

IACP

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The International Association of Canine Professionals' commitment is to develop professional recognition, communication, education, understanding and cooperation across the wide diversity of canine expertise and knowledge.



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Cover: Rocky Road, UCD, ASCA CD; Bindy; and Lucy Palmer demonstrate 3 stay command responses. Photo: Karen Palmer

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President's Letter

by Marc Goldberg

Running IACP And Herding Cats

IACP was launched by a small group of like-minded individuals who saw the need for an association of dog professionals which would be accepting of a wide variety of techniques and philosophies. At first, it seemed like a small club of friends who banded together and had much in common. As IACP has grown, more members have joined, and this means the philosophical “soup” of which we’re made has come to include more flavors and ingredients.

Along with growth comes change, and sometimes change involves growing pains. We must welcome the addition of members who may not think like the initial group of members who founded IACP. We must be open to philosophies which may not be our own. I believe the only thing which we should not tolerate is intolerance.

So as IACP grows to include more members who weren’t around in the beginning, we must open our arms to them and welcome them aboard. Some of them may have been around a shorter time than others of us. Some may have just as many stripes on their sleeve as we do, or even more. Either way, IACP is not just for the veteran professionals. We’re also a professional home for those who are newly joining our industry.

I can tell you firsthand that the daily running of IACP isn’t a great deal of fun. It takes time out of our personal and business lives. Governing

IACP costs most of the board not only time, but personal funds as well. While serving IACP is very gratifying, it is also no easy task. All dog trainers know that dogs are easy and that people are not so easy. Naturally, humans are more complex and we interpret the world according to our own nature and filters.

We hope that you’re enjoying your IACP membership. We intend to bring you educational opportunities and an association of members who understand what your life is like because they live it too. Tending IACP is a bit like running a dog business (or herding cats). It’s a little complicated, and it gets noisy from time to time. But we can’t imagine enjoying anything else more.

Marc Goldberg



Helping Hands: Tawni McBee, Mesa, AZ

by Sarah Wilson

Helping Hands is a profile of IACP volunteers—the people who make IACP possible and often work tirelessly for all our benefit. *Helping Hands* will appear in each issue. This issue's profile is devoted to Tawni McBee.

How did you get started?

I've had dogs all my life. Got into horse training after a young life yearning for horses and, well, you train them to fit what is needed. Not at all like what I do now, but they did well.

When we moved into town, we still had dogs, but fairly small ones, easy to handle. When the last of that group passed on, I wanted another Poodle, my husband wanted a large dog, presto—Standard Poodle. Big dog.

I knew I wasn't a dog trainer so I interviewed a bunch of dog trainers and picked one and discovered I already had a lot of understanding. That company was hiring and I apprenticed with them. I think the apprenticeship was about a month and the owner told people I'd had the shortest apprenticeship on record. That was in 1997. I've been training and learning ever since – starting my own business, All Greatful Dogs, Inc., in 2005.

What sort of professional work do you do?

I consider myself a holistic dog trainer. I train, deal with behavioral issues, and I do body care for pets. I evaluate a dog and set up a training program based on what I find in the body, gait, body language and behavior. I also offer body

care for pets separate from training and have clients that benefit from both sides of my business.

How have you contributed to IACP?

From the first conference I attended in 2003, I volunteered every year at whatever jobs needed doing at conference. I chaired the Standards Committee and assisted with the Dept. of Education and was a CDT evaluator (I am one of two people who hold the PDTI certification). I became a director in Jan. of 2008. I became the chair of the Dept. of Education in July, 2008. I still chair the Standards Committee. I am director liaison for the Safe Handler Certification Committee.

What do you want for IACP?

IACP has been like an extended family for me. I've learned, I've laughed, I've cried and it's all been great. I've met some fantastic people and stretched myself further than I'd have thought possible.

I'd like to see IACP grow and become THE dog professional organization that the public goes to for information that they trust. I'd like it to be the premier organization for all dog professionals where they can grow and learn and thrive.

If you know a volunteer who should be profiled, please forward your suggestion to Sarah Wilson at MySmartPuppy@aol.com. All levels of participation will be featured, so whether this member has done a little or a lot—let us know.



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Can a Biter Be “Cured”?

by Mary Mazzeri

Dogs only bite for two reasons. They bite because they think they have to, or because they think they can. Take away the reason for biting and many dogs stop biting. Some causes of biting may include fear, abusive background, dominance territory or resource guarding, and pain response. Is it dog-to-dog-(or other animal) aggression? Is the biter conditioned to overly rough play? Are there underlying medical issues, or bad genes?

How hard is the biting? When is it happening? What factors (health, abuse, neglect, genetics, inappropriate human behavior, lack of training, indulgence, or unclear expectations) play into the bite?

All bites are not equal.

It is a matter of degree.

Wrinkling the muzzle, baring teeth, growling, snapping, nipping, and “pressure bites” are *controlled* bites, which shows that a dog is inhibiting to some degree. They are warnings. A dog is able to determine the degree to which it bites, from mere threat behaviors through damaging deep holds, rapid repeat bites, shaking and/or tearing.

I am more optimistic in rehabbing dogs that have shown restraint in trying to “talk” to humans than with dogs that think they have the right to punish humans. The dog that is uninhibited about biting, especially when children are present, is not usually the best candidate for rehabilitation, especially in the home where the behavior was allowed to develop. In some cases, it is the humans’ behavior—often overindulgence with no clear rules for the dog—which has fostered the

problem. Sometimes it involves a mismatched dominant dog with a submissive owner(s).

The myth of the “farm in the country” where biting dogs can go live happily and not hurt anyone is just that—a myth. A biting dog might be better off being placed in another home where the human element is more dog savvy, and willing to train and manage such a dog. But there is a dearth of such qualified homes.

Dogs warn when they are uncomfortable with a given situation. One example is food guarding. A dog may indicate its discomfort when someone approaches its bowl by initially just becoming still over the food bowl. If the person is oblivious or doesn’t notice this subtle change in behavior, there may be an ever so slight wrinkling of the muzzle—a bit more difficult to detect in a dog with long fur on the face. Generally, the dog will glance (call it a dirty look) at the intruder. The dog may wrinkle its upper lip and/or give a low cautionary growl. If unheeded, this may escalate to a louder growl, teeth bared, body tensed—the final word of warning. If ignored, the dog may go to air snapping and/or lunging actions. Some go directly to a grab and release bite, depending on the proximity

of the perceived threat, success they may have had with previous encounters using these behaviors, and the confidence level of the dog.

“The myth of the ‘farm in the country’ where biting dogs can go live happily and not hurt anyone is just that—a myth.”

A more serious biter may have escalated to bites that do damage, from scrapes, to pressure bites that produce black and blue injuries, to punctures and tears or worse. Often, these are dogs that have taken ownership. Some owners acquiesce to such dogs and tiptoe around situations that might



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cause the dog to bite. I had a client call many years ago because they could not interact with their 4 year old Malamute. He was kept in a large, covered kennel in the back of the garage with a sliding pet door to the yard. The yard was completely surrounded by a 6 ft. high solid stockade fence according to the owner. They could not touch this dog. The set up the owner described on the phone reminded me of the enclosures/pens set up for the wild animals at the zoos. They put food out in the yard in the morning to move him from the kennel to the yard, shutting a sliding door down behind him. He would be out for the day. They'd reverse the feeding in the evening and clean/change water etc. in whichever area he wasn't. He hadn't been groomed, vetted, or even touched in over two years since he had started claiming space, then lunging at them--and had managed to puncture bite everyone in the family more than once.

It is a matter of environment.

My first referral from Cesar Millan was several years ago. It was not a success story. I decided not to accept the client. It wasn't so much the dog as it was the client herself. Her four year old intact male Doberman had bitten three trainers already (she said with a slight note of pride in her voice) and the night before, he had bitten her husband, while he was sound asleep, because he had evidently turned in bed and disturbed the Dobe's sleep. The bite was a fang-sinking incident with a shake to the gentleman's derriere. The bite required a trip to the ER. She then revealed that when she went to the restroom in the middle of the night, the dog would bite her if she attempted to re-enter her bed. When I suggested that she start by banning the dog from the bedroom altogether, she replied, "But we want him to sleep in bed with us." I reminded her that she spent half

the time sleeping on the couch, and getting his behind lacerated in his sleep certainly couldn't be too appealing to her husband. In the end, I realized that she was not willing to make any realistic changes to help that dog succeed in their home, and I told her that I could not help her.

If the inhibited biter lives with a family that is willing and able to set the dog up for success, and teach the dog solid obedience, they have a really good chance of rehabilitating the dog. If it's a punitive biter controlling an inept family unwilling to make changes, it's an escalating problem with disaster just waiting to happen. In other homes, some parents think that a dog should be willing to take any amount of rough play and interference from undisciplined children. Other parents thankfully teach the two species how to respect each other and get along. A very sensitive dog in a very loud, rowdy home may either learn to escape the pressure by moving away from it or become a defensive fear biter. These examples are not the best blend of personalities in any case.

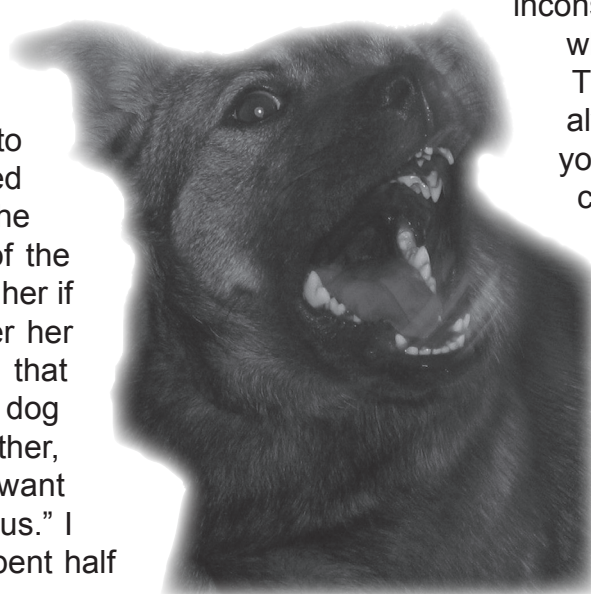
It is, in some cases, a matter of health.

Illness, injury, malnutrition, or poor health, thankfully, are realized as possible contributors to behavior problems by a lot of professional trainers. Pain and discomfort can elicit defense responses. Some dogs stop biting when their health is improved and they no longer feel they have to bite.

Some dogs put up with a lot of @\$% from inconsiderate owners and suffer silently, while others are more defensive. The area of canine health should always be addressed early on with your clients as a potential cause or contributor to biting.

It is a matter of genetics.

A dog's personality, if you will, is determined by its genetics and its experiences. There are many dogs who have been in negligent or abusive situations that, when re-homed, are not surly and aggressive, but grateful to be in a normal home.



They are genetically wired with a sound mind. Despite their “fear” from past experiences, many are extremely bite-inhibited and quickly adapt and recover in a healthy home. Others who are dominant when homed with permissive owners quickly and aggressively take over headship and start enforcing the rules that they feel should be in play through biting or aggressive posturing. Dogs bred to guard, for example, might tend to take ownership of space and resources.

I recently had a fourteen week old mix puppy (a GSD cross, perhaps) in a kindergarten class. During a routine exercise, upon initial handling by a stranger, the puppy went absolutely hysterical and began biting in earnest. The same thing had happened in the veterinarian’s office at its first visit. At the class the puppy was restrained until it no longer posed a threat. During its episode the puppy managed to void its bowel, anal sac, and bladder. The puppy’s behavior was extreme and the 3 bites it managed to inflict were deep punctures. The point here is that there was no bite-inhibition whatsoever. This was, I feel, a fairly genetically instinctive fear bite reaction. With a young puppy with this extreme, irrational overreaction, some inhibition may be able to be conditioned but, when push comes to shove, this dog is likely to revert to fear biting.

Get to the root.

When interviewing a potential client, ask a lot of questions. By doing thorough, diagnostic, detective work you can determine if the dog is biting because it hurts or feels lousy; it fears a person or a situation; it wants something someone else has; it has become conditioned to be spoiled and demanding; it feels someone/thing is invading its territory or personal space; it is highly aroused or in strong prey drive; or it is being pressured into defense. How old is the dog? What were its

parents like in similar situations? Who or what is the dog biting? When and where is the dog biting? What are the dog’s owners like? What’s the history on the dog? What kind of living situation is the dog in? Get viewpoints from different family members if possible.

Not all serious biters can be rehabilitated, but if a dog can be successfully integrated in its family, can be taught reasons NOT to bite, can be taught acceptable alternatives to biting, and if a dog’s health problems causing the bite are resolved, it is reasonably genetically sound, and it is living in a suitable environment, then it can be rehabilitated. We need to explain these circumstances to our clients. It is our job to know our own limitations and level of experience going into an aggression situation. It is up to us to ask the right questions, dig out the facts and help the clients to make the best decisions regarding their biting dog.

Mary Mazzeri is a Founding Member of the IACP and is the Owner/Director of CareDogTraining.com since 1970.

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Want to be published? Here's your chance!

The SafeHands editor is looking for submissions relating to all aspects of professional canine care. Articles should be of interest to a diverse membership of canine pros and should range from 500 to 1,000 words.

Methods vs. Madness

Dog Trainers, Tools, Techniques, and Language

by Karen Palmer

Before I can describe the topic at hand, it is necessary to define a few terms so all readers are on the same page (pun intended). All definitions are taken from the Encarta Dictionary.

Science: *"the study of the physical and natural world and phenomena, especially by using systematic observation and experiment; an activity that is the object of careful study or that is carried out according to a developed method"*

Art: *"the set of techniques used by somebody in a particular field, or the use of those techniques; the skill or ability to do something well"*

Method: *"a way of doing something or carrying something out, especially according to a plan; orderly thought, action, or technique; the body of systematic techniques used by a particular discipline, especially a scientific one"*

Technique: *"the procedure, skill, or art used in a specific task; skill or expertise in doing a specific thing"*

Tool: *"something used as a means of achieving something; something used in the course of somebody's everyday work"*

Trade: *"a specific area of business or industry; a skilled occupation, usually one requiring manual labor"*

Obedience training is a science as well as an art form. It requires careful study as well as practice and skill. A good tradesman (or woman) will share what he has learned and help others in his field to continue to develop their own skills for the good of all. In addition, in the obedience training industry, the customer (student) benefits from the experience and skill set of the instructor, or on the

other hand, experiences detrimental results due to the lack of experience and skills on the part of the instructor.

Trainers can help each other or hurt each other through their actions and use of language. We are finding, more and more over time, that poor use of language (intentional or not) can be very harmful to the industry as a whole, as well as to dog owners in general. Those in the field of professional dog obedience training must be careful how they use words, because the alternative can cause a range of results from minor offenses to legal charges and even the threat of undesirable legislation.

One increasingly common threat to obedience trainers is the accusation of abuse, cruelty, or inhumane practices. This charge can come from prospective students, dissatisfied students, the general public, and worse, from other trainers.

These threats can be in the form of shrewd writing and verbal word usage, a slight change in the way that training terms are used, or even outright slander. Sometimes, a person may not even realize that the words they choose are having a negative effect on the industry as a whole.

For example, the choke collar/chain collar/slip collar/training collar has many names.

Advocates and adversaries alike usually prefer to use the term "choke collar" when they refer to this tool. Of course, no well-meaning obedience trainer wishes to choke a dog with any tool (although, realistically, there are rare times when it may be necessary for safety reasons). The term was given to the tool long ago, and the average person recognizes the

"Trainers
can help each
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tool by that name, so it is easily recognizable as a piece of common training equipment when one uses this term.

Unfortunately, some people have decided that because of the tool's traditional name, and perhaps because of some horror stories and myths perpetuated by animal rights groups and other adversaries, the collar itself is increasingly being equated with abuse. This negative connotation (tool=abuse) does not take into account the many happy, safe, and well-trained dogs who have been the benefactors of a quality method used along with the collar. The negative depiction sticks, and any obedience trainer who advertises that they use this tool (regardless of method) can be associated with abuse, cruelty, or inhumane practices, regardless of the truth.

This brings us to another misuse of terminology: the interchanging of the word "method" and the word "tool," or the implication that "tool" equals "method." In our example above, a trainer could



potentially use choking as a technique in part of his method, and could use a choke collar (as well as many other types of common collars) to communicate an error to the dog. This technique and method would be abusive, cruel, and inhumane, and any one of us would be right to report that trainer to the authorities. But we would be wrong to ascribe the cruelty to any collar itself. There are

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clearly other ways to use a choke collar to communicate safely and effectively to a dog as part of a humane obedience training method.

How many prospective students have asked trainers, "What method do you use?" when what they really mean is, "What tools do you use?" More importantly, how many of us have answered in such a way that we explain the difference? "Whatever works" may be an appropriate answer for some, but I would like to propose that more detail should follow. Educating the public is our responsibility, so there is no reason not to take that answer another step or two.

The IACP has a position statement regarding the use of training tools because there has been a need to defend each trainer's freedom of choice, art, and trade legislatively. But it begins by educating each other and those with whom we come in contact.

We all know that any tool can be used abusively, though we do our best to ensure that this is never the case within our circle of influence. Some tools require more skill to be used safely and effectively for management and/or training than others, and it is clearly important for obedience training instructors to first learn appropriate ways to fit and use our tools of choice and then learn appropriate ways to teach these skills to the student. Should we fall short in these two factors, we leave ourselves open to criticism from other trainers, students, and even law enforcement. Worse, we provide more fodder for our trade's fervent critics to use against us all.

How will you answer someone who asks you what method you use? Do you have a ready answer? Do you know what method you use? Do you have a method, or do you just use "whatever works" as your motto for every student? Do you have a method with a name, such as, "the Koehler

Method of Dog Training," or have you made up your own? If you did make up a name for your method, will the person asking you find meaning in it? How will you answer their ultimate question, which is really, "Do you use tools I fear or abhor, do you abuse dogs with those tools, or do you teach in a way I would be comfortable with and will keep my dog safe?"

How many of you have answered the question, "What method do you use?" by telling the inquirer what tool or tools you choose to use? Or do you start by simply describing what tools you don't use? What does this say about your choice of method(s), if you have one? Do you instead give them an answer about your training philosophy, and thus avoid the question of "method" altogether? If you don't have a standard method, please do us all a favor and simply state that fact. "I don't have a standard training method, but my philosophy is to use whatever tool I feel a dog and handler could best benefit by with a set of techniques that would help them to achieve satisfactory results safely and effectively."

There, that wasn't so hard, was it?

If you use a standard method, you could say something like, "I use the Koehler Method of Dog Training. The main tools of choice in this method are a choke collar and a six-foot leather leash, because we find that they are the safest and most

effective tools to help us produce reliable results. I believe in this method because it works closely with my philosophy--it provides a step-by-step process to teach the dog the rules he must learn to live by in our human-oriented society, how to follow the rules, and that there are consequences when the rules are broken. In addition, I find that the process of obedience training with this method produces dogs with reliable, responsible, and desirable character."



What will your answer be? Will your answer educate the inquirer, help them have confidence in your approach to obedience training, and be helpful to other people this person will meet later on? Or could your answer (or lack thereof) leave the person still wondering what you are about, still confused about these terms, and perhaps even more willing to criticize trainers needlessly?

Karen Palmer is a dog trainer located in Twin Lake, Michigan. She is a professional member of IACP, and a member of Protect MI Dogs, the Michigan Association of Pure Bred Dogs, the Australian Shepherd Club of America (for obedience competition purposes), Muskegon Lakeshore Obedience Training Club, Greater Muskegon Kennel Club, and Community Toastmasters Club #3009. Visit her website at www.BalancedCanineTraining.com and blog <http://good-dogowners.blogspot.com>.



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What's Love Got To Do With It?

By Ruth Crisler, CPDT

Two national news stories recently drew my attention. First, the reported misdeeds of television personality Rachael Ray's pit bull Isaboo; second, the death by orca attack of trainer Dawn Brancheau at Sea World.

According to The National Enquirer, Isaboo was being walked by one of her handlers through New York's Greenwich Village when the pair encountered another dog on leash. Isaboo reportedly froze and began to growl, then lashed out and ripped off the other dog's ear. This is supposedly the latest in a string of incidents involving the dog, who has her own Facebook page and makes regular appearances on Ray's show. An Enquirer source suggests "Rachael calls Isaboo her 'baby', but after the latest dog fight, she's living in fear that her pet will have to be put down."

Meanwhile in sunny Orlando, Florida, the killer whale known to tourists as Shamu was plotting his next move, or so it would seem. Known to Sea World staff as Tilikum, this whale had been involved in prior incidents, including the 1991 death of a trainer at Sealand of the Pacific in British Columbia. In February, the performing whale grabbed veteran trainer Dawn Brancheau's pony tail and dragged her into the pool, thrashing her about and ultimately drowning her. Brancheau, whose skill and dedication I have no reason to question, was petting him pool-side when the attack occurred. Calls for Tilikum's death notwithstanding, Brancheau's sister suggests the trainer would not want any harm to come to the whale. She says of her sister, who was childless, "She loved the whales like her children, she loved all of them."

So we have a pair of animals, Isaboo the pit bull and Tilikum the bull orca, each potentially formidable, each very much beloved, one by its owner and one by its trainer and both by many members of the public at large. Yet despite all the love heaped on these animals, and despite the relatively enormous resources dedicated to them, nei-

ther appears to be reliable and both face an uncertain future. At best, they will likely endure increased confinement and/or isolation, devoid of some number of previously enjoyed privileges. At worst, they will suffer a premature death.

My question is, what good is our love and affection for animals such as these, in the absence of a deep understanding of their nature and an equally deep commitment to making the most informed and responsible decisions on their behalf? And what does it mean for such creatures to be referred to or viewed by their owners and handlers as children, rather than as the mature and potentially dangerous predators they actually are?

Webster's Dictionary defines neoteny (n.) as follows: *retention of some immature characteristics in adulthood*

No doubt, there are perks associated with the ability to inspire such sentiments. After all, pandas and pit bulls alike would have far fewer fans if they weren't so darn cute. But the downside, that they are more widely and profoundly misrepresented and misunderstood than their less adorable brethren, is pretty steep.

"The naked, non-neotenzied truth is dogs mature as all creatures do, and it's only appropriate to refer to them (and treat them) in a manner that acknowledges that maturity."

It is theorized that dogs are, in fact, neotenzied wolves. Whether or not that holds true, many domestic dogs have been bred with a mind toward upping the cuteness quotient. Neotenzied features and behaviors appeal to us, as does the parent-child metaphor. And maybe both serve the welfare of dogs in so far as they help to foster a caring relationship. But I very much doubt that the parent-child metaphor would ring true to most dogs, no matter how puppyish they look or behave compared to their ancestors. Worse, this superficially affectionate metaphor diminishes dogs, while pretending to elevate their status.



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The naked, non-neotenized truth is dogs mature as all creatures do, and it's only appropriate to refer to them (and treat them) in a manner that acknowledges that maturity. Words like "child" and "baby" imply diminished capacity— for taking responsibility, for self-restraint, for decision making, for meeting expectations.

Not surprisingly, this mindset can have unfortunate behavior ramifications. Take Isaboo. A brief visit to Rachael Ray's official website tells the story. Ray writes, "She has thousands of toys. Her faves are any stuffed animal with squeakers inside of them. It's like a challenge; she bites through the toy until she finally gets to the squeaker."

One can watch Isaboo as she runs adorably amok backstage, helping herself to plates of human food and so forth. One can read about what a "princess" she is and how much she enjoys special attention from "mommy and daddy." And then there's the front-clip harness she's wearing, a popular device favored by those who can't be bothered (or perhaps think it inhumane) to train their dogs to respect a slack leash. I don't know what Isaboo was wearing on the day she helped herself to another dog's ear in passing, nor can I say with certainty that she hasn't been well-trained up to this point. But what I can and indeed will say is that a dog who is heeling beside its handler is incapable of both maintaining the heel and ripping another dog's ear off. Of course, in a world where tearing apart a stuffed animal is considered a challenge, formal obedience might loom as insurmountable as Mount Everest.

Had Isaboo been recognized as the dog she was, her self-control might successfully have been nurtured along with her penchant for tearing up squeaky toys. Her more inconvenient predispositions might successfully have been channeled or suppressed, rather than denied and left to fester. She might have proved a great ambassador of her breed, rather than another argument for breed specific legislation.

Sadly, her story is not unique. There are many more non-celebrity dog owners, who despite having ample resources, are nonetheless disinclined to give their dogs the balanced training they deserve. Why? Go ask Shamu.

"You cannot use a leash or bridle, or even your fist on an animal that just swims away. Positive reinforcement — primarily a bucket of fish — was the only tool we had" (*Don't Shoot the Dog* by dolphin trainer Karen Pryor).

Captive performing marine mammals were first drafted in the war against traditional dog training in the late 1980's, when Karen Pryor began lecturing on the effectiveness of reward-based training and clicker training in particular. Since then, killer whales and other species having very little in common with dogs have been held up as poster children for the power of positive reinforcement and applied operant conditioning generally to produce reliable behavior without the use of force. Standard training tools and practices have in the meantime been systematically poooh-pooohed as unscientific and needlessly coercive, and their proponents roundly dismissed as backward-thinking relics.

The argument tends to go something like this: If we don't need a [scary-sounding training device] to train a [impressively high number]-pound [large marine mammal or other beast unfortunate enough to be the subject of positive reinforcement training while captive and powerless], why would you need to use such a tool to train a dog?

The answer may have something to do with the fact that dogs, unlike orcas and sea lions, are expected to be reliable in our homes and in public. But before further deconstructing the dolphin-dog analogy, I'd like to return to the unhappy story of Tilikum. Unlike Isaboo, Tilikum must work for a living, while consigned to what must seem a life of abject deprivation. He is without doubt a valuable asset, and Sea World Orlando's main attraction. According to a 2006 profile of trainer Brancheau, "[Brancheau and Tilikum have] been key in Sea World's effort to launch the first major update to its signature Shamu show in nearly a decade."

Thus the homicidal orca will likely live to splash tourists another day.

Perhaps thinking of him as a child allows us to more gracefully absolve him of his participation in the deaths of at least two people. Perhaps it helps us to rationalize our unnatural and unjustifiable treatment of him. Perhaps it serves to support the myth of the magical relationship humans may share with such a creature. After all, children require caretakers to house and feed them; they cannot be held wholly responsible for their actions, and most importantly, they love and trust us. According again to the 2006 profile of Brancheau, "The [updated Shamu] show is designed to be inspirational, leaving the audience with the notion that if people can swim with killer whales they can achieve anything."

An interesting proposition, but like the dog-dolphin analogy, it doesn't hold much water. A more reasonable theory might be: if people can be persuaded that Sea World's exploitation of Tilikum is a model of humane and enlightened treatment, they might also be persuaded to purchase an overpriced stuffed animal at the gift shop (Isaboo, look what mommy got you!).

Or perhaps they might order a copy of *Whale Done Parenting*, published last October and co-authored by Sea World's head trainer Chuck Tompkins. It promises parents "five simple and effective principles for coping with any parenting challenge based on actual killer whale training techniques." (I guess dogs weren't enough.)

Speaking only for myself, such tips strike me as potentially less relevant to the average parent, than to the average child-abductor, who, having imprisoned his catch in the cellar, might be interested in engendering his captive's cooperation, and in shaping behaviors that support the idea, no matter how deluded, that a loving bond exists between them.

My point is that a relationship based primarily on operant conditioning may be productive without being healthy or mutually respectful. In fact, outside the somewhat insular field of animal behavior and training, the

learning theories developed by B. F. Skinner are being laid aside by many in favor of more constructivist principles. Take a current leader in progressive education, Alfie Kohn. Kohn argues against approaches exemplified by punishments and rewards, and, more generally, against a focus on behavior rather than on the motives and values that underlie behavior. "Rewards and punishments are not opposites at all; they are two sides of the same coin. And it is a coin that does not buy very much" (*Punished by Rewards*). "The value of a book about dealing with children is inversely proportional to the number of times it contains the word behavior. When our primary focus is on discrete behaviors, we end up ignoring the whole child." ("Unconditional Teaching," *Educational Leadership*, 2005)

It ought to be acknowledged that the proposition that all things a being does can and should be treated as behaviors, is at heart a philosophical position, not a scientific one. As a tool, positive reinforcement operant conditioning has many sound applications to be sure, but its primary utility may ultimately live in the world of controlling, manipulating, and exploiting the behaviors of captive animals, with whom a relationship supportive of more meaningful communication and genuine leadership is highly unlikely if not altogether impossible.

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At the end of the day, we may love them; but love, at least in its more noble and selfless incarnations, has little to do with it. Note: I am told that Rachael Ray's publicist disputes the truth of the National Enquirer story.

Ruth Crisler has been working with dogs and horses in Chicago since 1991 and training dogs professionally in Chicago since 1998. She is a Certified Pet Dog Trainer, Certified ForceFree Method Trainer, Certified Pet Care Technician, AKC Canine Good Citizen Test Evaluator, and Professional Member of the IACP. She competes in AKC Rally and Obedience in the Chicago area with her adopted Labrador Retriever Olive Oyl, and has provided dog training support to Rottweiler, Pit Bull, English Bulldog and Dogo Argentino rescue groups. Ruth is the owner and head trainer at See Spot Run Kennels. She believes that different dogs require different approaches and that the best tools a trainer can possess are experience and an open mind.

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Teaching a Remote Sit & Sit to Flush

By Larry Sonntag

I frequently invite prospective clients to visit our training grounds to watch me working with the dogs. They will see dogs doing field work ranging from very basic tasks for a new dog to the very advanced work of a Master Hunter. The one thing that they always say “wow” about is when the dog “sits to flush.” This means the dog is out in front of us 20-30 yards, finds a planted live bird, moves in and flushes the bird, and then sits when the bird takes off without my saying anything. The dog also stays sitting until sent for the retrieve, or comes back to us when called, if we miss the bird and it flies away. I also demo this skill, often for obedience clients, with a retrieving bumper. I release the dog to run free (in a safe place for that). At some point the dog will look at me, and I will throw out a retrieving bumper. Without a further command, the dog will stop and sit and wait to retrieve until I release him. Several obedience trainers asked me to write about the remote sit and sit to flush. It is both a flashy skill for demos, as well as a useful tool in the field.

This article is about the steps to teach this skill, not about a training methodology. That said, I train with food treats to teach and the e-collar for proofing. While I have used the e-collar for over 20 years, my methods have changed after attending workshops by Marc Goldberg and Robin McFarlane.

I teach first, then use very low level taps with the e-collar. I set the dogs up for success, not failures. The lesson I want the dog to learn is that being obedient gets him the retrieve, disobedience doesn't. This also assumes that you have worked to develop a dog that loves to retrieve before starting these lessons. I want a happy, hard charging dog that is being good because that will get him a desired reward. Keep these sessions short, 10 minutes or so, and remember to have “recess”-- fun retrieves to keep a good attitude.

Here are my training steps for a remote whistle sit. First, the dog should be solid on basic obedience, including going to a “place board” and have a reliable hold and drop. I keep the dog on a long line, 20 feet at least, attached to a flat buckle collar so that I can control when the dog gets a retrieve. The next step is to teach a walking sit. I approach the place board, say SIT when the dog gets on the board, and keep moving.

Many dogs have trouble with this early step if they learned sit at heel and associate sit with your stopping, as opposed to responding to the verbal command. In the field we need SIT to mean “right now” and regardless of where I am, or how far away, minimally 200 yards. As in all training, baby steps yield solid results, so establish the walking sit before moving on.

After the walking sit is reliable, I introduce the whistle sit at the place board. TOOT the whistle, then say SIT. After enough repetitions, the dog will sit on just the whistle. At each step of training, one the dog is reliable on the place board, I fade that out, but I stay in the same training location.

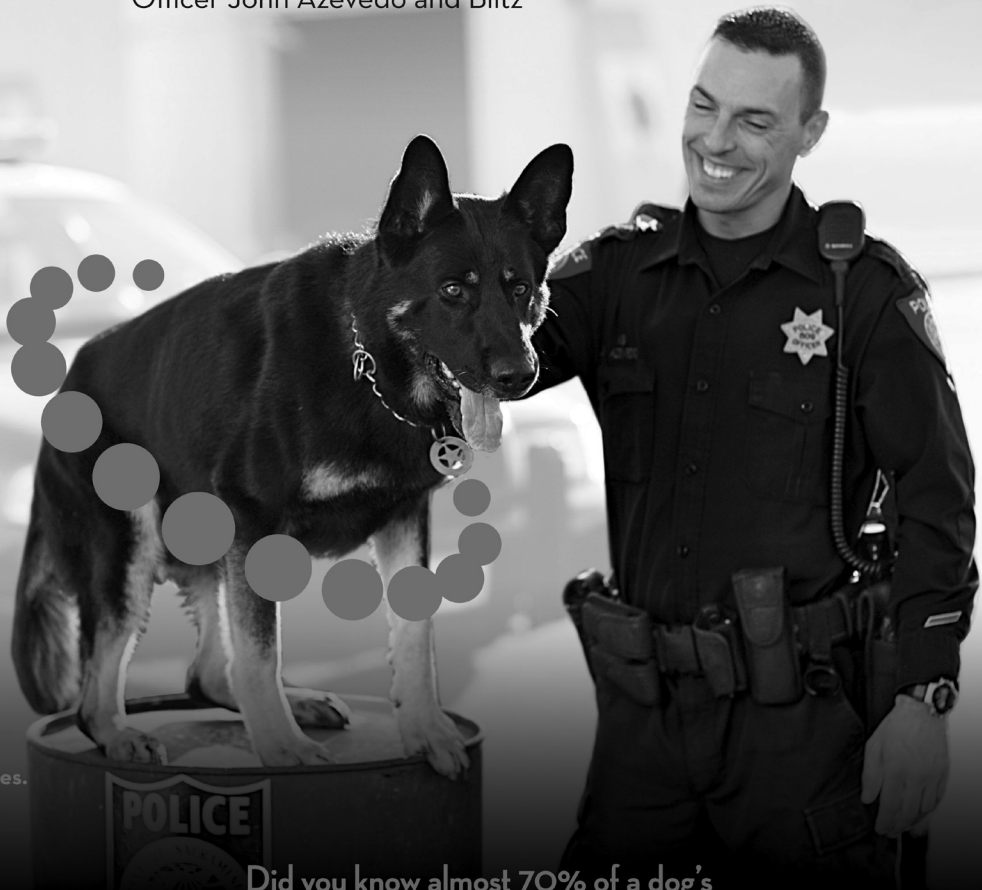
The next step is to call the dog to me with a place board in between us, then TOOT and say SIT when the dog is on the board. At each new step, I add the verbal SIT after the whistle TOOT briefly to simplify, but fade the verbal command as soon



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as I see the dog understands. Then I will send the dog to the place board from my side and TOOT/SIT when he gets to the board. At first I walk with the dog towards the board, then I gradually work to sending him from my side from a sit. I increase the distance for both of these steps out to about 50 yards. Again, remember to fade the board at each step.

When the dog is very reliable on the whistle sit at 50 yards without the place board, I begin the sit to flush work. I sit the dog, back up 20 yards, call the dog to me and throw a bumper up, and straight behind me, and while the bumper is in the air TOOT the whistle and say SIT. At this point we need the vocal command as well as the whistle, due to the added excitement of a retrieve. After enough repetitions, the dog will sit as soon as you throw the bumper up. Now I move to throwing the bumper behind me, but bit out to the side, again increasing the excitement. Gradually increase the angle of the throws out to 90 degrees. The last step here is to throw the bumpers straight at the dog while he is coming in to you. This is were you can stop if you want a reliable demo dog using a bumper or a Frisbee for your demos. For gun dog people, read on.

Next we repeat all of the above steps with a dead bird. Plan on the dog acting like it has never sat in its life. Remember the first throw is behind you, so the dog can't get the retrieve if he doesn't sit. When you can throw the dead bird straight at the dog and he sits reliably, we move to the next step. We throw a live bird. I use a pigeon and put a rubber band on one wing so it will flutter around a lot, but can't fly because it is out of balance. Again

start with throwing the live bird behind you and plan on the dog not sitting. Surprisingly this step usually goes well because the sit should be automatic at this point. When you can throw the live bird straight at the dog and he sits, you can move to planting a live bird in a remote bird release. You have the dog working out in front of you (hunt 'em up), and when the dog smells the bird, push the remote controls to launch the bird and TOOT the whistle. It is good here to have a helper near the bird so the dog cannot get to the bird if he doesn't sit. For some dogs, this is the hardest step, because all the other steps had some control built in, and the dog knew it. At this step, the dog is in "hunt mode" - he is thinking "I'm working on my own." Keep at it and use minimal corrections around live birds. Lastly, plant live birds that will flush. Here the rule is: don't shoot the bird if the dog does not sit. Install the message that "Only when I sit do I get the retrieve of a real exciting bird." It is hard to watch the first three or four \$12 pheasants fly away, but that's what works.

Keep on training and with some fun work, you can add a "wow" factor to your demos and increase your income.

Larry Sonntag has over 20 years of successful experience training dogs for obedience, hunting and AKC hunt test competitions. Larry is Professional member of IACP, Force free & TMD certified and is a certified practitioner of NLP, Neuro-linguistic programming. Larry coaches and gives seminars for trainers to help them avoid problems & achieve their goals. Larry brought 20 years of sales & sales training experience to his dog training business. He can be reached at Larry@saltydogfarms.com, or 414-530-3139

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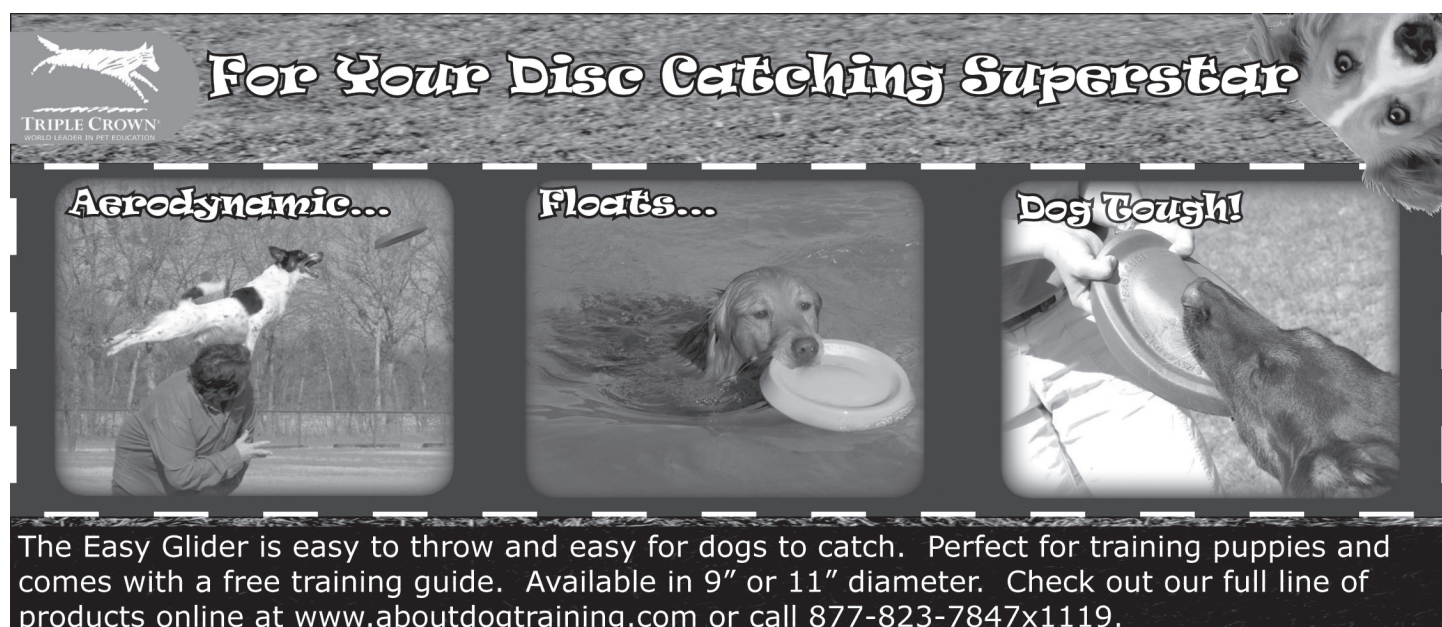
by Megan Brooks

I teach an intensive 7-week obedience class. We focus on every aspect of raising a healthy, well-balanced dog. Topics we cover include leadership, 7 essential commands, additional commands, hand signals, tricks, training games, health topics and more. I keep the class small so I can have time to work individually with each handler/dog team. This also helps me target any behaviors the dog may be having at home or elsewhere.

As professionals, we realize that it isn't so much about teaching the dogs--it is the humans who really need the help. For this reason, our first class is orientation without dogs. I find that it is easier to keep the focus of the handlers when the unruly dogs are not there to cause distraction. After all, many of the handlers do not yet know how to control their dogs while paying attention to their instructor. I also ask that the entire family or household join us for orientation whenever possible. This ensures that everyone in the family is on the same page. I stress the utter importance of consistency within the family and having the entire family for orientation gives me this opportunity.

We cover so many topics in orientation. We discuss exercise and leadership, the two factors I believe are most important when expecting a dog to be a well-behaved member of the family. I go over my leadership techniques and prepare my students to begin practicing them immediately, as well as the first three commands I teach: sit, down and watch me. I demonstrate loose-leash walking and outline a couple of techniques to get them started with the dogs walking by their side. I get an opportunity to talk to each student/family to determine what the issues are and how I feel I can help overcome them. I give everyone a clicker and explain that they may use them as much or as little as they like in class or out and that they are great training tools that significantly accelerate the learning process when used correctly.

I demonstrate each command and hand signal we will teach using my own well-trained dog. He also attends each class, lying quietly on a down-stay until I need him to demonstrate. During class I may take a student's dog if they are having trouble and give the student my dog who already knows



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exactly what he is supposed to do. This gives them an idea of what the “right way” feels like and can help them achieve proper results with their own dog.

I close orientation with Q&A, and collect papers that everyone has completed describing their household structure so that I can see if anything (such as the feeding schedule or sleeping arrangements) needs to be changed. I also include a questionnaire that asks each student what they are looking to get out of our classes and an exercise log where I request students chart their daily exercise schedule to determine if problem dogs are receiving adequate exercise.

Starting the 7 weeks with orientation works great for me and my students. It gives me the opportunity to teach people what they need to know, without distractions. We have a very low drop-out rate, and

prior students report long-term success after attending our group classes. I believe the “humans-only” nature of this first class is a big reason why.

Megan Brooks is a Certified Dog Trainer. She has worked with dogs for twenty years, starting as a volunteer at Canine Companions for Independence in Santa Rosa, California in 1989. Megan is involved in all aspects of dog training including service dog training and Canine Good Citizen. Her specialty is obedience and problem behavior modification. www.k9superstarz.com



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