

IACP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS

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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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IN THIS ISSUE...

President's Letter.....	Chad Mackin	4
Joring Into Canine Silent Sports.....	Georg Schluender.....	6
"If He Ain't Naked..."	Robin MacFarlane.....	10
My Personal Way of Training	Roland Tschische.....	14
Guidelines for Instructors	Mary Mazzeri	17
A Good Family Pet	Ron Bruce	21

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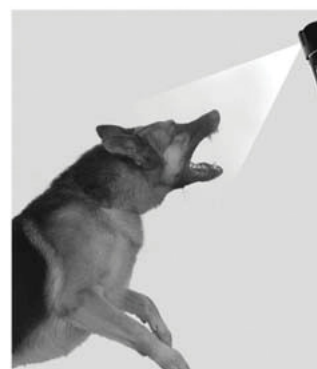
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President's Letter

by Chad Mackin

As I write this, I am traveling home from a workshop. It's only been a few hours and already my mind is turning to the next one. The next one happens to be at IACP conference, but more on that in a bit. This weekend I met a whole lot of great IACP members, and saw some that I've known for a long time. During breaks and at dinner, we shared ideas about dogs and dog behavior, we told our tales of training and other dog work, some happy, some sad, some moving, some inspiring, but the exact nature of each story didn't matter. We were sharing camaraderie and our love for dogs, and that was magical. But that's only a small scale of what I know I will find in Florida at the IACP conference in April.

It is hard to say anything about conference that hasn't been said before,

so I won't try. I just want to say that there is no place on earth like an IACP conference. You will not find a better collection of people who love dogs, or a more varied and exhaustive collection of dog knowledge and wisdom anywhere on the planet. And there are few places more welcoming and friendly. I hope to see many of you there. Please take a moment to stop me, say "Hi," and tell me some things about you and your work with dogs. I'd love to hear it.

Thanks for reading, and as always, if I can do anything to help you out, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Chad Mackin,
President, IACP



The IACP is proud to announce that IACP Members

**Steve Bettcher, Kristin Bliss, Jill Haffley,
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Joring into Canine Silent Sports

by Georg Schluender

The next four issues of your *Safehands Journal* will introduce readers to the seasonally-appropriate concepts, conditioning, equipment, and safety considerations, as well the insights obtained during DoggieTrek Fitness instructional sessions, of canine “silent sports.” None of these sports are as simple as taking your dog for a walk, yet the mind and body relationship you’ll share will develop a deeper bond with a calmer dog companion. Enjoy!

What are the “canine silent sports”? Defined by Michigan Silent Sports as “seasonal outdoor recreations consummated through a synergy of human endurance, wilderness, and weather,” the canine silent sports refer to dog-powered pulling recreations of canicross, scootering, bikejoring, skijoring and rollerjoring. My company develops sustainable marketing solutions for resort communities and recently started targeting canine silent sports, also referred to as dryland mushing, for resorts that allow humans to bring their dog companions. My attempt will be to introduce you to the sports with the least amount of frustrations and injuries. One must learn to walk before he can run...and then he must attach a dog to his waist to understand that the view changes rapidly when you’re not the lead dog!

It was by accident I learned of canicross, actually utilizing it before I even knew it had a name. Just over a decade ago, I rescued a Belgian Malinois that had been taken from a breeder mill. Neglected, fearful, aggressive, and filled with anxiety, she would, I knew, try to bolt as soon as I opened the car door. I crawled into the back to leash her and hooked the loop through my backpack harness in order to get

out of the vehicle. Down the trail we immediately went, and 12 miles later, we were both spent. By the time she was done pulling me through the forest, she was drained of her pent up energy, and was calm and happy. I got on the Internet that night and typed “Dog pulling sports,” and canicross (cross-country running while hitched to a dog) was at the top of my results.

The origins of joring (literally, “ski-driving”) date back several hundred years to when the Scandinavians traversed the harsh winter landscape on wooden skis towed behind reindeer. The first ever Skijoring National Championships were held in Minneapolis in 2011 with over 200 participants, and the International Federation of Sleddog Sports is working towards having it included in the 2014 Winter Olympics. All aspects of these canine silent sports began with mushers dryland training their sled dogs in the off-season. The adaptations to foot, bike, roller blades, or scooter originated in Europe, and since have become stand-alone sports in the United Kingdom.

As an instructor of a variety of silent sports over the last 25 years, I’ve learned you must harness the energy before teaching any skill set. The only way to refine motor skills is to “rev the engine”

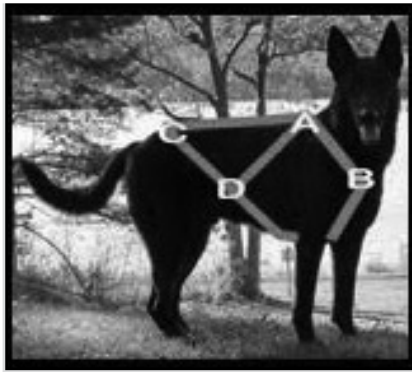
so it can idle down. New environments always create anxiety, so harnessing that before you begin is crucial. (Wouldn’t it be nice if we could walk into an office and play a game of duck-duck-goose prior to giving a presentation?) This is how many alpine ski instructors

acclimate children to their equipment, yet I don’t see much of this in dog obedience classes. You don’t need to like Cesar Milan to understand



that his prescription of “exercise, discipline, affection” creates a more balanced environment for dogs and humans alike. So it makes perfect sense to safely harness a dog’s energy before attempting to teach obedience commands.

The first thing any penned-up animal wants to do is run – release the energy that has been building within a confined space. When considering the hunter-gather relationship that brought humans and dogs together 85,000 years ago, movement was a necessity in order to survive. The evolutionary blip in time since we have become more sedentary has created many of the mental and physical ailments that plague us and our dog companions today. When hooking a rescue, shelter, or unconditioned puppy to a leash, doesn’t the sense of work instead of play over take you at times? Wouldn’t it be rewarding to feel refreshed and invigorated before learning and teaching? Are we not the student and the teacher when we take on any new dog and their human companion clients?



A = Base of neck (withers) just in front of shoulder blades

B = Breast bone

C = Base of tail

D = Last rib on ribcage

When measuring make sure your dog is in a standing position.

1. A to B- Measure from the withers or base of neck ~ point A ~ to breast bone ~ point B (Find where the breast bone is most prominent, just where the neck turns into the chest.)

2. B to C- From point B, take the tape between the front legs, just past the armpit, then gradually extend the tape on an upwards angle to the end of the back, just where the tail begins ~ point C

3. A to D- Just above the place where your dog’s belly begins to tuck up and the ribcage ends, find the last rib ~ point D ~ measure from the base of neck ~ point A ~ to this point.

4. A to C- Measure from the base of neck ~ point A ~ straight along the middle of your dog’s back, right to the base of tail ~ point C

What Type of Equipment & Body Hardware do I Need?

The most necessary piece of equipment is a strong heart, and for this reason I recommend you have a physical prior to being pulled down a remote trail where the crows may be all that find you until spring. Conditioning your body is one of the reasons for taking on canine silent sports; DoggieTrek Fitness clients often come with very little aerobic endurance, and in eight weeks have shed up to 18 pounds! You’ll never run as fast and long as your dog, so the key is to bend your knees, drop your rump, straighten your back, tighten your stomach muscles and use the pulling as resistance training while building aerobic endurance. Once you know the body is in working order, purchase yourself a good pair of trail running shoes that have ankle support.

For the dogs themselves, though there are few manufacturers of



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the proper equipment, it has been designed by those dedicated to these canine silent sports. One size does not fit all when properly outfitting a dog's harness. Although a dog walking harness can be used, most have metal rings and buckles that generate pressure points and chafing, especially when pulling is the desired effect. For this reason, dog sled harnesses known as X-backs are recommended for comfort and safety. (For more detailed instructions you can go to www.ultrapaws.com/harness_measure.asp.) Ruffwear manufactures the Omnijor which can be used for all joring disciplines.

When canicrossing in an urban setting, always make sure to have a collar on the dog to hook a leash or carry a slip-collar leash to use at crosswalks or to restrain the dog when necessary.

You'll want a waist belt with lower-lumbar support, and initial shock-absorbing line with a quick release mechanism that attaches to a towline of 8 to 10 feet with secondary shock-absorption that connects to the dogs harness. Make sure to measure your waist with your winter clothing on so that it fits comfortably over rain gear and winter layers.

How do We Communicate?

The joring vernacular is different from obedience commands, and the dog will become conditioned to distinguishing between the two when you put on either the collar or harness. It is best for both of you to learn joring commands while canicrossing rather than at the break-neck speeds skis, bikes, or roller blades will go when your dog is hooked to them:



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Command..... Dogs Reaction

Hike or Let's Go	Start
Whoa (pronounced "Wo" with a long "o")	Stop
Easy	Slow down
Haw	Turn left
Gee (pronounced "Jee").....	Turn right
Gee Over.....	Move right
Haw Over	Move left
On By	Pass without slowing
Line Out.....	Tighten towline
Come Around	Turn 180 degree's

Where to Go?

DoggieTrek Fitness is blessed with so many trails in Northern Michigan that we canicross a different one every night of the week. When starting out, find a rail-trail or any that is fairly flat and without many twisty turns so you can both learn the proper commands. If you're going to start on neighborhood sidewalks or congested park settings, either get up before the morning traffic or after dark when the dogs can't be distracted as easily. As you start to challenge yourself on trickier terrain, you'll find those steep ascents become easier with your companion pulling you uphill and always be prepared to disengage the quick-release when going downhill. Be prepared to be slingshot through a twisty turn when your towline goes taught against a tree or other obstacle as the dog turns through a bend. One thing you can be assured: your dog will never complain about the trail you choose.

Dog Gone Facts!

A Tibetan spaniel doesn't have the stride, nor does a Manchester Terrier weigh enough, but a 35 – 45 pound high-energy dog will start a doggie jig when they see the harness come out of the closet. Ideally, a dog weighing 65 pounds is preferred by professional racers that want to average more than 20 mph. Typically, the sporting and herding breeds or an "American" mix of them will perceive canine silent sports as a "call to duty." We can teach our dogs to pull by harnessing their natural behaviors to chase, trail run, or follow the pack. Instinctively, they love to chase prey. In the woodlands they smell out game trails and follow

with a hyper focus no matter the breed. Just as their ancestral lineage did during a hunt, running in a pack will make a dog pull to follow. Praising these instinctual actions will condition your dog companion to start pulling when the harness is put on them.

Now, get outside and hook yourselves together to culminate the primordial synergy that (wo)man and dog have shared for 85,000 years. In the next issue, I'll introduce you to scootering, the asphalt jungle, and the back roads of exploration.

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



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"If He Ain't Naked..."

by Robin MacFarlane

The following article originally appeared in my blog, "The Truth About Shock Collars." It was something I wrote in response to the frustration I frequently experience when hanging out on dog training forums and chat groups. It is the same frustration that usually causes me to leave the lists and just go back to my dogs, clients and training. Maybe it is just me, but I find the continual battles about tools, methods and "who's doing it wrong" tiresome. Somewhere in all the arguing we've lost perspective that most of us make our living helping the average pet owner learn how to have a peaceful life with his or her dog.

We've forgotten that meeting the needs of John and Jane Doe and providing him or her a solution that works for them is the objective. While I am all for helping JQP see a vision of life with their dog they may not have believed possible, I have low tolerance for ramming a personal vision down everyone else's throat. The unfortunate outcome of such lambasting of one another is that we close ourselves off from circulating in a wider community and leak away possibilities of joining forces to simply preach that training is important.

I thought about posting some brainy quote about open-mindedness in this article, but then it occurred to me that it isn't necessary that we all become more open-minded. If we're good at what we do and good at helping our clients get to that point, we should continue on. There is no need to constantly expand to something else.

What our industry really needs is greater tolerance, so I will leave you with some words from George Carlin: "Religion is like a pair of shoes...Find one that fits you, but don't make me wear your shoes."

Practice your training "religion" with vigor and enthusiasm, but let others practice theirs as well.

Robin

The argument of whether or not a dog is *really trained* if he is wearing an electronic collar comes up frequently among dog professionals. The debate rages that a *trained* dog shouldn't need to be wearing an e-collar.

My first question typically is: "Trained according to who's definition?"

"Trained" as defined by a competition obedience routine that is performed sans any training tools in the ring? Or perhaps "trained" to the degree of a Police K-

9 capable of searching a building for hidden suspects. What about "trained" to remain on the dog bed while you have 25 people over for a holiday gathering?

What I might consider a trained dog, the high scoring obedience competitor might deem unacceptable or sloppy performance, and the police handler might say is just "circus tricks," while the average pet owner may watch and exclaim, "I don't need all that 'fancy stuff', just a dog who behaves!" (Of course, this leads to a discussion of what "behaved" is!).

The definition of a trained dog lies in the mind of the dog owner/handler. We all have different ideas of what we expect our dogs to do and under what circumstance(s) they should remain accountable to those expectations.

Dog trainers seem to have equal (perhaps greater) differences of opinion over how to achieve teaching a dog those expectations.

We have leashes, long lines, slip collars, prong collars, electronic collars, treats, clickers, harnesses, head halters, and a host of other items used to guide a dog through the learning process. There is controversy over all of those tools, but the outcry is the loudest if an electronic collar is on a dog.

Even among some of the professional trainers, there is a lingering arrogance that if you have an e-collar on the dog, somehow you are cheating and the dog really isn't trained.

I say poppycock to that notion. And let me return the volley; "Well if he has a leash on, he ain't trained." "If you've got treats in your pocket, he ain't trained." "If he does great in the ring but can't stop jumping on visitors to your door, he ain't trained." "If he does a great building search but can't lay down and be quiet in the squad car when you tell him too, he ain't trained." "If you need to raise your voice at your dog, he ain't really trained." "If you need to give him that look and that shake of the finger...."

Blah, blah, blah...we can all go on and on and round and round. But to what point?

It takes no particular skill to argue with one another over what is trained and what is cheating and who

does a better or more humane job of getting to their goal. The arguing part is easy.

How novel would it be to celebrate the idea that we all believe in training the dog? In the spirit of healthy debate, maybe we can call a truce and focus on the most important piece of equipment, the one that sits between our ears.

Does it really matter what tool we use if we do so with conscious endeavor? Does it matter if a dog is wearing a tool or if an owner/handler uses that tool to aid maintaining their goals?

If someone is actually taking time to train their dog, I say, "Hurray!"

Sure, there is common ground in saying if the dog is as good as gold with a training tool on (or with a situation well managed) versus completely off his rocker without the tool or continual management....well then, there is some real work to be done.

If the disparity in behavior is that big, there is a disconnect between using a tool to achieve a behavior versus

using a tool to aid building a relationship. That is where the emphasis should be, on the relationship.

If the relationship is in balance, the road traveled to get there doesn't really matter. Electronic collar on, or buck naked...the training will shine.

Robin MacFarlane is a past director of IACP. She is the owner and training director of That's My Dog! Inc. in Dubuque, IA. Learn more about Robin; her writing, workshops and E-cademy program at ThatsMyDog.com

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My Personal Way of Educating

by Roland Tschische

I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Roland Tschische, I'm the first and only Austrian IACP member. I joined the association in October 2011, because I would like to be part of something special, something larger than only national. I've been training dogs since 1995, since my 21st birthday, in my own enterprise. We are called Pet Dog Trainers Vienna.

Canine education in Austria is quite different from many other countries because tools like e-collars, spray collars, and even leash impact is strictly forbidden by law. So, according to my main occupation, I'm an elementary school teacher in Vienna, but I developed my own method to train dogs during all those years, and gave it the name "CCL method."

CCL stands for Communication- Consequence-Leadership Energy, which, in my eyes, are the most important pillars of any relationship in which training is required--human child, or dog. Both of them are acting instinctively (humans only up to the age of eight in the so called "early childhood egocentrism," dogs their whole life long). Acting instinctively means they try to fulfill their needs, in the moment they raise the need in their minds. That has the consequence that both individuals would start to gratify their needs whenever, wherever they want to. This could lead into serious trouble, for obvious reasons.

During situations like this, most dog owners get into a reacting position too often. So what we need is structure, boundaries, communication and someone who is reliable enough to be accepted as an authority.

The Communication:

For me, communication starts with a glance into my face, no matter how long this glance lasts. Important is the immediate giving of feedback, by using your face, hands, indeed all the possibilities

ties you have with facial expression or gesture. The fact is that if you communicate this way, the dog will learn to READ YOUR face and body. The difficulty is to feedback your dogs behavior all the time. What does that mean? For example: If my dog would like to jump into water, he might try to communicate this to me instantaneously, to get some sort of allowance first. Within this second or two of sight contact, I do have the ability to get the dog away from the water if I want, or allow him to go on. If the dog has learned that starting communication in this way doesn't give him an answer, he will stop offering it and decide by his own will. This is the moment where we start to shout and call (react on our dogs behavior) and our beloved animal does whatever he wants to do. Feedback every situation with every option you have. If YOU start the interaction, make sure that your sight connection is so strong that nothing, absolutely nothing can disturb it. You can feel a connection of this quality almost in your body. Many dogs even stop breathing for a split second!

Nothing can distract the communication between the dog and the leader in this moment. Communication has not only to do with commands, but also with facial expression, how you walk, and the self awareness you can show in the things you're acting out. Most of the time I try to communicate without commands, because what I say is insignificant; the way my body speaks in this situation is important.

How can such a quality be established? From my work with children I know that learning has something to do with earning positive feedback, learning to cope with things without help from others, the importance of a positive learning environment, and focusing on one thing at one time. So if your dog learns that focusing on you leads to fulfilling his needs, there is no reason for not communicating with you. It's simple, as long as you're able

to be focused on your dog any time you're in a working situation (as far as I'm concerned, life is a working situation). Communication gets disabled in the man-dog relationship by having the dog living his life outside of yours, not with you! We human beings, motivated by our rational behavior, inadvertently teach the dog that speaking with us leads to no reaction. This is not even right for human relationships, and of course not for dogs.

Consequence:

This part means the creation of a stable structure in which every single part of the "family" has its place and knows where the boundaries are. That means really hard work in the first months of living with a puppy, and that means you need to be very bullheaded if you want to optimize an adult dog's behavior. The problem is once again our rationality.

I came to visit a Pekingese dog named Gismo in 2011. The problem was that he does not allow anyone to touch his body. His female owner was bitten all over her body seven to ten times a day! She got the dog from a rescue station in Vienna. She told me (this is where the problem with our rationality starts), that "it is okay if he does this with her, because within the family anybody should live his life as he wants to," but she can't understand why he behaves in this rude way at the veterinarians. "Can't he see that getting an injection is important for his health!?" No comment. Structure means that what is okay today, must be okay tomorrow, and what is forbidden today is forbidden tomorrow. And to establish and hold a stable structure depends on how much energy you can afford to sanction your boundaries. I remember Fridolin, a five year old Jack Russell mix. He stalked his leader, really stalked his leader. The

A black and white advertisement for the KONG Wobbler. The top left features the 'KONG WOBBLER' logo in a stylized, blocky font. The main image shows a black and white dog, possibly a Weimaraner, interacting with a large, dark, hourglass-shaped KONG Wobbler toy on a white surface. The dog's head is lowered, sniffing or nudging the toy. Several small, dark, bone-shaped treats are scattered on the surface near the toy. At the bottom of the advertisement, the text 'Feed a meal or just some treats.' is written in a bold, sans-serif font, with a trademark symbol (TM) at the end.

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man could not drink a coffee without having the dog sit on his legs. I told him to show the dog that it's his right to drink coffee alone, by sending the dog to a place where he should wait patiently, until his owner allows him to come. It was a Wednesday afternoon in 2008. At nine o'clock in the evening the man called me, crying; he sent Fridolin to his place (he counted) 250 times, and anytime HE entered his kitchen the dog sat on the chair again. I told him to be strict. Send him to his place 500 times if necessary. Three days later he called me to say that the situation is relaxed as never before. Fridolin sleeps in his place, and he can walk through his flat without being followed by his dog. But how can situations like this happen? In our heart we say, our puppies are so cute, so vulnerable, we have to protect them all the time. We teach the dog: There is no other way of living than being with my owner every second of the day. And what seems to be cute at first leads to obsessive behavior and directly to stress. So enable a stable structure by telling the dog where his place is, and what your rights are.

Leadership Energy:

This part of my method means to establish a system of trust. I, as a human being, am responsible for fulfilling my dog's needs, such as food, body contact, walking, positive interaction, exercise in many different ways, social safety, and contact to other dogs. Create an environment where the dog subordinates by his choice, because he knows that YOU are the one that gives his life sense. A leader always acts instead of reacts in situations. A leader is not aggressive, he always keeps control in situations. He shows the dog that he is able to dispense and hold back privileges. He shows that his decisions lead to success, such as food, body contact, playing, and so forth. A leader can never be challenged by provocative behavior. I remember Boomer, a "whatever" mix three years old. He was able to bark two hours without interruption, just to get his ball thrown into the garden. Sometime during his education, he learned that barking long enough leads to playing with his owner and the ball. One single unexpected reaction of his owner (we closed the balcony

door right in front of him, leaving him outside in the garden) led to some sort of "What is going on?" silence, and we used this silence to throw the ball through the window into the garden. The dog learned: forcing my human leads to closed doors. Sitting silently leads to a ball.

In fact, the problem is to bring up the energy to keep all three parts of this system running. The earlier you establish communication, consequence and authority, the more reliable your dog/man relationship will be overall. The fact is that everything we classify as unwanted behavior is an attempt on the dog's part to serve his own needs.

The question is: How can we fulfill those needs, within the borders of law and morality, and LET THE DOG KNOW that WE are the ones he can count on. He needs to know that we are not rivals to his fun and needs. Let's develop some sort of personal responsibility in our dogs that leads to better interactions between the species.

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Guidelines for Instructors

by Mary Mazzeri

I have done a lot of mentoring over the last 40 years. I'm sure there are many others in the IACP who have done the same. I don't run a 'school', and I didn't start out looking for people to mentor. The cream rose to the top. I was sometimes the one to encourage a particular student to go through advanced training with their dog(s) and then consider observing/apprenticing/assisting/instructing. Some came to me, but usually I noticed certain students with potential and interest. This guideline is geared toward group class instruction but certainly applies in good measure to the private dog trainer. Some of the qualities I look for and some of the principles I teach are:

BE KNOWLEDGEABLE:

You can't teach what you don't know. Personal experience and success in training your own dogs is a great place to start. Training dogs of different temperament, size and breed gives a broader perspective. Volunteer to work with dogs in your local shelter. Read the trade literature, attend workshops, view DVD's, observe successful instructors, and be mentored by them. You will never stop learning.

Have the Right ATTITUDE:

A good instructor will exude calm enthusiasm, confidence and helpfulness. His role is teaching people, not just training dogs. Discipline and good organization should frame honest concern toward each student. He should willingly impart information but be honest about his own limitations. It's OK to say, in response to a problem, "I'm not sure, but I'll find out for you." All of this is capped with genuine love of people and their dogs, the virtue students learn through observing their instructor. With rare

exception, the clients are there because they want to learn and improve their dog's behavior. We are there to serve their needs. I strongly recommend reading such classics as *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie to improve people and communication skills.

OFFER INSTRUCTION:

The many facets of good teaching techniques could never be fully covered in this outline, but primary considerations will be touched on. The instructor must recognize the nature of individual problems. Be alert to handler attitudes. Challenge poor ones but respectfully motivate them to keep trying. Use positive reinforcement. Catch them doing something right and compliment them. Going back to the basic steps of an exercise solves most training problems. In teaching the exercises, we are responsible for instilling the concepts behind the techniques--not just the "how, but the "why," too.

We study,
read, compare, and
discuss differing meth-
odologies, keeping the
best and discarding
the rest.

Create an "Air of Expectancy" in your class. You set the tone by calm, confident instruction. Pace your class for goals achievable within the time frame. Your tone says "This is the way it is done. People routinely achieve this level in this amount of time." It puts the responsibility on the student to work to measure up to the 'norm'.

Exchange words like 'should' for 'will be able to' and 'can'. Your tone of voice, inflections, and ability to project without sounding irritated, or condescending all make a difference. Humor is an excellent tool for creating enjoyment and good will in the class. This necessitates that the humor is not rooted in ridicule or embarrassment. Respect your students.



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EVALUATION:

Student teams will have individual capacities. Although we have a standard of excellence, we must also consider the individual progress of each team. The week-to-week progress should be used to augment the final evaluation. The students should understand the final requirements for advancement early in the training session. The instructor must feel that a team meets the requirements before permitting progress to the next level class. A final test will help both you and your student to evaluate the effectiveness of your program and help you spot weaknesses both in the individual and in your training program. If a large percentage of a class fails in a particular area, it is wise to re-evaluate your approach and methodology in that exercise.



ORGANIZATION:

Making the most of limited class time is a genuine challenge. Time must be divided between review; new instruction and demonstration of handling and techniques; student practice/participation; problem solving and announcements. Be sure to come together at the start of the class for weekly roll call, announcements, and outlining the week's lesson. This helps to 'set the tone' and give a sense of direction and purpose.

Careful advance planning of class time in regard to how each exercise shall be taught, reviewed, or practiced should be carefully choreographed ahead of class time. Knowing when to break into lines or squares or smaller groupings, and how to direct traffic in class is vital to smooth transitions, keeping students engaged, and making the most efficient use of limited class time and space. In general, each exercise follows a stepwise progression of explanation (why), illustration (demonstration (how), repetition (what), review, shift cues (when), test (distractions), and habituation.

Make good use of your assistants. Good assistants are a Godsend. You should all be on the same page. They should study each week's new exercises

and be prepared, at your direction, to demonstrate accurately what you describe. Not all assistants have equal experience. Some have trained longer than others, although some which have trained for a shorter length of time may have a better grasp of some things. Some will have excellent people skills, or function very well one on one, or be observant and good at spotting problems. Those aspiring to be instructors will hopefully develop the technical, organizational, and people skills required to someday assume that role. Assign tasks according to the level of skill and experience of your assistants.

In a basic obedience class, make it practical for everyday life. Break down exercises into the smallest components and be prepared to explain them many, many times from week to week. Don't tell students they are wrong--approach them with

"Let me HELP you with that." Students should be taught how to build their dog's confidence through a pattern of teach, review, then new, then proof train, then repeat some more until the understanding of an exercise crosses the line into habit. Start each new phase with a review of last week's work.

CHOREOGRAPHY:

You need to plan ahead as to how to best use floor space, both working with available space in the confines of a building or keeping a class cohesive in a larger outdoor area where it may be more difficult to hear. The students must be able to see and hear you. They must be able to move efficiently and safely through the area. You need to make good use of your assistants so that the students are working most of the time and not standing around waiting for a single turn.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSTRUCTOR:

All instructors must have the current manual for their level, study the material, prepare it thoroughly and teach out of the motivation of wanting to help

people train their dogs to be better companions. Instructors need to attend instructor's meetings when held. These are for the discussion of instructing techniques, updating methods and for the input of the teaching staff and the resolution of training problems. Assistants are always welcome at these meetings.

Competition Class Instructors must be aware of current AKC/UKC Regulations, equipment, advancement requirements and information specific to their class level. If an instructor cannot teach on a given night, it is his responsibility to notify the Director of Training so provision can be made for the class. The instructor should let his assistants know what he expects them to be responsible for from week to week. This might include overseeing proper equipment usage and storage; demonstrating new exercises; calling heeling patterns; working individually with students or helping observe and spot problems when the class is working as a whole.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENTS:

The student is responsible for cooperating with the instructor, managing his own dog, and complying with policy and safety regulations. He is responsible for keeping up with class work and should make arrangements with the instructor in the case of an absence.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSISTANTS:

The assistant starts out as an observer. They watch the class level they will assist with a view to seeing how the instructor handles the class: Their use of time and space; how they give instruction, visually demonstrate, and verbally break down the exercises into small steps. How they direct activities within the class. How they relate to the dogs and people in general.

The apprentice is given some tasks to assist the class such as demonstrating an exercise with their own dog when asked to do so; providing distractions; moving class props and equipment etc.

The assistant will interact with the class according to their level of experience. Functionally, they relate more 'one on one' unless asked by the instructor to call a heeling pattern or work a section of the class on a particular exercise. When the instructor is giving general instruction to the class at large, especially for a new exercise component, the assistant should stop what they are doing and direct all students' attention to the instruction being given. It is important that the assistant's instruction not conflict with that of the instructor. They are there to reiterate instruction to any student that needs more help in assimilating the information. If they see a problem that needs to be addressed by the instructor, they should bring it to the instructor's attention discreetly. The alert assistant is invaluable to the instructor!

PHILOSOPHY

At Care Dog Training we work as a team. We are always striving to find the best way to achieve reliable results. We study, read, compare, and discuss differing methodologies, keeping the best and discarding the rest. In order to be successful in teaching, you must believe that you will be successful and act on that faith. If you have a positive, forward thinking attitude you will accomplish what you set out to do. Project this same faith into your class. You will help them to succeed as well. Helping others to realize their goals and potential is the greatest satisfaction a teacher can have!

Mary Mazzeri has been training professionally since 1970. She is an IACP CoFounder and holds the CDT, CDTA & PDTI certifications. She is owner/operator of Care Dog Training. Com Carpentersville, IL USA. Member: IACP, NADOI, NAIA, ADOA. IACP 2010 Member of the Year 2011 Hall of Fame

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A Good Family Pet

by Ron Bruce, DPM

Denver, Colorado was recently shaken to its core—not by an earthquake, but by a dog attack, on live TV, to one of its favorite morning anchors. The dog had recently been rescued from an icy pond by the fire department. The anchor was doing a follow up interview in the studio with the owner, the fire-fighter rescuer, and the dog, described as an Argentine mastiff. As the interview was proceeding, the anchor was petting the dog underneath the muzzle, which the dog seemed to be tolerating. The anchor then leaned her face towards the dog, and in an instant, the dog attacked and bit the anchor on the face. Later viewing of the tape clearly showed that split second change in the dog's facial expression prior to the attack. Needless to say, this sparked a lot of media coverage and reaction from the public.

In one of the articles, the dog was described as a "good family pet." If you have been in the canine training profession long enough, you have come across many examples of good family pets that have bitten people. A good family pet does not automatically equal a social, friendly dog that is able to adapt to all situations.

Hindsight, being the wonderful teacher that it is, always shows us where we screwed up or what we may have missed. The dog's breed is on some lists of the most aggressive dogs. It is a guard dog breed. The dog was in the icy pond because it had been chasing an animal (high prey drive?); I think we can justly assume that the dog was traumatized by the icy pond incident. The dog was brought into the bright lights and new sounds of a TV studio – how many of our obedience trained dogs have ever been to a TV studio? The dog weighed 85lbs and was on what appeared to be a large, flat leather collar – how many of you professional trainers could stop any forward motion of an 85lb dog on a flat collar? I don't think I saw anything written or said about the level of the dog's obedience, so I don't know the level of owner con-

trol. While the anchor is as sweet as can be, the question remains: why are you putting your face in front of a dog that you don't even know?

There are just so many ingredients that could have added to the explosive moment. We know, being on the professional side of this picture, that sometimes it only takes one particular ingredient or scenario to exceed a dog's aggression threshold—resulting in its aggressive reaction.

Professional trainers deal with aggressive dogs and fearful dogs on a daily basis. It becomes normal operating procedure for us to understand, anticipate and work with inappropriate behaviors that a dog may display. Unfortunately, the general public does not have the same experience.

Organizations like the American Kennel Club and publications like our *Safehands Journal* are putting out information to help the general public as well as the professionals that deal with the public. We can not expect the general public to become readers of subtle canine body language. We can, however, expound on general principles to our clients such as "putting your face in front of a strange dog is not safe." I even tell my clients with children that caution should be exercised with their own dogs until they are absolutely sure that their dog has seen all the antics of the children (and their friends). As a general rule, small children and family dog interactions should always be under adult supervision. When we have a safety issue like this, we as professional trainers shouldn't be hesitant about getting up on our soap box to those with whom we have a relationship. You are not explaining the mechanics of a sit/stay. You are highlighting a safety issue and the client, or your target audience, should easily understand that this has a different emphasis. If the client/owner does not want to follow your advice, the liability is upon their shoulders. Yes, you may offend a few sensibilities with this straight talk, but it will never

come back to haunt you because you didn't say what was truly in your gut.

While I have always considered myself a trainer and an educator, this whole incident has crystalized for me the need to put more emphasis on educating my clients. In my training program, a dog is either trained in the board & train program or through individual private lessons and then is progressed into group class. Group class is intended for the client/dog to practice their new obedience skills around a new level of distraction. While I have lectured on various topics in-between class exercises in the past, I am now going to make a more concerted effort to include safety issues.

Obviously, the current topic was thoroughly covered during our last class.

In our current group, we have a lab mix that has fear aggression issues, so the activity level of the class goes at a much slower and calmer pace than would be in the normal group class. This gives the lab's owner a chance to work under controlled conditions, gives the lab a chance to be

successful with other dogs around, and also gives the other owners some insight into behaviors they may not have ever seen but could be confronted with in the future.

Soon after this bite hit the airwaves, the TV station announced that they were holding an education class for their employees. Good for them.

Ron has been in the canine training field for 16 years. He previously was a board certified podiatrist who left the field of medicine to pursue his passion for working with dogs. After serving a two year apprenticeship with master trainer, Mark Castillero of San Diego, CA, he moved to Denver, CO. He owns Dog Train, LLC and has been the head trainer for Tenaker Pet Care in Aurora, CO for the past seven years. He is a professional member of IACP and can be reached at ron@dogtrainllc.com..

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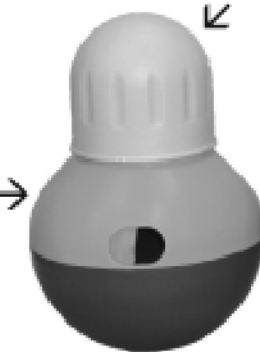
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