

IACP

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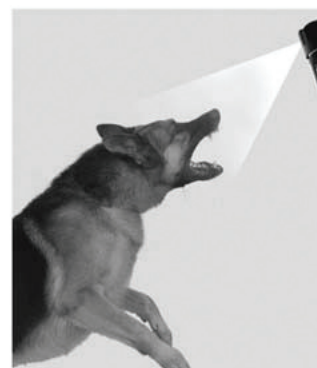
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President's Letter

by Chad Mackin

If all goes as expected, this will be the last time I write to you as IACP President. My term is up in January and I am not seeking re-election. I have served in this capacity for two years now and it is time for me to direct my attention elsewhere. I am very grateful for the trust the board of directors and membership have placed in me over these years and I hope I leave you feeling that trust was justified.

I will remain on the board until my term is up at the end of 2013, but it is time for me put more of my attention into other areas. It has been an honor to serve this organization that I love over these past two years.

I write this after the close of our September board meeting, and I would like to take a moment to thank all of the directors for their contributions and work this weekend. But most of all, there are three people I need to thank specifically for their service to the organization. Linda Beard, Denise Collins and Pat Trichter are each stepping down at the end of the year.

Linda has served as our Treasurer for the past year and has done an amazing and difficult job. We have been very lucky to have her and we are sad to see her go. Thank you Linda, for all that you've done. We all wish nothing but great things!

Denise Collins has put together some of the best conferences we've seen, but that's not the extent of her service. Denise has always been one to take on any challenge presented and has always represented a fair and reasoned voice on the board. Denise, thank you for all hard work and dedication. We will miss you.

Finally, Pat Trichter has been a director from the very beginning and has handled much of the day-to-day administration of the organization over the years. In addition to being a director, she served as treasurer until Linda Beard took the job last January.

Pat has been a fixture around the board table, and her absence will be palpable.

It also marks the end of an era. When Pat leaves, the last of the original board members leaves the board. The organization will be entirely in the hands of those of us who inherited it from those who built it from the ground up. It is a sobering thought. Pat, your service has been invaluable and you are truly irreplaceable. You've earned the rest, though. Thank you so much for all you've given to the IACP and the world of dogs.

Along with the goodbyes, we have some hellos to say as well. Tyler Muto and Brian Atkinson have been elected by the board to fill the spaces left vacant by Denise and Pat's expired terms. We all look forward to working with them.

Karen Laws will be stepping into the president's position. Brad Strickland will remain a Vice President and will be joined by Christine Norris in the other Vice President position. Cyndi Graham will now officially be our Secretary (she's been "acting Secretary" for a few months now). We have decided to spend more time speaking with potential Treasurers before we make our decision, so that position will be announced in the coming weeks. (It may have been made before you receive this.)

I'd like to close my final "Letter from the President" by saying how honored I have been to serve this organization over the years. My belief in IACP remains stronger than ever. This truly is a great organization and I see greater things on the horizon. I can't wait to see what happens in coming years!

Thank you all so much!

Chad
Mackin,
President, IACP



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Bikejoring into Autumn

by Georg Schluender

With the first signs of autumn, my dogs and bikes are always on board when I leave town. Crisp mornings begin painting the trees with fall colors and early sunsets beckoned by barred owls herald great weather for bikejoring until the snow is deep enough for skis. With temperatures mid-50's and below, any time of day is a good time to work out, for your dog effectively dissipates heat in the cooler weather. When starting any new aerobic activity, getting a physical should be common sense. Since your canine will be pulling heavier equipment at faster speeds, it is wise to have your vet verify body structure, temperament, weight and conditioning goals.

If your confidence in your canine's cani-crossing is solid, and you're comfortable with the speeds reached scootering and/or rollerblading discussed in the last *SHJ*, you might want to consider progressing to bikejoring. All those skills plus your biking abilities will be challenged, so I recommend acclimating to what some call urban mushing. Also, it is wise to have your bike inspected by a professional mechanic before hitting the trails.

Your bike doesn't need to be top-of-the-line, although there are some musts:

- Knobby tires for trails & dirt roads, inflated to the lower end of the suggested range. The lower inflation will provide a smoother ride and greater control in challenging conditions.
- Good brakes. Most mountain bikes come with disc brakes today and these are superior to other braking systems for

bikes. If you have V-brakes, purchase Ritchey red brake pads for early morning frost and wet conditions. They wear faster but stop much better than standard v-brake pads.

- Suspension is found on the forks of most bikes purchased today. If you want to minimize the impact of tough terrain, drop a dime on a dual suspension bike. The advantages of control, traction and comfort are worth the expense if you're going to make K9 silent sports a part of your lifestyle.
- A quick release seat post takes some time, but it's worth it. You will want it higher for climbs, dropped to the frame for downhill's, and low enough when you lift off that it doesn't hit you in the back!
- A fender keeps the mud and debris from ricocheting off your face and is the least expensive of the accessories that will make bikejoring even more fun.



These are only a few considerations, and equipment manufacturers offer many different options that will make your silent sport toy chest grow into a basement or extra room. Because of the sandy terrain and snowmobile trails in Northern Michigan, I've chosen to ride a single speed Surly Pugsley. Known as fatbikes, they have tires almost 4 inches wide for loose-packed soils and even snow, cutting the weight by removing multiple gears and shocks for maintenance sake.

You'll be using the same harnesses you purchased for cani-cross, although lines you

attach to the bike and dogs should be about 2 feet longer. You have two options for the mechanism which extends the dog to your side or out in front of you. The Springer and Dog Walky are two products which attach to your seat tube. These are for people unsure of having their dog out in front and for those dogs which aren't reliable pullers. Because no line can tangle with the front wheel, the system can be safer for exercising dogs that aren't yet ready for the real thing. Bikejorers who primarily bikejor on city streets and rail trails will also appreciate the short lead and greater control. I utilize this more for commuting through communities with my canines, although you'll need to purchase a walking harness. The Bikejoring BAY-o-net,



by Nooksack Racing Supply, is modeled after the preferred European bikejoring attachment used to reduce "run-over" of slack lines. A slack can wrap into a hub and catapult you into the ground in the blink of an eye! Adjustable so as to extend over the front bike wheel, this product allows me to focus less on the line and more on the trail. The BAY-o-net's flexibility allows for some play side-to-side, which makes cornering easier on both of you while also helping you avoid obstacles, jerking the dog or breaking its stride.

Perhaps also appealing about bikejoring is it can be more of a workout for the dog than you when necessary. If you're just too whipped after work to load-up and head out to the trail for a good

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workout, then simply use it as a way for exercising and training your dog on neighborhood streets and pathways. Allowing you to coast along behind will give you time to focus on feathering brakes, for light tension must be applied to the towline at all time. Remember that the extremes of urban mushing are people, places and things--which can cause you to express a lot of adjectives. If your canine isn't acquainted with the urban setting, don't expect it to handle a crosswalk any better than oncoming traffic. If you have to learn in the city setting, do so at hours with minimum traffic and distractions. Just doing laps in large parking lots is the safest way to acclimate you both to bikejoring in town.

Want to shed some pounds? Use the dog's power to tackle those hill climbs and loose sand trails which demand more of your core, cardio, and

flexibility. Just like in the city, you should acclimate to the woodland trails starting with seasonal roads and two-tracks before twisting through single track. With rollerjoring you can get road rash if you wipe out, but I leave a little skin behind every time I bikejor single track. The bond this kind of riding creates with my canines allows me to learn from them more than they learn from me out in the wilderness. This primordial kinship will be enhanced by adopting a k9 silent sports lifestyle year round, and it benefits the entire family pack.

Georg Schluender is a certified dog trainer who has been rescuing German Shepherds for over 20 years. He is the developer of DoggieTrek Fitness, based in Traverse City, Michigan, specializing in "nature based wellness for dogs and their human companions." Email him at: pack_leader@doggietrekfitness.com

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Undue Temperance

by Ruth Crisler

“If your dog was to be subjected to an aversive, would you rather it occurred randomly or control the timing yourself?”

I put this question to a rational positive-reinforcement trainer, who responded unhesitatingly that she would prefer to control the timing of the aversive, so as to minimize fallout, and in order to potentially create some practical inhibition.

The logic of her choice hinges on a pair of sensible assumptions. First, that controlling an aversive (even just the timing) naturally lends any competent handler the opportunity to avoid (or at least temper) detrimental associations; second, that the well-timed application of an aversive has potential utility. Of course, she would prefer to avoid aversives altogether, and clearly stated so.

No surprise, given the well-publicized risks. According to the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior,

the potential adverse effects of punishment [include] but are not limited to: inhibition of learning, increased fear-related and aggressive behaviors, and injury to animals and people[1]

Moreover, we are warned that risks such as extreme generalized fear and negative associations with the dog’s environment or handler, can occur **“regardless of the strength of the punishment.”**

This last claim must rest on belief in a dark sort of behavioral homeopathy, whereby the magical effects of punishment [2] endure despite its infinite dilution.

But there is another problem. If we accept that the experience of even mild punishment carries an arguably prohibitive level of risk, and we acknowledge that the deliberate application of an aversive is nonetheless safer in obvious respects

than allowing exposure to randomly occurring ones, how is it that trainers come to fret over distilling off every atom of punishment from their training programs, while blithely acknowledging that naturally occurring aversives are both largely unavoidable and relatively innocuous?

One would think such events as getting stepped on or startled would carry a risk (of potentially extreme and irreversible fallout) equal to that borne by the deliberate application of a comparable aversive. Yet few cautionary tales exist to illustrate these hazards, such as happen to dogs every day of their lives, often right in the presence of their owners or at their owners’ very hands.

Even the authors of some of the most dire warnings regarding the purposeful use of aversives to punish behavior seem to understand that the bulk of natural or accidentally inflicted aversives are fairly harmless.

I imagine it is intuitively obvious to them, as it is to me and to the dog-owning public, that a dog’s stubbing its toe while chasing a frisbee is unlikely to sour him on the game or ruin his relationship with the person who threw it.

So, what makes the demon punishment so extra-special potent, and its measured application so inescapably treacherous, compared to those unplanned aversives our dogs regularly suffer and gracefully overcome?

Aversives v. Punishment

Karen Pryor explains the critical distinction in a 2007 blog post (emphasis mine):

“There’s a difference between aversive events and punishment. Life is full of aversive events—it rains, you stub your toe, the train leaves without you. These things happen to all of us, and to our pets, and we don’t control

when or if they occur. Kay Laurence has an amusing paragraph about the aversive events that befall her Gordon setters (all of which they ignore)—falling off the bed, running into door posts, and more.

In general, all that we learn from the inevitable aversives in daily life is to avoid them if we can.

On the other hand, a punishment is something aversive that you do on purpose. It may be contingent on a behavior, and it may stop or interrupt that behavior—which reinforces YOU for punishing, so watch out for that.”

I find this explanation notable for several reasons.

First, it happens to be framed in response (albeit indirect) to the question, “Can you teach everything without punishment?”, yet that question is in no

way addressed either by the above or within the remainder of Pryor’s comments.

It does, however, illustrate the tendency to frame discussions on tools and methods in terms of human intent, rather than in terms of the dog’s actual experience.

It’s a common tendency—and problematic, as when assumptions regarding the intention behind either the design or application of a given tool are offered as proxy for an objective analysis of how the tool actually operates or is actually applied.

Consider the myth, held true by many and even promoted by such authorities as Dr. Karen Overall, that head-halters are non-aversive. It’s an error that persists despite the reality that dogs do not casually accept wearing them, nor reliably tolerate being steered or restrained with their assistance.

It’s surprising that a phenomenon so widely observed and even scientifically documented [3]

A black and white advertisement for Coastal pet products inc. The background is dark. On the right side, there is a close-up photograph of a dog's face, likely a Weimaraner, looking directly at the camera. The dog is wearing a dark collar with a silver-colored buckle. On the left side, the text "Coastal pet products inc." is written in a white, sans-serif font, with "pet products" stacked above "inc." and a small registered trademark symbol. Below this, the text "The Quality Leader Since" is written in a smaller, white, serif font, followed by "1968" in a large, white, cursive script font. At the bottom left, the phone number "1-800-321-0248" and the email address "training@coastalpet.com" are listed in a small, white, sans-serif font. A white wavy line separates the bottom text from the rest of the advertisement.

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would be so widely ignored. But if we accept that our intentions are directly relevant to any and all contemplations of tools and methods, it's only a small leap to imagine they may represent an acceptable standard of measurement.

And if we buy that, head-halters clearly rate as non-aversive by virtue of their gentle intention (indicated right there on the package), whereas prong and electronic collars may fairly be judged inhumane by virtue of being, as Dr. Overall put it in a 2007 editorial, "rooted in an adversarial, confrontational interaction with the dog." [4]

Why would anyone invest in a scheme so clearly divorced from objective analysis?

For starters, it allows one to rationalize bypassing the complicated business of assessing how a given dog experiences a given tool wielded by a given trainer under given circumstances, instead suggesting a far easier equation, according to which one need only infer a tool's intention in order to gauge its virtue.

This represents a boon, of course, for the purveyors of tools designed more for the purpose of persuading us of their kindness than actually facilitating it, as well as for anyone in the business of evoking faith in good intentions above promoting trust in skill or effectiveness. Moreover, substituting cursory judgments for true investigation is a real time-saver, freeing one up to concentrate one's efforts on cementing the stigma attached to those intentions deemed impure, or on promoting the prohibition of those tools and methods associated with them.

But most importantly, it diverts attention from the fact that to a dog, an aversive is just an aversive, whether willfully administered or the result of mere clumsiness, a point that—if fully appreciated—would stand to undermine the endowment of punishment with extra-normal danger and potency.

To be clear, I'm not arguing for or against specific equipment or methods. I'm suggesting good intentions wield little to no dependable influence over how much a dog gains or suffers. And until we make a practice as an industry of evaluating

the effect of our actions independently from the righteousness of our intentions, we may remain blind to those cases where the two are in conflict.

"I Can't..."

Suzanne Clothier lately posted some thoughts on punishment under the title "*I had to....*" On her blog, she takes positive trainers to task for dodging responsibility in instances where they've made the choice to punish. She offers examples of what she evidently considers lame excuses, like "the client was frustrated," or "I had tried everything else." And she challenges trainers to do better:

Replacing the phrase "I had to. . ." with "I chose to. . ." puts the responsibility where it belongs: on the trainer who made the choice to use techniques or equipment. It helps us all remember that in making that choice, by definition we excluded other possibilities. When using force, we need to be very clear that in discarding other options, other possible solutions, we may also be choosing to limit what is possible when we push ourselves.

For the record, I agree force is often used too casually, without due consideration of alternate strategies, and that acting out of mere convenience or frustration should be roundly discouraged. I also believe in the importance of accountability in dog training across the board. However, I was struck when reading Clothier's article by what seemed a misplaced focus on the moral peril (for lack of a better term) associated with use of force, rather than on any harm—real or presumed—that might be dealt the dog as a result.

She details an event involving a young Labrador who'd just head-butted her very hard for the second time, and describes the moment in which she considered her options:

I began to think, "One good correction might get through this dog's thick skull." I surprised myself by thinking that, but then I further shocked myself (and some of the audience) when I asked the handler explicitly for permission to use a physical correction on

her dog. She agreed, trusting me as a trainer to do right by her dog.

In that moment when she trustingly agreed to let me use force on her dog, I found something in myself that surprised me further: a little voice that challenged me to push myself further, to help this dog without force. It was like having a gauntlet thrown down at my feet. *Do it without force, without ego, without justifying force.*

Compelling words. But what does Clothier's internal struggle have to do with the needs of this somewhat thick-headed young dog?

We are meant to assume he benefited from Clothier's suppression of her ego, to understand that what he needed most in that pivotal moment, was *not* "one good correction," but rather for Clothier to "take up the gauntlet" and turn the other cheek.

But it's impossible to deduce that from Clothier's narrative, *because it has nothing to do with the dog's experience.*

Instead, she gives us a parable about overcoming temptation and perfecting one's intention. Good stuff from a personal improvement standpoint, but no substitute for a reasoned consideration of whether a correction might have been productive. Granted, that's not the point. But what is?

That we are accountable for our choices to use force, yes, and that one should not act out of ego or vengeance, clearly. But was *that* the temptation Clothier resisted? Remember, she didn't just refrain from lashing out in anger. She suppressed the instinct to consider punishment *as an option.*

Despite Clothier's drawing the familiar analogy between the application of a training correction and the specter of wife-beating, this is ultimately *not* a lesson in tempering one's anger or shoring up one's patience. *It is a lesson in training one's inner voice to distrust one's rational mind.*

Clothier equates the use of aversives with the use of force, and equates force with violence. She frames its contemplation as a sign of moral

weakness, and the decision to use "force" as a failure by definition:

Whatever the answer, the solution is to recognize *where I went wrong.*

Dog training is many things, including a lesson in kindness and patience. But it should not be exploited as a proving ground for fringe notions of moral perfection.

If "*I had to...*" is a cop-out, then so is "*I can't...*" After all, in making *that* choice, aren't we also "choosing to limit what is possible"?

Bible and Hatchet

Meanwhile, a generation of trainers is being bullied into signing blood oaths constraining them from ever practicing the productive application of aversives.

Jean Donaldson, Karen Pryor, and Victoria Stillwell all require pledges from their disciples, while selling the public on the idea that hobbling oneself with a vow of irrational temperance is a mark of enlightenment.

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The result is a murky and oppressive climate, often dominated by vitriol and intolerance, as in Dr. Karen Overall's unsubtle insinuation that owning a choke, prong, or electronic collar may lead to child and spousal abuse:

Without exception, such devices will make my anxious patients worse and allow the anger level of my clients to reach levels that are not helpful and may be dangerous. The link between dog abuse and spousal/child abuse is now well-established (Ascione and Arkow, 1999; Lockwood and Ascione, 1998).[4]

Like Pryor's warning to beware the utility of punishment, lest one's urge to punish be strengthened, Overall here concerns herself with the threat punishment poses to us. It's a clumsy argument at best, and less than cleanly scientific. But it succeeds in promoting the point that punishment is poisonous and intoxicating, while skirting the question of what that has to do with training a dog.

Child abuse is real. Animal abuse is real. Drunkenness is real. It's a fact there are cretins and criminals within our ranks.

Likewise, there's a history of countering such abuses with fear-mongering, misinformation, and hyperbole. And science, or some fractured fairy tale version of it, has been drafted into these campaigns before.

These tactics are effective, which I've heard is reinforcing. But they are a rejection of reason, and an abuse of the influence their authors wield. It's as old school as tent revivals and temperance unions, and as backward as beating a dog.

There are solid arguments for taking care in applying aversives. But there is no credible foundation, scientific or ethical, for the wholesale *exclusion* of aversives from a training program, *except if one accepts the idea that the very willingness to punish is perverse, and so fit to be stigmatized and suppressed.*

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Take away that belief, and the dragon vanishes. One is left with a serviceable tool and a solvable problem. The dog doesn't know you are putting your soul at risk. Nor does he care. He doesn't even need to know you did it *on purpose*.

In the end, using aversives safely and productively isn't rocket science or alchemy.

It's just good bar tending.

1. AVSAB Position Statement: The Use of Punishment for Behavior Modification in Animals. 2007.

2. I use the term "punishment" here and throughout this post in the same arguably vague way as the sources I'm quoting, to denote the deliberate application of an aversive to discourage behavior.

3. L. I. Haug, B. V. Beavera and M. T. Longnecker, Comparison of dogs' reactions to four different head collars, Applied Animal

Behaviour Science Volume 79, Issue 1, 20 September 2002, Pages 53-61

4. Overall, K.L., 2007. Considerations for shock and 'training' collars: Concerns from and for the working dog community. Journal of Veterinary Behavior: Clinical Applications and Research. Res.2, page 106.

Ruth Crisler has been working with dogs and horses in Chicago since 1991 and training dogs professionally since 1998. She is an IACP Pro member, IAABC Supporting member, and the owner of See Spot Run, a training/boarding/daycare facility focused on obedience, behavior modification, and canine socialization. Her current companions include a husband, two children, an adopted Labrador Retriever, and an adopted Pit Bull. 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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The Real Work of Modern Dogs Is Psychotherapy

by Patrick Burns

Dogs are entirely man-made, a function of human choice, and often a choice made by specific people in specific locations.

The farmers and huntsmen of the fields and fells of Great Britain made working terriers.

The native people of the Arctic made the sled dogs of the northern snow and ice.

The stock men of Europe made the hard dogs that can stop angry bulls or wild pigs.

The Bedouins and Tuareg made the running dogs of the Middle East.

The shepherds of the borders and highlands of Scotland made the dogs that love and live to herd.

But do we not have tribes of people today who are still making dogs?

Yes, the tribes are different, but they still exist, and they are making dogs just the same.

The terrier man with dirt on his hands has been replaced by the overweight matron with gold lacquer on her finger nails.

The musher with 13 dogs in harness has been replaced by a fellow with a sled dog on his passenger seat, and 200 horses under the hood.

The bulldog man now owns a wheezing wreck that can barely waddle to the edge of the field where it is trotted out as the team's mascot.

The running dog is now sprawled on the couch, and instead of a night lamping it might get a slow walk around the block.

The Border Collie man with stout legs and calloused hands has been replaced by a suburbanite whose dog chases a Frisbee rather than herding sheep.

Where are we going in the world of dogs? To hear people talk, we're going in every direction under the sun, and often straight to hell.

That might be true, but there is some comfort in this observation: cool and useful tools never die.

And really is there any tool so cool and useful as a dog?

Sure, there are a lot of very crappy shovels sold at Lowe's for the "Harry Homeowner" who confuses real digging with putting in a rose bush, but good shovels are still made and sold if you know where to find them. And so it is with almost everything apparently else, including working dogs.

Real sheep-herding men and women are not running to "Barbie Collie" theorists for canine stock or advice any more than gun dog men are going to backyard puppy peddlers, or terrier men are going to Kennel Club pretenders.

Up in Alaska, the pulling dogs are not registered in the Lower 48, and in the deserts of the Middle East the test of a dog is not what's written on a piece of paper, but whether the hare is returned to hand after a swirling chase in the dust.

And as for the real bull dog, this country is crawling with well-built Pit Bulls capable of busting, catching and stopping a feral pig on any given night. In fact, we now have two television series devoted to their exploits!

So what does it matter if there are a lot of pretenders in the world of dogs?



So long as the dogs that result are not too seriously deformed or genetically defective, what is the harm of Barbie collies, tennis ball retrievers, and fantasy fox terriers that are somewhat less sharp, storied, or experienced than their romance-soaked antecedents?

The work of these new modern pet dogs is not in forest or field. Instead, the purpose of these dogs is to give their owners a sense of identity... or perhaps it's to serve as a surrogate child, or a welcome wag after a long day at a soul-crushing job.

Perhaps their job is to give their owner a chance to win a beauty contest, or an opportunity to work out their long-repressed hair-dresser fantasies.

But so what? Is it really that odd that psychotherapy work has become the real work of the modern dog?

Yes, many dogs today are transvestite terriers, counterfeit collies, and bogus bird dogs, but as pets most seem to work out fine, even if they are pale imitations of their storied ancestors.

Isn't that good enough?

Now, to be clear, I never suggest Jack Russell Terriers, Border Collies, Pit Bulls, or even working Labrador Retrievers for pet owners. Dogs with strong prey and herding codes inside them demand more work than most dog owners are ready or able to provide.

That said, I have given up on trying to control the world.

I can tell people that they need a cat, not a dog, and that



they are crazy to flip through an all-breed book like it's a paint-chip chart, selecting a canine companion based on the thin and often erroneous information given there.

But, let's face it, not many people will listen.

I have come to accept that at least one third of all dogs are bad fits for both dog and owner alike. In any case, most of the time the dog is a done

deal. The only hope after the fact is that the dog and the human family can somehow learn to accommodate each other.

And the good news is that they often can.

It's a pretty rare Jack Russell Terrier, Labrador Retriever, Pit Bull, or Border Collie that cannot work out its needs and issues if given a lot of exercise that includes two walks a day, one run, and a little ball-and Frisbee-time.

Give the dog a lot of exercise and one-on-one interaction, and I hardly care if the Border Collie is actually herding sheep, or if the Labrador Retriever is actually retrieving ducks, or if the Jack Russell terrier is actually diving down a hole after a fox.

Is the dog happy? Are you?

Yes?

Good enough, then!

Patrick Burns is the author of American Working Terriers and blogs at "Terrierman's Daily Dose." A terrier owner for more than 45 years, he is a resident of Virginia, was a monthly columnist for Dogs Today in the U.K. for several years, and is one of 11 dog trainers featured in Cesar Millan's latest book, Cesar's Rules.

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Why Vehicle Safety Matters

by Mailey McLaughlin and Lana Kline

Most canine pros and most savvy owners understand the need for restraining dogs in vehicles. In addition to the dogs themselves feeling generally safer, becoming less nauseated, becoming less “protective” of the vehicle space, and being less stressed, restraining dogs in the car keeps them out of the driver’s way, thereby eliminating them as distractions. It also keeps them safer in the event of a collision, as the dog can become a “living missile” when the brakes are applied suddenly. He can be seriously injured, or even killed, in crashes at even low rates of speed, and/or become a collision danger to the other occupants of the vehicle. If a collision is major, he can escape through broken windows in a panic and be lost, or pose a threat to rescuing personnel. Before you assume that he will respond to your commands to “stand down” to them, what if you are unconscious? What if your dogs have been injured in the crash, and are in pain?

As a pro, you might scoff at the idea of restraining your dogs in your car. But for your clients, it definitely makes a lot of sense. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), diversions that last more than 2 seconds increase your risk of crashing--and dogs can definitely be a diversion.

So which type of containment is best? Are crates superior to harnesses or trolley cables made for vehicles? What about the barriers that keep the dog in one compartment of the car? Let’s examine the differences, and then we’ll hear from an IACP member who has thought at length about this subject.

Crates seem to be the most popular tool for professionals, often because we use them when we arrive at our destination, and they are, when outfitted in our vehicles, the easiest choice. Our dogs tend to be crate-trained, and more than willing to “crate up” when we open the

door. Secured well, crates provide many benefits. However, they are not accident-proof. Several online videos show plastic crates rupturing on impact, and an unsecured crate bouncing about is also a hazard.

Harnesses made for car travel seem to be the safest bet for most dogs, and probably easiest for your clients. These need to be able to be secured in the back seat or rear area of the vehicle by a relatively short tether. They should have wide breastplates to even out the force in a crash, metal hardware, and secure webbing. Some dogs can wiggle or chew out of them, or get caught up in them if left unattended.

Barriers and “zip lines” are better than nothing, and will keep the dog out of the driver’s way, but beyond that, will not keep the dog injury-free in a crash.

Suggest that your students/clients choose and use what works best for them, using your own protocols as a model.

MY CANINE VEHICLE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

by Lana Kline

It is safe to assume that, as canine professionals, most of us travel with dogs in our vehicles quite frequently. It’s also safe to assume that most of us take a fair amount of safety precautions when transporting our dogs. I am not claiming to have all the answers; the following vehicle protocol is a combination of original ideas, suggestions from my safety-conscious husband, and recommendations from a friend who is an EMT who often responds to accidents involving pets.

We need to make it easy for emergency responders to deal with our dogs in the event of an accident. Not all emergency responders are dog lovers.

Some might even be afraid of dogs. Remember, too, that if we are in an accident, we might be unconscious, or even dead, and unable to protect or give instructions for our dogs.

There is no perfect system or crate that is guaranteed 100% safe. I believe that dogs are safest if transported in metal or wire crates. The crates should be tied down into the car via the luggage hooks/restraints most vehicles have. I also tie my crates to each other. I use nylon straps with plastic snaps and old nylon collars for this. In the event of a sudden stop or impact, I don't want the crates flying through the car, or even lurching forward or on one end.

I then secure the doors of the crates with double-end snaps to help prevent the doors from flying open in an impact. In the rare circumstances where I have to leave the dogs in the car and I can't keep the car in sight, I have combination locks on each crate and I secure the doors with those. I do not use the locks while driving--just the snaps, because I don't want emergency personnel to have to cut the locks off or have to search for the combination if they have to remove the dog from the crate. I also snap the leash to the front of the crate so it is easy to find.

My dogs are always secured or in sight at home, so they do not wear tags 24/7. Each dog has a "travel collar" with all their tags (microchip #, license, rabies tag, etc) that they always wear in the car. I also have emergency info fastened to the front of the crate, enclosed in a small sheet protector meant for day planners, and zip-tied to the front of the crate. My emergency info includes:

- my contact info
- dog's full name and call name
- license locale and #, microchip #

- list of up to date shots and date given
- vet's contact info
- dog's health insurance company name and policy # and phone number
- who can be called to pick up the dogs if I am unable to care for them or communicate
- who has permission to authorize euthanasia
- what the dog eats and any meds the dog might be on
- anything helpful about the dog's personality, like the possibility of snapping under stress
- the fact that vet bills are guaranteed.
- PHOTOS OF THE DOG

My EMT friend suggests putting info about the dogs with your driver's license, as that is the first place emergency responders look to for information about you. A brief note listing the dogs with a description of where the emergency info can be located should suffice.

I also carry with me in the front seat a 8.5 x 11 report booklet with sheet protectors. In the sheet protectors, I have, for each dog:

- copy of the emergency sheet mentioned above
- copy of their rabies certificate
- copy of their most recent shot history

Be sure to always have extra water along. A canine first aid kit is also a good idea. And I carry a variety of large moon (silver reflective) blankets in the car. They can keep the car cool in the summer, keep the crates and myself warm in the winter, or be used to cover an injured dog in shock.

Safe travels!!

laccp



Isis in her car crate with the door latch snapped shut, leash snapped to front of crate, emergency info fastened to front of crate. The padlock is hung on the left to be used if I have to leave the car out of sight. The crate is fastened to the luggage rack on the left front and to another on the left rear. The crate behind the seat is fastened to luggage hooks in the front and on the left. The soft crate on top is snapped to the crates at both ends to prevent it from flying forward into the driver's head.

Enjoying Shed Hunting

by Georg Schluender

The K9 Adventurer Series

Since rescuing my first GSD in '91, the one constant in my life has been silent sport ecotherapy. Woodlands and water non-stop will work wonders on any being and his or her canine companions. When I started writing about dryland mushing for the SHJ a year ago, I also started to review my trials and tribulations of K9 wilderness experiences over the last two decades. From paddling with whales to jogging with bear, I've shared more encounters like this with my canine companions than humans...and I like it that way.

These contemplative recreational activities seem to instill the primordial kinship we shared as hunter-gathers 20,000 years ago. While experiencing these mindful escapes from our egocentric thoughts, I began to realize the dogs were teaching me how to live in the moment. Our own social dynamic started to change from obedience training to body gesturing on the trails with minimal verbal commands necessary. Mushers and hunters share a similar bond, and a K9 silent sport lifestyle offers the same alliances and commitments from your pack.

Consider K9 Adventuring a lifestyle. It includes any silent sport in which you and your canine companion participate: a mindful coexistence that includes mind, heart, body, and spiritual wellbeing in which your dog will guide you on how to let go of the chaos and enjoy life's moments. All you need to do is be a kind, alpha human that provides the same unconditional love we know all dogs to possess.

Every adventure offers experience, and every journey is more spectacular than the destination when wandering the woodlands and waterways with my canine co-pilots. I enjoy sharing with you the games we play and those I hear of through SHJ readers. Trailside "MacGyvering" may make us laugh, cry, or itch and scratch. "Joring" is a daily experience for the GSD pack and me; we average 6 miles a day (I look forward to experiencing your tale wags of adventure). K9 Adventuring will be engaging, enlightening, and entertaining, starting with a reindeer game of sorts: shed hunting! Let's step away from the business of dogs to remember the love we all share for them and how they enrich our own existence. Please email me any stories you'd like to share to pack_leader@doggietrektfitness.com. ~Georg

No, we are not looking for the clumps of dog hair that make it into every corner and piece of furniture you find when house cleaning, nor to the outbuildings that house garden tools, but rather hunting the racks shed by deer, elk, and even moose during their mating ruts. I'm not much for hunting with weapons, even fearing being in the forest during rifle season. But I do enjoy hunting shed antler racks that surviving bucks leave in our neck of the woods.

Pedicles form on a male deer between 8-9 months where the antlers start to protrude atop the skull. As the deer matures, the antlers typically increase in mass, beam length, points, and point length.

With two to four months of development, they are covered with a sensitive skin commonly referred to as "velvet." After this time, a hardened ring forms at the base of the antlers (burr) that shuts off blood flow to the velvet-cover. As a result, the velvet dries up, and falls off, often assisted by the white-tailed buck rubbing his antlers against tree bark. The same process is repeated to shed the antler at the end of the rut, typically between the months of January and April.

Hunting breeds such as German Shorthair, English Pointer or Brittany are best suited for this activity, I have found. The origin of shed hunting was specific to developing puppies for wild game hunting,

though the training tools used mean you don't have to be a hunter to appreciate nature with your canine companion. If you're going to get serious about shed hunting, it's not as simple as throwing antlers out in the yard like fetch. The sensitivity of eyes, nose, muzzle, and mouth on young pups can make them want nothing to do with the game if they are poked by an antler shed. The Dog Bone System developed by Jeremy Moore provides a safe rubber dummy antler and contains scent derived from pulverized antler with trace amounts of deer blood and hair that is common on a woodland shed. It is the main ingredient to successful shed hunting.

To successfully train your dog to find sheds, you need to make it a rewarding and pleasurable experience. You might consider taking several months to cover these six steps:

1. Play fetch with the antler dummy for several weeks. You want to make this a fun game and not a job for either of you, so make the praise of retrieval the reward.
2. Apply a discriminatory scent your canine will recognize in the wild to build on the initial game of fetch. Be sure to limit human scent on the antler, for it doesn't have it in the wild.
3. Once he is acclimated to shape and smell, it is time to introduce the dog to the real feel of antler.

Want to be published? Here's your chance!

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PHOTO Submissions welcome, too!

4. Now it's time to move the antler fetching game out in the woods and fields in which you'll be actively seeking sheds in the future.

5. Start by hiding the same antler you've been playing with the last few weeks in easy-to-find locations.

6. When you go out shed hunting, it is critical that every trip is a success in the dog's eyes and in yours, too, so always carry your scented dummy antler with you on hunts as a reward. More than likely there will be times that you see a shed before your dog does. Control your excitement and resist picking the shed up, instead directing the dog to its location.

As the first blossoms flourish with migrating birds in breeding plumage is when we enjoy wandering the woodlands looking for sheds. You can purchase the Dog Bone System while visiting us or our online store. One thing we can assure you is even if you don't find any antler sheds, you'll have fun bonding with your canine companion, and probably shedding pounds in the process.

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Critical Thinking

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

“You have to build the floor before you can build the walls.”

I'm quite sure Shihan Mike, my karate/jujitsu instructor several years ago, was not the first to tell me this maxim, but it's his voice I hear in my head every time I repeat it to my students. It's true in most of life, of course, and most people would rather not embrace it. Instant gratification is the way of things.

We have become used to getting what we want and getting it quickly, haven't we? We are a snap-and-receive-it culture. The newest, hippest gadget or product is often procurable almost as soon as we decide we want it. Technology provides faster and faster service in many areas of our lives, and for some things, this is a positive. But, as canine professionals know, there is no way to build structure in dogs by snapping one's fingers and wishing it into existence.

Foundation work is inescapable in this profession. And it is our job to coax dog owners into starting it and keeping up with it.

How do you get someone (including yourself) to do the “boring part” of the job? You make it interesting, and make sure the payout is a positive for all involved. You get bonus points if you can make it happen fairly quickly, and/or with steps that are themselves enjoyable.

I have an old bookcase that has been in my family since I was a small child. It's not an antique, or valuable to anyone but me nowadays. It's wooden, and heavy, and has shelves of varying heights, which is quite helpful because I have a number of books that are too tall for other bookcases. So, I keep it.

Some years ago, in a fit of 80's pique, I harmed this staid bookshelf, then painted a perfectly serviceable white, by spray-painting it with that hideous fleck-stone faux paint. Inexplicably, I chose turquoise. It looks ridiculous now (as it did then); the paint is chipped and faded, and the color is atrocious. It sits in a bedroom, full of books, and bugs me.

I could get rid of it and buy a nicer one with a pretty wood finish, but I don't want a new one. I want this one back to its original state. The problem is, I have never refinished a piece of furniture before, and the task seems horribly daunting: smelly, time-consuming, and annoying. I want the finished product, but I don't relish the idea of stripping, sanding, prepping, staining, staining again, then cleaning up.

Isn't that what our students want, too? We complain about dog owners wanting “magic wands” to fix their dogs' behav-

ior problems, because we know there is no such thing. Foundation work is the key, and we know it. The problem is getting them to do it, even though when they put just a minor amount of effort into it, they will see results.

Foundation work doesn't have to be boring when it comes to dog training. We know that when we are working with the dogs themselves, time sometimes gets away from us, and we experience that state called “flow.” We look for increments of progress, and by rewarding those, we get better results. We also seem to know when to take a break, to think, to allow the dog to think, and prepare for more work. We enjoy the process, and we strive to make the dog enjoy it, as much as the finished product.

Games, interactive toys, mental stimulation, short training sessions integrated into daily life, and incorporating play into training are all ways to do this. Are you sharing this information with your students? Or are you just getting frustrated when they don't do the work? Most dog owners are not professional trainers, and have busy lives, including jobs, kids, hobbies, and more. They will not do the work if they perceive it to be long and frustrating, with low yield. Help them enjoy the process more, and you will see a difference in their dogs. Break steps into tinier pieces, and teach your students to enjoy the process more. You will probably find that you enjoy your human students a bit more too, as you share in their success.

I am going to roll up my sleeves this fall and strip and refinish my bookcase, and I know I will enjoy it much more when I have put in the effort. My goal is to make it a point to enjoy each portion of the foundation work, too.

Schedule conflicts and foot injuries ended my martial arts practice a few years ago, which saddens me. I enjoyed my training and looked forward to the end result. But I did manage to enjoy the steps along the way, too—and it is those I most miss. So I compensate by doing my best to make my dog training classes and lessons, focusing on the foundation, interesting in and of themselves.

Mailey, The Pooch Professor, is Editor of SafeHands Journal. She has worked professionally with dogs and their people for nearly 30 years, holds a Masters in Education, is a CDT, and is Behavior and Training Manager for the Atlanta Humane Society. Read more at www.carpek9.blogspot.com.

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