates! Okay, give him a rerun and have another handler's meeting and explain the "only one attempt" rule. Back to the trial. Handling is not up to the usual USBCHA level, but it did bring back memories of early trials I attended in the U.S. many years ago. In spite of the novice status of the handlers, the runs went well and we had three top finalists. My host, Shin, wanted to have the top three compete in a special trial later in the day.

Next we held the beginner's trial. This was in an arena about 70m x 120m. I had set up an XYZ course consisting of a Y chute, a Z chute and a Maltese cross. I left the openings wide enough to make it easy. I decided to judge this on a points system, with the competitors earning five points/head through each obstacle. What I thought easy, most found difficult. Finally we had a couple competitors get some sheep through each obstacle. Everyone was supportive and had a very enjoyable time laughing as the handlers tried to get the job done.

After the beginners, ran we held the challenge cup. For this course, the top three from the morning's Open course were to run a silent fetch trial on ten head of sheep. Most of these dogs had rarely worked ten head, and the handlers were skeptical. More daunting was the idea that they could only give ONE command to send their dog without major point penalty. To the great surprise of the competitors (and part of the lesson from me), was that the outruns were MUCH better without the handlers constantly trying to direct the dog and distracting the dogs from their job.

This trial was won by a very quiet handler (even before the silent fetch) whose dog did a wonderful job bringing the sheep quietly to her master's feet in a nice steady pace, although she did have one rogue sheep and needed an extra command to wait for the recalcitrant sheep, which cost her five points. I think all the handlers and spectators were impressed with how well the dogs did when given the opportunity to use their own natural instincts.

That night we held a farewell dinner with much talk about sheepdogs, bloodlines, breeding and training with some unusual and wonderful picnic food Japanese style. Sadly I had to leave for the airport the next day as my hosts had to start back to work the next day. I am looking forward to next year!