

IACP

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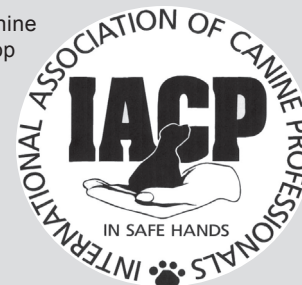
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President's Letter

by Chad Mackin

This year, the IACP lost one of our most recognizable members. The news of Dick Russell's passing was not surprising (his battle with cancer was well-known) but it was a blow nonetheless. A month has passed since I heard the news and I still find myself fondly remembering Dick Russell stories. There are so many things I say and do as a professional and as a person that have their roots in Dick's homespun wisdom.

Dick was at times caustic and even abrasive, but at the root of it was a generous heart that was always willing to offer guidance to those who sought it. Dick was a man who always had the mischievous smile of a pranking child. Someone once said, "Dick always looks like he's just played the best practical joke in the world and you're about to find out about it." That's the most accurate description I've ever heard of his personality. I owe Dick more than I could ever repay. It is with a heavy heart that I say goodbye to him. We will not likely see a man like him again. He belonged to a different age.

The world is a little darker for his passing. But I am comforted by the many small flames that sprang from his bright fire. Some of us are using his principles of large field socialization as a springboard towards solving many dog problems. Some of us are using paper plate recalls to teach dogs reliable recalls from great distances. There are those of us who have taken to heart Dick's admonishments about great customer service and the WOW effect. I read the lists and listen to my fellow IACP members and I am reminded that Dick's legacy lives not just in the countless dogs of Baton Rouge he helped to train, but in our members as well. It lies in their words; it lies in their hearts. My final message to Dick would simply be. "Well done sir, and thank you! You will be missed."

On a more cheerful note, I would like to take a moment and thank the Board of Directors for the wonderful work they have been doing on behalf of the entire organization. I couldn't be more pleased with our newly elected directors. They are such valuable assets and their energy and commitment is inspiring. We have a great group of people working with us this year, and I am grateful to have them helping me through my term as President.

Finally, please feel free to write me with any questions or comments you have regarding the IACP: chadmackin@packtobasics.com!

Chad Mackin,
President IACP





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To The Rescue: Get Involved

by Amy Lorentz

I know that the statistics are suspect. I know that the problems are largely regional. I know that legislation is not the answer. And I know that here in the South where I live, I can't go a single day – unless I stay home and turn off the phone – without encountering a dog with no owner. They are everywhere. The rescue I work with is one of maybe 20 in this area, and we cannot keep up with the demand. The phone never stops ringing; the emails keep coming. *I can't afford to feed him anymore. I don't want these puppies. I don't have time for her. There are puppies in the woods. There are dogs abandoned at my neighbor's house. Someone's got to take these puppies.*

To combat this unending need has arisen a legion of dedicated amateurs. Fueled always by compassion and enthusiasm, and sometimes by knowledge and skill, rescuers are often viewed by professionals such as ourselves as batty dilettantes. Sure, we all belong to the larger group of people who think that anal glands are acceptable dinner-table conversation, but rescuers are a special kind of crazy. So, with a common goal of helping ownerless dogs, how does a professional trainer, vet, vet tech, or groomer who wants to become involved in helping unwanted dogs find a niche in a sea of volunteers?

First, will your skills be valued? Even if your goal is not to be the training director of your newfound rescue, your outlook on your own profession is bound to affect the way you approach this venture. If the group you have chosen is one that views training as akin to euthanization--a regrettable, last-ditch necessity – you are likely setting yourself up for frustration. If you feel a calling to change minds

on this issue, then godspeed, but it is unlikely that your efforts will benefit the dogs until you have succeeded (or given up) with the humans.

There are rescues as large and efficient as businesses, and those that are barely more than a small group of people with nose-prints on their car windows who get together every now and then to complain that everyone else is heartless. Some things to look for when evaluating a rescue: How many dogs are they responsible for at any given time – does anyone even know? Is there a clear procedure for taking in a new dog? Are the various responsibilities accounted for? Who would a potential adopter talk to? What about an owner wanting to relinquish? Who manages the money? Who keeps the vet records? Who makes decisions about heroic efforts?

A well-run rescue needs to manage resources appropriately; that is, they need to be able to say 'no' when they have to. They need to offer clean, well-vetted dogs via any number of user-friendly venues (Petfinder, Petango etc). Their dogs should rarely be with them for long, should be in foster homes, not kennels, most of the time, and should be house-trained, crate-trained, leash-trained and have good house-manners when they leave for their new homes. Furthermore, the dogs' strengths and weaknesses should be honestly evaluated and matched with those of their adopters.

In addition to their procedures and roles, get a feel for their rules. Some rescues have stringent policies for screening adopters. These often touch on age of children in the home, number and/or type of existing animals, intact animals, size and

Ultimately,
the point is not to protect dogs from bad people;
it's to find good people to take on responsibility for the dogs' protection.

type of fenced yard, number of hours away from home, and method of planned training. Debating the logic of these rules is beyond the scope of this article, but the point is to make certain you are aware of their policies and are comfortable with them. If you disagree and wish to try to change the rules you are unlikely to get anywhere, and nothing else will be accomplished while you try.

In recent weeks the rescue I work with has taken in a boxer mix whose vegan owner relinquished her to us after a shocking act of savagery (she killed a wild rabbit), an aussie mix whose owners left her in a crate for 12-14 hours a day for 2 years and then tried at three vet clinics to have her euthanized because she wouldn't settle down in the house, and nine dogs (including 5 puppies) whose owners stripped their rented house of doorknobs, light fixtures, even the landscaping--but left their dogs to starve. Rescuers deal daily with the terrible situations, awful people, neglect, abuse, starvation, injury, and the pervasive attitude that pets are valueless and disposable. It takes strength of will to keep from becoming a bitter, suspicious, hate-filled person. Beware groups that provide an unending supply of vitriol; this contempt is poison and contagion. There are certainly acts of cruelty, and even just plain stupidity, that defy explanation, but not every abandoned dog is the victim of real evil. A friend who owns a boarding kennel arrived to work last week to find a terrier

had been boosted over her fence. She posted his picture on Facebook and gathered quite a long list of comments, mostly along the lines of "people are awful!" But the dog was left with his bowl and his bed. To me, this speaks of desperation. The dog is still homeless and the same amount of effort (and money) will be required to have him vetted and re-homed regardless of the former owner's character; however, I don't want to be someone who can't acknowledge that decent people can find themselves in terrible situations. Ultimately, the point is not to protect dogs from bad people; it's to find good people to take on responsibility for the dogs' protection. If you start to believe that there are no good people, find another way to spend your free time. Seriously.

Amy Lorentz is a geek by trade and a dog trainer by choice. She owns and operates Steadfast Canine in East Tennessee, and volunteers with Rescue groups in her area.

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Change and Choice: Adapting to the Market

by Chad Mackin

Growing up in Houston, I remember a commercial that ran on local television to promote the Houston Rockets basketball team. It featured then-coach Rudy Tomjanovich holding a basketball saying "Basketball is really simple sport. The goal is to get this ball into that hoop and many times as you can, while preventing the other team from doing the same," or something to that effect. The thing is, his speech was intercut with highlight reel footage that demonstrated how incredibly complex the game actually was. It was a nice bit of promotion, and it left a lasting impression on me.

As I listen to dog trainers talk about their work I am often reminded of that commercial. On the surface, dog training is a relatively simple proposition. Set goals for the dog and get the dog to achieve them. But just like getting the basketball in the hoop, there are many ways to accomplish those goals, and the one that is going to work best sometimes depends on the situation. It is not always practical to drive to the hoop; sometimes it's better to shoot from the outside.

In dog training, we professionals tend to argue over relatively minor points of style. We get into heated discussions about tools, how to use those tools, or even what "sit" means precisely. What we often forget is that at the end of it all, the only thing that really matters is if we've improved the life of the dog and the dog's owner. Everything else is details.

However, the game is changing. The very definition of "training" has changed, in the eyes of the public and in the eyes of many dog trainers.

People seeking competent dog training are deluged with hundreds of competing ideas and

philosophies. The debate about methods rages on, but that's not what's most important to most of our potential clients. Most of our clients are concerned with the finished product. The truth is, these days the average dog owner is looking for simplicity, not precision. Most of them don't care if the dog lies down when told to stay. They don't care if the dog heels so long as he isn't dragging them down the street. They don't care about straight sits or centered fronts. In fact, most of them don't care if they have to repeat a command occasionally. They just want a dog they can enjoy spending time with.

For many trainers, precision is the most important thing. For many dog owners it isn't. To the average dog owner, competition precision is an unnecessary upgrade that amounts to more work for them. To most people, it isn't a big deal if the dog sits straight and square. They don't care about centered fronts or sloppy sits. In fact, for many of them, it just means more work on their part. More

work is contrary to their goals. What they are looking for is convenience and peace in their house. There is a democracy of the market place at work. Those trainers who listen to what their clients are asking for will generally be more successful than those who insist that their clients spend a lot of time practicing details they find pointless or over-restrictive.

Of course there is nothing wrong with adhering to the traditional standards. But if you choose that business model, you are choosing an uphill battle in terms of marketing. Choice ultimately means the democracy of the marketplace will always determine the future.

At the end of it all, the only thing that really matters is if we've improved the life of the dog and the dog's owner. Everything else is details.

There is no getting around it. Trainers who offer faster, more convenient solutions will fare better than those who offer solutions that require lots of work and effort on the part of the owner.

Does this degrade the quality of dog training? Perhaps. Time will tell. What I see happening, though, is something different. I see a lot of dogs enjoying freedom they otherwise would not. More people are paying for dog training than ever before. I see owners understanding the concepts of dog training and taking responsibility for their part in owning a well-behaved dog. I see people purchasing the type of training they want, rather than being forced into a one-size-fits-all model of what their trained dog should look like. Choice is generally a good thing.

The market is changing to match the will of the consumer. It is simple economics and it is as inevitable as the tide. Those who understand the current market will thrive in it. That doesn't mean you can't change it. But to change it, you have to understand what drives it. You must

be sympathetic to your customers' wants. You cannot dictate to them, you must convince them. If you want them to strive for a higher standard, inspire them want more from their dog! But don't demand it. Sell yourself, sell your skill, sell your experience, but always listen to their wants. Find a way to make them want what you are selling. Do that and you'll succeed, no matter what approach you take to the changing role of dog training.

Because in the end, it is really very simple. Make the dog a reliable companion that the owner can count on and is happy with. Everything else is details.

Chad Mackin is the owner of A+ Dog Obedience in Webster, TX, and has been training professionally since 1993. He created the Pack to Basics system of socializing difficult dogs and teaches workshops around the country. Chad is currently the President of IACP.

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That Dogma Won't Hunt

by Janeen McMurtrie

Science is properly more scrupulous than dogma. Dogma gives a charter to mistake, but the very breath of science is a contest with mistake, and must keep the conscience alive.

~ George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

This article is a critique of a University of Pennsylvania study that has been quoted extensively in the media and in the dog training world as providing proof that “confrontational training methods” provoke aggressive responses in dogs. In the introduction Meghan Herron, Frances Shofer, and Ilana Reisner (Herron et al.) write that:

The purpose of this study was to describe the frequency of use, the recommending source, and the owner-reported effect on canine behavior of interventions that owners of dogs with undesired behaviors had used on their dogs. This study also aimed to report aggressive responses from the dogs subsequent to the use of aversive and non-aversive interventions.

But if you jump to the conclusions you'll see that the authors don't really claim to have proved anything. They merely state that an association between “confrontational training methods” and aggressive responses was observed in the population sampled. Confusion about that silly cause-effect thingamahickey might have occurred when some PR hack inflated the results to sex-up a press release. Or... it may have come about because immediately after Herron et al. state that they observed an association, they go on to say that: “Ultimately, reward-based training is less stressful or painful for the dog, and, hence, safer for the owner.”

I believe that this is akin to saying: “We found that being black in color was associated with a higher risk of euthanasia in the shelter dog environment.

Ultimately, white coats are less dangerous for dogs, therefore, all breeders should strive to produce white dogs.”

How does a simple association morph into a cause that requires intervention? *Correlational studies indicate the existence of relationships between variables, but they can't prove that one variable causes a change in another.* Correlated variables may or may not be linked in time, space or function, and factors that weren't considered in the study may be important – or even causative. Maybe I'm being picky, but when I was in graduate school it was considered quite bad form to use a simple correlation to imply one has discovered a cause-effect relation.

Good science and dogma don't mix.

The biggest problem in science today isn't that it's hard to understand, it's how distressingly easy it has become to use science to advance a personal, economic or political agenda.

And what about this bit of science? To begin with, there appear to be several bias problems in the survey population. The first one I found, and in my opinion it's a rather glaring one, is that the study population only included owners who were actively seeking help from a specific veterinary behavior clinic. Given this limitation, all dog owners who found that aversive methods worked effectively would have been removed from the population.

The authors don't mention the strong possibility that the population selected also likely included a large number of people who were frustrated with their dogs. Frustrated owners are likely to lash out at their dogs in anger — something no trainer I've met would consider a valid training method. Including this kind of angry, frustrated behavior in the same category as a thoughtful, well-timed correction makes about as much sense as calling free-feeding a “reward-based training method.”

Herron et al. don't discuss how many of the dogs included in the survey exhibited aggressive behavior before "confrontational" training methods were used. Aggressive behavior that preceded training shouldn't be considered to have been caused by that training.

The training methods included in the study are only given vague descriptions and the authors don't state why each method is considered to be confrontational, neutral or nonconfrontational. "Leash correction" and use of a "choke or pronged pinch collar" are considered separately, as are "dominance down" and "force down." Three different verbal corrections are evaluated separately, and two different trained commands ("sit to get" and an attention cue) were included in the "non-aversive" group without considering what kinds of methods were used to train the dogs to obey those commands.

The discussion doesn't provide a balanced presentation of the training methods studied. Detailed discussions on potential negative aspects of some aversive techniques were included, but for

some reason no information was presented on any potential positive effects of these techniques. No discussion of potential negative or positive effects of the nonconfrontational or neutral methods was included.

The most obvious example of this is the detailed and rather convoluted justification presented to discredit all use of shock collars. A similar discussion is provided regarding the use of collar corrections. I'm not sure why the authors felt obliged to include detailed discussions on the possible adverse effects of just one set of methods. I also find it interesting that leash corrections were ranked by owners as the fifth most effective method and that they resulted in aggressive responses in roughly the same percent of cases as "using food to trade for item" and "avoidance." The use of "shock collars" resulted in the same low percentage of aggressive responses (4-6%).

Intended or not, the unbalanced discussion of methods casts an appearance of bias on this study.



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I found the study to be somewhat confusing because in places the discussion doesn't match the results. The authors describe the use of Cesar Millan's characteristic 'schhhtt' sound and "jabbing at the dog in the neck" as "potentially provocative" – according to their own data these methods elicited aggressive responses as often as food rewards did. So why are Millan's methods described as provocative and why do the authors recommend using food rewards?

The authors state that owners of dogs with aggression problems who consult dog trainers instead of veterinarians are at risk because "the lack of standardized oversight of many training programs has resulted in a range of competence and ethical practice of behavior modification and owners may be at risk of receiving unsafe advice." In the next sentence they state that the most common intervention recommended by veterinarians was the use of a muzzle. In an interesting bit of irony

this was the method that resulted in the highest percentage of aggressive responses.

I'm concerned that a study with so many obvious holes in it is being touted as "accepted science" throughout the media. Herron et al's "Survey of the use and outcome of confrontational and non-confrontational training methods in client-owned dogs showing undesired behaviors":

- Sampled a heavily biased population;
- Includes a discussion section that is heavily slanted against all use of aversive/ confrontational methods even though this opinion does not appear to have been supported by the survey data;
- States a conclusion that is not supported by the data; and
- Presents correlation as cause, and then uses the inferred cause to manufacture a problem and a sense of urgency to address it.

A black and white advertisement for Kong Wobblers. The top left features the 'KONG WOBBLER' logo in a bold, stylized font. The main image shows a black and white dog, possibly a Weimaraner, interacting with a Kong Wobblers toy. The dog's head is lowered towards the toy, which is a dark, rounded shape with a hole. Several small, round treats are scattered on the surface in front of the dog. The bottom of the advertisement has a black background with the text 'Feed a meal or just some treats.™' in white.

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I'm afraid that instead of presenting a balanced, scientifically rigorous evaluation of the data they collected, the authors presented the results they wanted — and expected — to find. Whether you agree with their philosophy or not, this was not good science. Good science involves a commitment to follow the data, even when that data leads you in a direction you're not ideologically comfortable with.

It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.

Sherlock Holmes, *A Scandal in Bohemia*

Janeen McMurtrie is the owner of Smart Dogs Training Center in Red Wing, MN and is a Professional member of IACP. Read more from Janeen at <http://smartdogs.wordpress.com>

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Left Behind: Helping a Dog Cope with Loss

by Martin Deeley

Do dogs have emotions? Do they grieve at the loss of another dog or a family member? In my experience, yes. But the intensity of an emotion depends on many aspects. It depends on the family the dog is living in, his life style, the relationship with the deceased, the relationship with the human members of the family, and the attitude and emotions of members the family after the death of a loved dog. Dogs pick up on the emotions of others as well as having emotions themselves.

"Emotion" is defined as *a mental state that arises spontaneously rather than through conscious effort and is often accompanied by physiological changes; a feeling: the emotions of joy, sorrow, reverence, hate, and love. In the case of a death, the emotion can be distress, sorrow, grief and related feelings that we may describe as emptiness.*

The changes that you may observe in a dog who has lost a companion are lack of appetite, distance or aloofness, or, conversely, demands of attention and affection. He will act differently. We have to remember that when a living animals relate to each other for a long period of time, they do develop relationships; they do create habits, routines, boundaries and even rules around each other. When suddenly one of the 'partners' is no longer there, these change; they have to. Good, safe habits and routines create confidence, trust, certainty and familiarity with the world. The death of a companion it is almost like having to overcome an addiction, an ingrained habit that they find difficult to lose. With some dogs it is extreme because they may have built a strong bond with the deceased 'partner'. They have followed them, been guided by them, exercised with them, and been entertained by them. The world has revolved around the partner. Even dogs that are leaders and have confidence can find themselves left with

a feeling of no one to lead, no one to share with – they have lost the feeling of being wanted and part of a pack.

It may sound anthropomorphic, but I am certain this is one of the main reasons that dogs show grief. Confidence and a feeling of belonging to a pack disappear with the loss of the other dog. In some instances this may even result in separation anxiety when the dog is left alone, now with no companion. There of course have been instances of dogs not being able to separate themselves even from their dead companion, sitting next to the grave for days. Remember the story of Greyfriars Bobby? He was so devoted to his master John Gray, even in death, that this faithful dog for fourteen years kept constant watch and guard over his master's grave until his own death in 1872. He only left it for food.

Dogs cannot speak to let us know what they are thinking and we have to read from their body actions, behavior and general demeanor how they are feeling. Of course we can misread what they are thinking and feeling. And sometimes they are reflecting our feelings and our emotions. They smell, sense and taste our emotions and react accordingly. We therefore may think their emotions come from the loss of a companion when really they are reflecting our emotions and getting theirs from reading us. In 1996, the ASPCA conducted a study, which found that 36 percent of dogs ate less after the death of a canine companion, 11 percent stopped eating completely, and 63 percent vocalized more or became quiet. Many slept in different places from where they had slept before and over half of the surviving dogs became more affectionate and even became clingy with their owners. They had lost their confidence, their security blanket, and their way of life, and without clear help and direction were mentally lost.



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So what can we do to minimize and overcome the grieving? It's not always possible, but think ahead when you know that one of your dog's companions may pass on. We should always be the pack leader, but even more so now. Engage your dog in activities she enjoys-- walks, retrieving, swimming, games--and do these by yourselves. Do not feel guilty about leaving the companion behind; he will most likely enjoy the break, the rest, and the relaxation.

Over the years I have had as many as thirteen dogs at one time and have been able to watch their changes at the loss of a companion. Today my wife and I are down to only owning four, plus 2 cats who are great friends with the dogs. Even though our dogs are friends, run together, play together and sleep together, when one goes over to doggy heaven, the others do not show excessive emotions. However, when my ol' Becky passed over the Rainbow, there was no doubt that her son and the younger dogs looked for her for

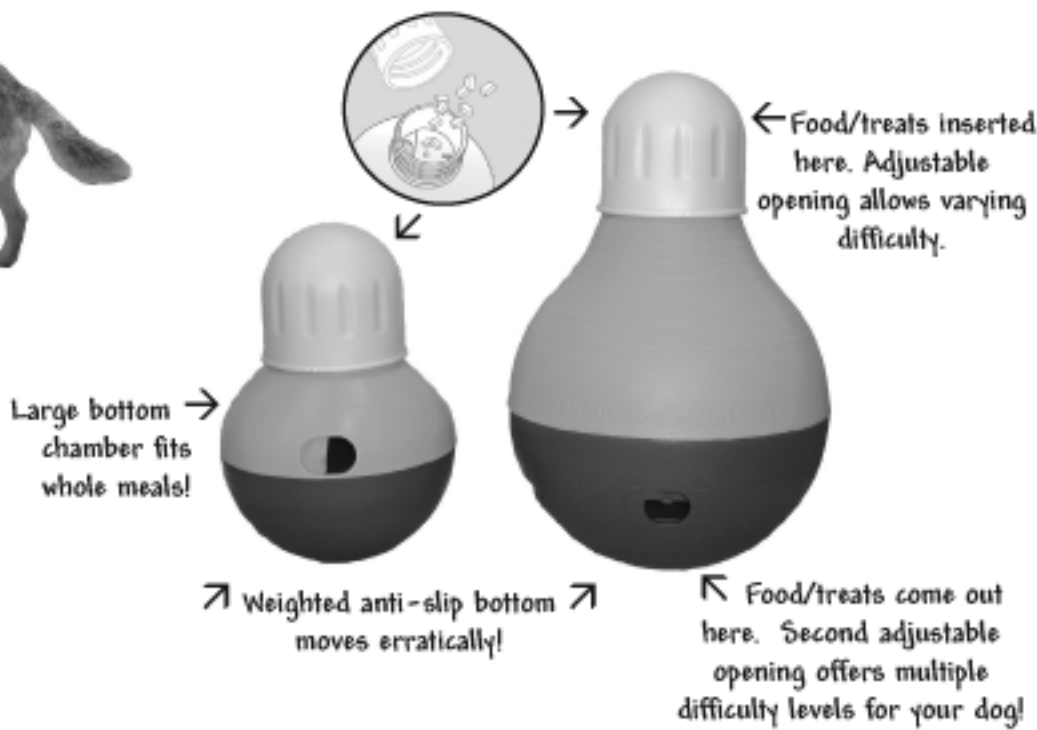
about four or five days. They were waiting to see her holding court around the paddock. She was the matriarch, the lead dog, but not the leader. I am, and that is the reason I believe I have few behavior problems when one of the 'team' passes away. I provide the pleasures or am an initiator of the pleasures because I spend time with them. My dogs are never alone outside in the yard. Unless they are in their crates, I am with them. I know not everyone has the time or even wishes to live like this. But it does make a big difference. When a companion dog dies, we have to take leadership and guide the remaining dog or dogs into activities to take their mind off what has happened. If we have shown leadership before the death, this part and the transition to being an only dog becomes much easier. We will also be grieving, but we cannot show it, or it can be reflected back to our remaining dog. We have to live for our living dog and she needs help to see her through these times, and in helping her, we do actually help ourselves. A calm, confident and kind hand while

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still maintaining boundaries and limitations with clear communication is essential. The reason? Some dogs will see our affection and our kindness as a sign of weakness in the pack and feel they have to take over. It may not be obvious to you that you are doing it, but beware of rewarding bad behavior because you feel depressed yourself and sorry for your dog. Allowing your dog to take advantage of you and behave badly will become the new habit unless you show the correct way for him to behave. Our job as a leader never stops. In fact, this is what helps a dog through these times. They look for assurance, they look for confidence, they look for leadership to be able to deal with the unknown and they look initially to us to provide it. Your dog should not feel alone – she has you.

One final thought: do not rush out to replace your deceased dog. Wait a while; give your remaining dog a chance to become familiar with the situation. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that because she, and you, miss her old buddy that a new one will be a perfect replacement. Some dogs not only become accustomed to being only dogs, but actually prefer it. Some take exception to a new puppy coming into what is now their domain. So take time and think it through. The loss of a dog is difficult for both you and your remaining dog, but you can be support for one another, help each other through these times, and this will bring you closer.

Martin has been training dogs for over thirty years and has written three books on dog training. He writes regularly for magazines and has devised, directed and presented thirteen training videos. Martin runs regular workshops and seminars for dogs throughout Europe and America through his International School for Dog Trainers. He uses all methods of training and all forms of equipment and is renowned as a trainer of trainers.



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Do Border Collies Dream of Sheep?

a book review by Donald McCaig

Do Border Collies Dream of Sheep?

By Carol Lea Benjamin and C. Denise Wall

Outrun Press; \$20

Lassie Come Home, Adam's Task, The Plague Dogs, White Fang, Winterdance: classic dog books inhabit a mysterious, magical space where two unlike species love and comprehend one another. *Do Border Collies Dream of Sheep?* is such a classic.

A pup from a Tennessee farm flies to New York City to become a service dog; its littermate is trained to be a working sheepdog. In alternating chapters, the pups' owners tell how both worked out.

IACP Hall-of-Famer Carol Benjamin is a New Yorker, through and through.

She's been a pet dog trainer all her life, and among her books is *Mother Knows Best*, one of the best-selling training books of all time.

Denise Wall remembers her grandmother's farm, where every sheepdog was named "Dolly." She's a top sheepdog trainer and handler, head of the ABCA genetics committee, a bio-chemist and stock farmer. Carol's amusing cartoons enhance her writing. Denise is an award winning photographer.

At eight weeks, puppy Sky started his new life in busy, noisy, jam-packed Greenwich Village. Puppy May remained on Denise's sheep farm.

They were important pups with real jobs. Sky had to learn to relieve debilitating pain; without May, Denise couldn't do her stockwork.

In *Do Border Collies Dream of Sheep?*, city dog and country dog get equal billing.

Carol on Sky: "I couldn't teach her how to ride on the bus...unless I had the right to take her onto the bus. So she had her service dog tag early, plus a little red cape that said 'service dog in training'..."

"The size of the bus and its slow lumbering progress meant that Sky would be less likely to get motion sickness than she would in a car. This was a good thing. But the noises a bus makes and the large number of strangers and tight quarters make the ride difficult. I decided on two things. First, to start, I would carry Sky and keep her on my lap. That was easy because she was so small, almost too small for the cape she was wearing. Second, though service dogs should not be distracted when

they are working, I decided that if I let every kid on the bus pet Sky, she'd think the bus was a fun place to be. So that's what I did. I got on the bus with her just when school let out and it was filled with kids on the way home..."

Working/
training dogs
is mind-work and
this book makes you
privy to the thinking of two
skilled humans and two
remarkable dogs as they
share extraordinarily
difficult tasks.

Denise on May: "...May had to learn how to keep the sheep from coming near the feed pans while I was putting the feed in. Naturally, the sheep were very motivated to outsmart her in this task. They would try to get by her, around her, or sometimes even try to jump over her to get to the feed. Since I was busy putting feed out, May had to figure out how to counter each of their attempts to get to the feed before it was time. Luckily, I was able to start her on this new job in the early fall when there was still some grass. The sheep would fight to get to the feed I was putting out, but not as desperately as they would later in the season... Consequently, May had some time to hone her new skills and become more confident at her new

job as the sheep became more and more creative and insistent on getting to the food."

Working/training dogs is mind-work and this book makes you privy to the thinking of two skilled humans and two remarkable dogs as they share extraordinarily difficult tasks.

Carol on Sky: "If I had some pain, she'd reach out and put her paw right on it. I was surprised how hot her paw was and how precise she was about finding the place that needed her help."

Denise on May: "Sheepdogs often need to carry out a number of complicated actions in order to do a job. They don't work on a simple reward system like one you would use to teach a dog a trick. They need to understand a general goal and be flexible and inventive enough to do whatever it takes to reach that goal. May's understanding of the job was so complex that if she was doing a job she already understood but doing it incorrectly, I could call her over to me and talk to her a little in a disapproving voice, expecting that she would understand she needed to do better, and she usually would."

When three years old and trained for their lifes' work, the littermates Sky and May meet again. I won't spoil the ending.

Carol Benjamin and Denise Wall have written a beautiful, fascinating book; a book that does full honor to all dogs.

Donald McCaig is a working sheep dog man, novelist, poet, and essayist. He is the author of celebrated dog books such as "Eminent Dogs, Dangerous Men" and "Nop's Trials." He lives in Virginia and travels to compete with his border collies in sheepdog trials. Donald is a staunch defender of the border collie as a working dog.

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Dog Training and Tolerance

by Thomas A. Beitz, Canine Behavior Specialist

The concept of tolerance has influenced every aspect of society today, and the dog training industry is not immune. Twenty or thirty years ago, it was generally assumed a pet dog needed to be well-behaved and obedient. Today, it appears the expectations of some pet owners and dog trainers have been lowered to such a point that to refer to a “badly behaved dog” is to in some way diminish the value of the dog. There is no arguing that many dogs have been abused or haven’t had the same opportunities as others. However, there seems to be an ever-increasing number of dogs with serious behavior problems that often are excused for no apparent reason.

I have contemplated this notion for years and I believe it has much to do with the anthropomorphic (humanizing of animals) view we have of our pets. By humanizing our pets, we subtly apply human values into a human/animal relationship, which results in a confusing form of communication with our pet. This confusion inevitably leads to bad behavior. As I see it, the concept of tolerance is at least in part contributing to the confusion. Although there are many similarities between humans and dogs, there are some distinct differences. It is when we fail to make these distinctions that we go astray.

The purpose of this article is to challenge the entire concept of tolerance, not only as it pertains to dog training, but as it pertains to society itself. So, what is tolerance? In 1828, Webster’s dictionary defined tolerance as, “the allowance of that which is not wholly approved.” This was the definition of tolerance up until 1982. In order to tolerate something, you first needed to judge it as “not wholly approved.” But now, “we can’t judge,” we

can only tolerate. But I thought tolerance required judging? Not anymore. In 1982 Webster’s dictionary changed the meaning of tolerance to, “recognizing and respecting the beliefs, practices, or behavior of others.” Now, not only do I need to allow something I don’t approve of, but I need to respect it and embrace it.

So, the result of accepting the new definition of tolerance leads us to accept dogs that jump, dogs that bark excessively, dogs that nip, dogs that destroy personal property. These behaviors are “just what dogs do.” Respect them for who they are and embrace it. Based on the new definition of tolerance, the problem is not your dog, but you for not accepting its behavior. After all, if I don’t judge a behavior as inappropriate or I don’t disapprove of a behavior, then I don’t need to change it. It’s fine to let the dog do his own thing while not imposing any value system on him. We are all free to do just as we please without any consequence.

Back in the day, when your dog engaged in an inappropriate behavior, you would simply correct or discipline the dog. Discipline is another word that has taken on a new meaning in this new culture of “political correctness” and age of tolerance. In keeping with these influences that I have referred to, some trainers, rescue and shelter groups have embraced a purely positive training model which discourages any form of discipline. Statistically, nearly 75 percent of dogs surrendered to rescue groups are a result of an unresolved behavior or obedience problem. The vast majority of these problems could be corrected by first acknowledging a behavior is unacceptable and disciplining the dog, teaching that all choices have consequences.

As long as we accept the miasma (noxious influence or atmosphere)



and the new definition of tolerance, we will continue to lower our standards--resulting in the most ignoble behavior. Any airplane pilot will tell you when you drift off course as little as a fraction of one degree and stay off course, you will never reach your destination. It's time to make some serious course corrections before we go too any further or we may find ourselves looking for a landing strip only to find we missed our destination and all we can expect is a crash and burn. However, there is hope for dog owners. Course corrections can be made only by taking action. Let your conscience and common sense be your guide. Don't accept mediocrity. Rise to a higher standard for yourself, your dog and your community. Our future is depending on it. Let me know what you think.

Thomas A. Beitz is a Canine Behavior Specialist and the owner of Smart Dog Solutions. Tom is also an Authorized Dealer for Pet Stop Hidden Fence Systems and conducts training lessons throughout Western New York. He can be reached at (716) 628-0651 or found on the web at www.smartdogsolutions.com or emailed at tom@smartdogsolutions.com.

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"Cogitate On It."

by Mailey McLaughlin, M. Ed., CDT, Editor

How do you gestate?

There are many ways to do it. And there are many reasons to do it.

Eric Booth, in his book *The Everyday Work of Art*, defines gestation as a pause to "reflect, step back from action, to allow intuition and other wordless inner processes to perform their roles" and considers it a necessary part of decision-making and what he calls "world-making." It occurs mostly under the threshold of our attention, in our subconscious.

As dog trainers, we often put the dog in his crate after a working session to help him calm down and "ponder" what he's learned. It seems odd to some that a dog would think about what just occurred, but many trainers find that this does seem to make a difference. It also serves to make training more interesting, as the dog sees it as a chance to be out of the crate and be with his humans.

In contrast, working the dog and then letting him play all the rest of the afternoon with his doggy pals won't allow him time to gestate his new knowledge. Plus, playing with other dogs often supersedes "boring" time with humans doing exercises, so a "green" dog who has not developed a full relationship with his owner or handler will prefer the playtime to the person, thereby making said person a little less relevant.

I have had prospective clients tell me that they take their dog to daycare 3, 4, or even 5 days per week. Usually, this is a daycare that does not meet my standards, and the dogs play all day long. The dogs' owners tell me that the dog doesn't seem to give two squirts about them when he's home, and he doesn't listen. Of course, he's good and tired—just the way they like him.

Well, who can blame the dog? His owners are so far removed from his life that they have become irrelevant. The same thing can happen sans doggy daycare, with owners who won't confine their dogs, ever, and allow them to do whatever they want to do save for the few minutes a day they ask the dog to sit or lie down for some reason.

Having a dog should not be about perfunctorily going through the motions to satisfy his needs for food, shelter, and exer-

cise. It should be about developing a relationship, and a bond. Owners who pass off Rover to daycare too often find that being less relevant is not very much fun. (And yes, there is a case to be made for a correlation to nannies raising the children of the rich, but that's grist for another mill.)

Gestation doesn't only help dogs to learn. It helps us.

Regardless of what the situation is, I can almost always see the problem much better after I have put it away and ignored it (and I mean ignored it completely) for a while. Sometimes, gestation results in a "Eureka!" moment, and I realize I've just discovered some new way to look at it, which is great fun—even if that doesn't solve the problem.

Sometimes, sleeping on it is the answer. I have also meditated on it, taken a walk on it, written on it, read on it, lain on my back and looked at the sky on it, climbed a tree on it, cooked a meal on it, watched a movie on it, gone to dinner with friends on it, or listened to a favorite orchestral piece of music on it (the fact that a symphony or a movie score comes full circle and resolves itself probably has a lot to do with this working). Every now and again, a bourbon on the rocks will do it, but I do more thinkin' than I do drinkin'.

Booth says, "Dreams (of the day or night variety) do not travel the way the crow flies; they zigzag like a butterfly. These tools of gestation go to deep places our intuition would like to tap, to worlds we know, unbeknownst to ourselves."

When you are faced with a thorny conundrum, how do you gestate?

(This article is a reprint from my blog, carpek9.blogspot.com, from August of 2010.

Feel free to visit and answer

the question above. The title is an homage to the late dog trainer Dick Russell, who would end many of his wisdom-laced posts on the IACP list with that admonition. I took it to heart.)

Mailey, The Pooch Professor, is Editor of SafeHands Journal. She has worked professionally with dogs and their people for nearly 30 years. Read more at www.carpek9.blogspot.com.

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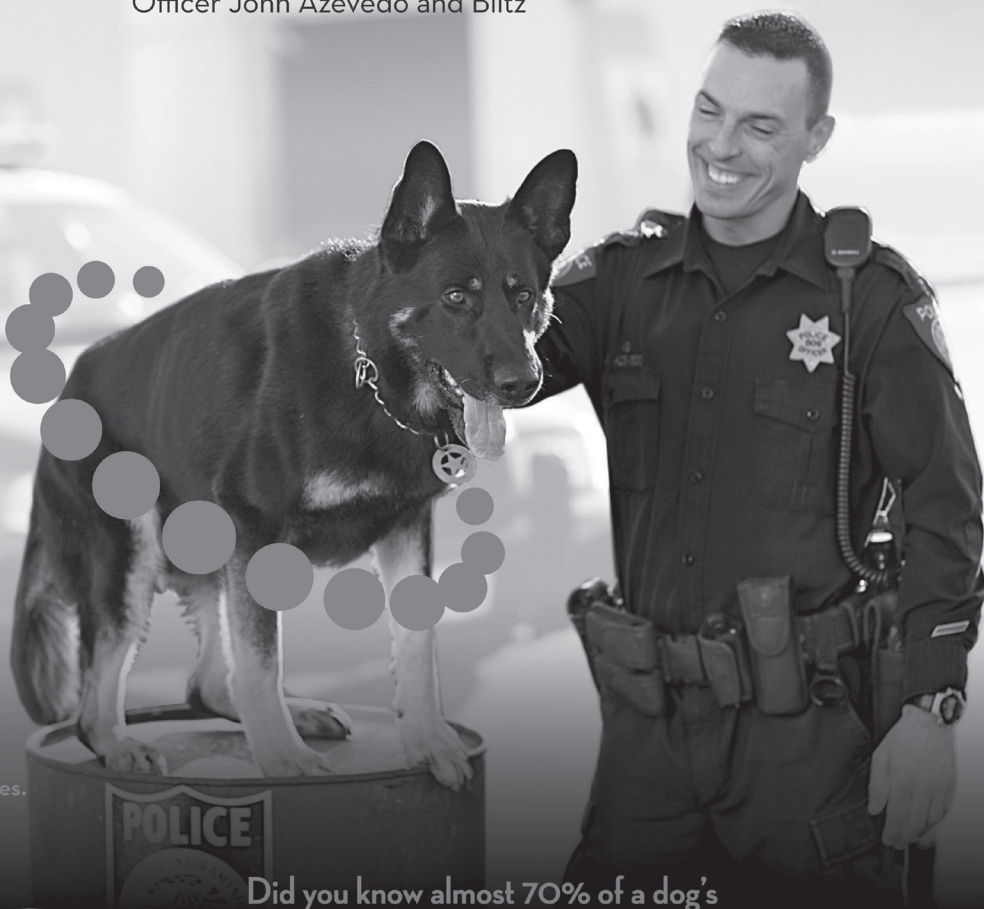


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