

IACP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS



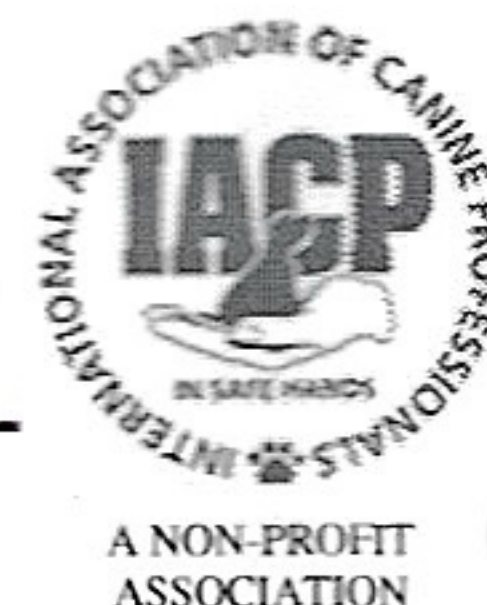
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Safe Hands Journal



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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS is an organization established to maintain the highest standards of professional and business practice among canine professionals. Its aim is to provide support and representation for all professional occupations involved with any aspect of canine management, health, training and husbandry.

The INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS' commitment is to develop professional recognition, communication, education, understanding and co-operation across the wide diversity of canine expertise and knowledge.

For Those Dedicated to the Well Being of Dogs

How to Join IACP

PROFESSIONAL MEMBER - At least 5 years experience as a canine professional. Can vote on IACP issues and use IACP name and logo on business materials.

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Annual Fees:

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All IACP members receive our SafeHands Journal, have access to our email list, seminars, educational materials, business support materials, events and activity calendars, regional-group participation, and our Certification Programs.
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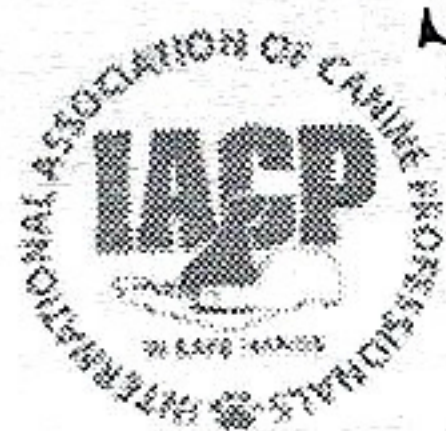
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

911 brought home to many the importance of dogs working in the service of people. Therapy dogs, as well as search and rescue dogs were at the World Trade Center, literally working their paws to the bone. Time passes and the importance of showing our support and respect for the dogs and handlers that work so diligently to serve and protect us wanes. But the service of these dogs and their handlers does not diminish. Presently we are a country on alert, we are a country at war and so often we overlook the work dogs do unselfishly, with great diligence and application not only to help protect our way of life, and our laws but also save lives. A group of dogs which are often overlooked for the work they do are those that serve with our troops overseas. We may refer to them as "War Dogs" and SAR dogs but I call them heroes. These dogs go unrecognized by the majority, receiving acclaim only from the men and women who have worked with them or benefited, even had their lives saved by the skill and determination of one dog. In Iraq and Afghanistan although we do not hear of them, we have dogs and handlers working to locate mines, booby trap systems and of course doing search and rescue among the rubble of conflict. Some of these dogs and their handlers are in this war for the long term. Their services so invaluable and difficult to replace that their tours of duty multiply.



Martin Deeley (on right) and Kris Butler (2nd from left) with TSgt Jerome "J" Blackwell Kennel Master and SSgt Brian Disorbo, kennel trainer at Patrick AFB

To date, nothing compares with ability and sensitivity of the nose of a trained dog. The nose is the handler's sensor to danger or life. Their trust and belief in their dog has to be complete and the relationship between handler and dog grows to one of total togetherness. They live and sleep together, their partnership and skills become as one, a team which commands the envy of all who love dogs. Veterans of Vietnam tell stories of how the dog leading their patrol would indicate the presence of the enemy waiting in ambush, or the path ahead being mined. Their faces crease with emotion, admiration, respect and true affection for these dogs of war and who but for the skills of these dogs, would not be enjoying their lives today.

War Dog Associations are active throughout America. Names of dogs that served are engraved on walls and statues in memory of their bravery and etched in the hearts of those who support these Associations. Captain Haggerty a founder Member of IACP is active within these Associations, himself having been a dog trainer and handler in the Rangers. It was a big hint from the Captain that had IACP once again moving into action and launching an appeal for donations, gifts, everyday items and a few small luxuries for the dogs and their handlers serving overseas. Especially at Christmas and the New Year when we are all settling down safely with our families in the comfort of our homes, the dogs and their handlers will either be working or on alert. Our safety, our confidence in knowing that we are protected is based on our belief, trust and confidence in those who protect us, and do so with little thought for themselves or the ultimate price they may have to pay. Call it patriotism in the IACP wanting to do this, call it generosity from a grateful group of dog lovers, call it many things but we call it an affinity with those who respect, love and work with dogs. War and SAR dogs are a special group and the gifts from IACP members and their friends which includes boots for the dogs in addition to many other necessities and much missed items for the handlers, winged their way across the miles at Christmas and the New Year, taking with them cards and letters of thanks and good wishes together with prayers for a very safe return home.

Martin Deeley

President IACP

Dog Training from a Pet Owner's Perspective

Maggi Oswald

Two recent threads on the IACPSafeHands discussion list really piqued my interest. One theme addressed using "force" versus having a "willing participant" and the second referenced business slow-downs. The more I thought about these two items, the more it seemed that these two topics are related.

Dog training is a service we provide to a client base. If your business is slow, maybe you need to reassess the service you are offering. Are you offering what your clients really want? What percentage of your client base participates in competitive obedience? What percentage just have "pet dogs" that they want to spend quality time with? And are you so totally locked into one type of training that you are overlooking what your clients really want?

As a newcomer to the dog-training arena, I have less experience than most of you. Indeed, I've really only been involved in training dogs other than my own for the past six years. However, I do have about 35 years as a pet owner. During those years, I've seen, read or been subjected to a multitude of books, videos, lectures, seminars and classes presented by a variety of individuals. Many of these instructors, authors, lecturers and trainers have a long string of letters following their names and the names of their dogs. They cite these advanced degrees and titles as the reason I should ascribe to their particular brand of instruction, buy their series of books or videos, or sign up for their sessions of classes. They profess an expertise or certification in a particular method of training that is the absolute best there is.

But as a pet owner, are these degrees, certifications and titles all that important to me?

No.

I applaud the time and discipline it took you to reach this level of expertise with your own dogs. But is that what I look for in someone to guide me to a better relationship with my own dog?

Not by a long shot.

As a pet owner, and prospective client, I look to see how your dog acts around you. Does your dog duck his head away when you reach down to pet him/her? Does your dog sit quietly at your side with a friendly demeanor and wagging tail when I approach you with my less than perfectly behaved dog, or does your dog snap, snarl and lunge?

What about when I walk past your crate or X-pen; is your dog quiet, calm, and confident – or does he/she turn into raging beast, eager to rip me to shreds because I've entered its perceived territory?

And what about your recall – does your dog come bounding

back to you, with its head held high, eager for the next great adventure, or does it come slowly, head down, dreading what comes next?



Photo by Aimee Sadler

You might ask why I care so much about how your dog behaves, when obviously I'm the one with the problem, since I'm seeking you out for help. I think the way your dog relates to you expresses what kind of trainer you are. If your dog looks at you like you are the greatest thing in the whole wide world, then you are probably the trainer for me.

I want a confident, happy dog who will behave in a civilized manner. And, I want to have FUN with my dog. I want to spend quality time doing something we both enjoy. I want a dog trainer who will teach me how to teach my dog to sit quietly until I release him/her; to lie quietly the same way and to come when called no matter what the distraction. And, I want my dog to do these tasks willingly.

I don't care if my dog doesn't sit perfectly straight, with its right shoulder in line with my left knee. I don't care if my dog flops onto one hip instead of a perfectly squared-up "Sphinx-like" down. And so what if my dog makes a slight arc returning to me when called, instead of a straight line. My dog is doing what I ask and it is a willing participant.

I remember the days when "down" was taught by slapping the dog across the shoulders with the end of the leash, or worse still, by stomping on the leash to jerk the dog's head down, forcing the dog to down. Okay, the dog did "down", but at what cost to our relationship? I walked out of those classes and continued my search for a trainer. How much easier it is (on me, to say nothing of the dog) to use a treat to teach the dog what to do!

You Can Charge More Because You're Worth It

MARC GOLDBERG

This article is *not* for all dog trainers.

It will only be of interest to some of you. Are we yet again dividing the canine community into the camps of "All Positive" (AP) trainers versus "Balanced" trainers? Nope. I don't care if you train with cookies, pinch collars or remote control collars. In this case, I'm dividing us into two groups based on income. One group of you is *satisfied* with your annual income and the other would like to earn more.

Which group are you in?

As we move through a discussion on income, and thus fees, we must agree to put aside any divisiveness based on dog training methods. Let's face it. Whether we use the same method, or totally opposing methods and philosophies, we still compete with one another. But by raising the bar for the lowest income earners among us, we concurrently raise it for the highest.

I'm located in Chicago. And if you think that I don't compete with you based on my geographical location, think again. I have board-and-trained dogs from Oklahoma, Tennessee, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Indiana. I've referred out clients who wanted to send me dogs from California and Delaware. So chances are, if you're located within, say, 500 miles of me, we compete on some level.

Here's the funny thing. My most immediate "competitors" have received ten times more income from referrals I've sent them than income they have lost to me. So referrals among dog trainers will be one of the topics we discuss here. Let's also talk about how to market your training method...whatever that method may be. And let's talk about price points.

First, let's discuss marketing your dog training method. All too often, I see AP and balanced trainers sniping and arguing in print, in person and online. I confess, I've been in the middle of it myself, and thrown barbs too. That's because I just think my method works better than yours. But isn't that human nature? Don't we all just want to be right and feel valid?

So let's forget "right" or "wrong" in training, and realize that one, we're all in it for the love of dogs. And two, we can actually benefit one another. For example, when I really consider it, I'm glad there is a strong AP climate among many trainers and a good bit of the public. I'm happy about that because, and this is only my own opinion, it isn't working for some of the clients. They try it first because it's popular. And if AP training works, they take their course or courses and I never hear from them.

But for those clients who continue to experience dog issues after AP training, balanced training is something they seek, even though they don't really know what they're looking for. They just know they are looking for something that will work for *their* dog. And, by the way, the reverse is true if the client has purchased, and not had a good initial experience with balanced training.

If you give group classes, whether balanced or AP in philosophy, you are the front line of defense for John Q. Public (JQP). Traditionally, classes are economical for the student, and can be profitable for the teacher. After all, if you do an eight week course of one hour lessons, and charge \$75 each for twenty students, you've made \$1,500.00 for eight hours of work right? Wrong.

You must remember to take into account all the work you did to get those twenty students signed up. The printing, the mailing, the phone calls, the preparation before and after classes. By the time you *really* calculate the time invested, realize you spend far more time in administrative work than you actually do teaching. Thus it is critical your class enrollment fee reflect your total investment of time and effort.

Most dog trainers keep an eye on what other local classes cost, and they pay far too much attention to that competition when devising their own fees. One of the major forces has become chain pet store classes. Typically they keep the class prices reasonable. After all, they're attracting students back into the store over and over, and will be able to sell them food and equipment on those visits. You probably sell only the dog training as your major sale.

Therefore, you can and must charge more than the "big boxes" charge for their classes. In most cases, you'll be worth more to the student. It's true that some of our very talented IACP members teach classes for the chains. But it's more usual that someone with a far more basic level of knowledge than you is teaching those classes. Thus, you can and should charge more. Just be prepared to offer reasons to your prospects as to why your classes are worth more than the competition's.

Consider referencing your years of experience, the respect you've won from local vets, your continuing education and professionalism (a.k.a. your IACP membership), and anything else that makes you a unique individual as a trainer. Remember that you're not really selling dog training. Everyone else is selling dog training. You don't want to compete on that oh so basic level.

You Can Charge More—Cont'd.

You're selling *you*. And there is only one *you*. So make your client want you as their trainer, and if they are sufficiently motivated, they will happily pay ten or twenty percent more to have you.

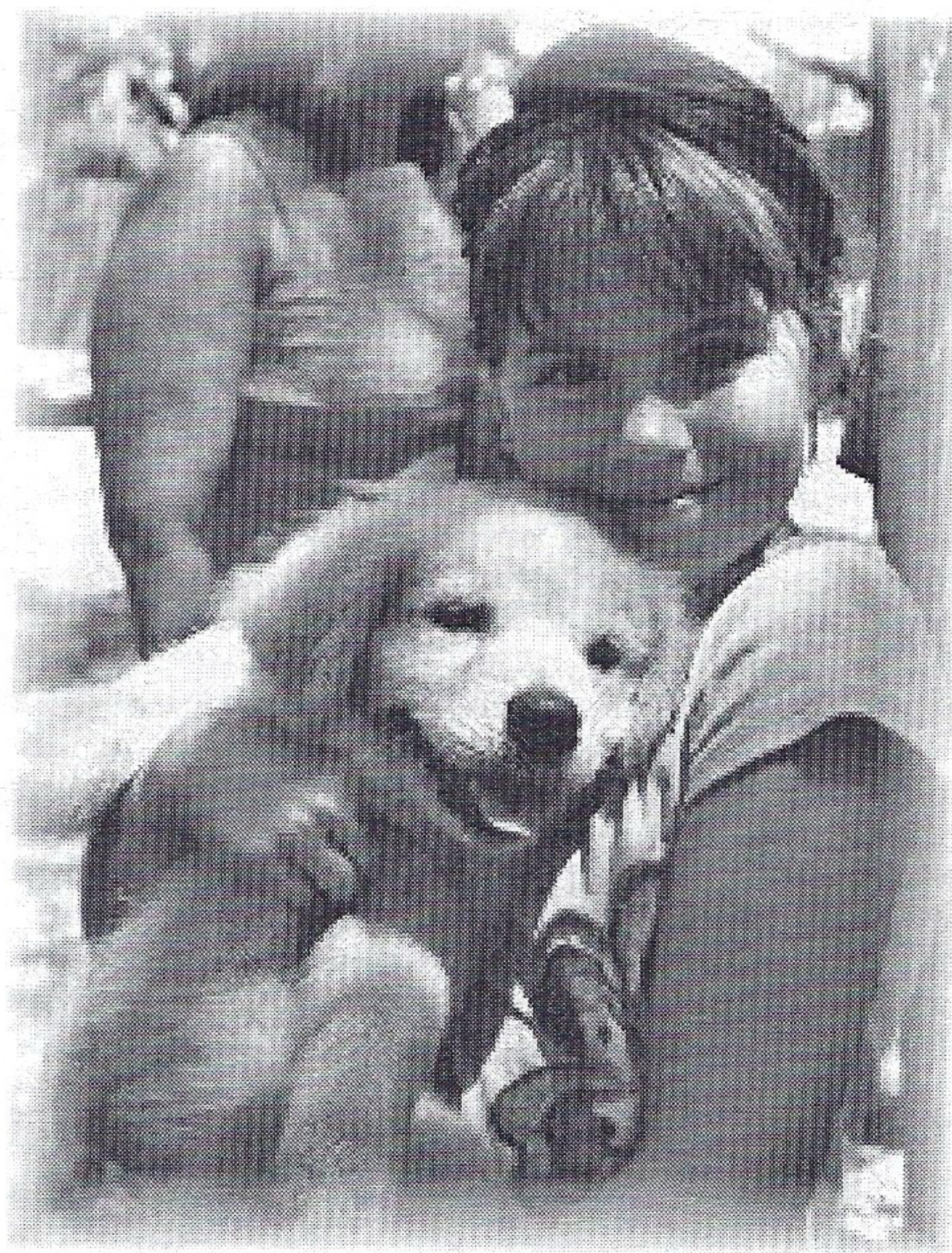
Back to your training method. Regardless of your philosophy, your own particular technique is something you should *sell*. If you're selling an AP form of training, *promote* that...brag about it, and market the fact that your classes feature all positive methods with no corrections. I'm a balanced trainer, but I won't be offended. After all, it's your strong point so go with it. You can even justify charging more for your classes than the next AP trainer because for AP to work, it must be taught very, very well indeed. *Remember, we're selling you.*

If you're selling a balanced approach, meaning you incorporate corrections in whatever form, then sell *that*. You also should brag on it and market it. I do. I realize that some people might retreat from the idea. So instead of being defensive about it, I'm quite up front about using an aversive in my training, and market the humaneness of my technique and I what I really stress is the effectiveness of it. Most of all, I'm selling how well I, personally, do it. I'm selling myself.

Were I an AP trainer, I would push for clients to come to me first asking the question, if you don't have to correct your dog, why do it? Since I am a balanced trainer, though, I promote the fact that if you've already tried other methods and failed, then call me. Does this mean I target AP failures in my marketing efforts? I'm not that specific in my marketing support materials. I target previous failure of *any* kind. I find that many of my clients have indeed previously failed with other trainers.

My niche specializes in fairly challenging dogs. Given the wide range of talent out there among trainers, I find that many difficult dogs are not being well served by some other trainers, and many of my clients have had their dogs through training before. My clients, therefore, are relatively desperate people with real problems. And when you match such issues with disposable income, you have a client willing to pay a high fee if you can only make that client want both you and your method.

The first client I took into my Board & Train was through someone else's boarding program only four months earlier. I



fixed someone else's failure in this case. And by the way, this was not an AP failure, but a balanced trainer's failure. Moreover, the balanced trainer has a well deserved and good reputation. They just didn't serve this particular client in the way he needed. The first trainer was expensive. I was even more so. The client was not happy with the first trainer. He is happy with me. Even though he spent more money.

So remember that your method is not relevant to the value of what you sell. What allows you to charge higher fees than nearby dog trainers is your ability to 1. find people with dog problems, 2. convince the client you can fix those problems; and 3. your ability to actually do it.

Certain products and services are considered commodity

Continued page 8

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You Can Charge More—Cont'd

items. Their value is very much relevant to what the common and ordinary charges for those items customarily are. For example, a product, toilet paper, is only worth X because you can find similar product on every shelf in every store. There is a bit of variation between the brands, and that is why you see so much marketing relating to "softness," number of sheets, and so forth. The manufacturers struggle to make their product sound unique and different in order to attract a customer to that particular brand, and to charge a bit more.

Plumbing is not a product. It is a service. Now I'm sure the plumbers wouldn't like me thinking this, but I consider plumbing a commodity service. That's because I don't much care about the personality and uniqueness of the plumber. I love my dog, but I do not love my pipes. I just want the leak fixed.

So one plumber might have twelve trucks, a receptionist and nice uniforms. The next one might be a solo act, with no uniform, and his or her spouse answering the phone. To me they offer the same service. So if I am in a hurry, then I want the one who can do the job first. If price is more of a concern than availability, then I want the one who will do the job cheaper. In neither case am I much influenced by marketing, techniques or personality. I buy based on speed, price, or some combination of those two factors.

You are *not* a plumber. Nevertheless, to some clients, how quickly you are available, and how cheaply you will work will indeed be a factor. If that client does not meet your profile, I recommend you refer them directly to other trainers. I do just that, depending on the case.

Personally, I refer only to individual trainers who I know. I do not refer to chain store classes. That is only because I don't know any of the trainer's at the local chains, and none of them is running an excellent side business. If I can support a small, personalized business, then I choose to do that.

Part of my philosophy, though, is to make sure that trainers to whom I refer *know* that I am sending them business. I ask clients to mention my name when calling the person I send them to. I figure karma will reward me one day when the other trainer sends me a client who does not fit her profile, but who fits mine. So *talk* to your competitors. Know who offers what in your area. And send them the business you do not want or need. Simply ask that they understand what you offer, and refer to you when you are the right trainer for the job.

If a client calls me and is willing to spend reasonable money to fix their problem, but I am not available quickly enough for them, I refer that client to one of the nearby trainers who charge high fees and offer excellent service. I do not send that client to a cheap trainer because obviously they do not want cheap. They want good.

On the other hand, when I receive calls from clients who do not want to, or cannot spend the kind of money I charge, then I refer

them to local trainers offering good service with lower price points than mine. Some people want privates or boarding, but what they will spend will only buy classes. In that case, I refer them to a good class trainer.

In either case, I do not want to train for people who do not fit my profile. You see, yes I do sell myself. And you should too. But I also have a clear idea of my ideal client. You should formulate the same concept. *Who is your target client?*

Is he or she an owner of a typical dog who can best afford group classes? If so, market accordingly, remembering to sell the benefits of your method, whether AP or balanced, and also remember to sell yourself as the appropriate expert in that field. Is your ideal client someone who has more money than time? These people often prefer private lessons or boarding because convenience is more valuable to them than money. Again, you must market your method, yourself, and the convenience you offer.

When you have a product that precisely fits the need of the client, and you succeed in helping them want *you* to be their dog trainer, you can and should be worth a higher fee than the average dog trainer.

A final thought. People will pay more for what they *want* than for what they need. Consider the example of car rental agencies. They often rent two versions of the identical car, one a standard sedan, the other a convertible. In colder climates, they don't even bother. But in nice weather climates, they not only stock that convertible, *they charge more for it*. Does anyone *need* to pay \$20.00 more per day for the convertible Mustang than for the hardtop? Heck no. But they do. Everyday. Because they *want* it.

Make the client want *you*...for your expertise, your communication skills, for your method and you're worth more than the guy who's just selling dog training.

Marc Goldberg is a proud professional member of the IACP. He urges his colleagues to value their time, skills and uniqueness. He would like to see them charge accordingly so they may prosper. Dog trainers earning excellent income have the ability to help more dogs than those who barely survive. For seminar ideas see www.ChicagoDogTrainer.com

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IACP CONFERENCE 2005 - Speakers and Topics

Pat Perkins, DVM

Canine Performance Medicine™: Performance Dog Workshop

This workshop will in cover format the role of pain in canine performance, basics of canine acupuncture, basics of canine chiropractic, pre-performance stretching routines, and what to do when chiropractic, acupuncture and exercise aren't enough

Pam Green, Mary Mazzeri and Margot Woods

The Koehler Legacy

The Koehler Method of Dog Training was first committed to print in 1962 and remains to this day one of the all time top-selling books on dog training. This seminar seeks to answer questions on the Koehler Method of dog training.

Dale DeLisle

Advancing Through Adversity

Adversity can come in many forms: professional, personal, financial, physical, and more. Dale points out that the causes of discomfort you feel in a situation often revolves around your perspective. Dale will help you learn to view challenges as opportunities for personal growth and achievement instead of as obstacles. He will provide insights and strategies to help you change your perception of "bad luck" and thereby learn to advance through adversity.

Kris Butler

Unleash Your Inner Dog Book

It's been said that writing is about art and publishing is about money. In addition to production, publishing also includes marketing and distribution. Books by unknown authors and books with limited targeted audiences are those least likely to be accepted by traditional publishers. However, low cost printing and print-on-demand technology offer today's savvy authors viable self-publishing alternatives

Vivian Bregman

What's in an Obedience Title?

This presentation will cover what an obedience title means. Vivian will also provide a breakdown of the different levels of obedience competition and will explain the difference between the entry and competition rules for various organizations including the American Kennel Club and the United Kennel Club.

A. Brice Cavanaugh

How Safe Are We?

"How Safe are We?" presented by Brice Cavanaugh will cover the theory and application of training techniques and dog team deployment in real world operations. An introduction to Explosives Detector Dogs (EDDs), new theories, common mistakes and obstacles, problem solving and applications will be covered, as well as the selection and initial training processes for EDDs.

Rocky Boatman

How to Run Successful Group Classes

The workshop will focus on developing and teaching classes to the public. Specific topics covered will include class development, methods, motivation, and how to partner with others in the profession. You will learn how to get things for free and how to build a community awareness of your classes and business.

Melissa Heeter

Frisbee Dogs 101

Michelle and her dog Ariel Asah will cover disc throwing techniques and show how to focus play with your dog on a disc.

Aggression Roundtable - Dog-Dog Aggression

Patti Strand - National Animal Interest Alliance

Who Will Speak For Our Dogs?

Dick Russell

The Answer to Dog Aggression

Dick Russell will show videotape of his large field socialization classes and discuss how this revolutionary new program lets dogs teach other dogs how to behave properly. Dick will also show you how to incorporate the concept of 'yielding' into a program for rehabilitating aggressive dogs.

Bonnie Bergin - Assistance Dog Institute

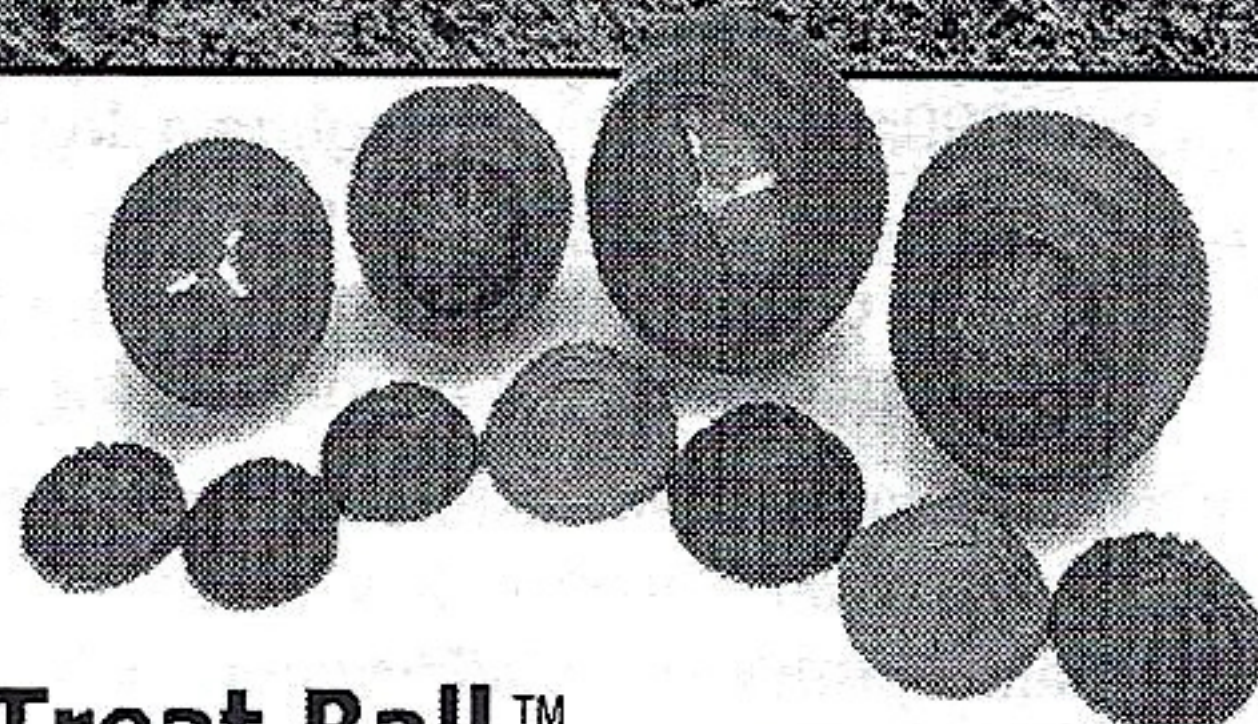
Teaching Dogs to Read

When taught to read stationary two-dimensional flash cards of commands previously taught verbally, dogs have demonstrated the ability to respond to flash card representations of dog stick figures with no prior experience. This illustrates a remarkable manifestation of the dog's deductive reasoning abilities

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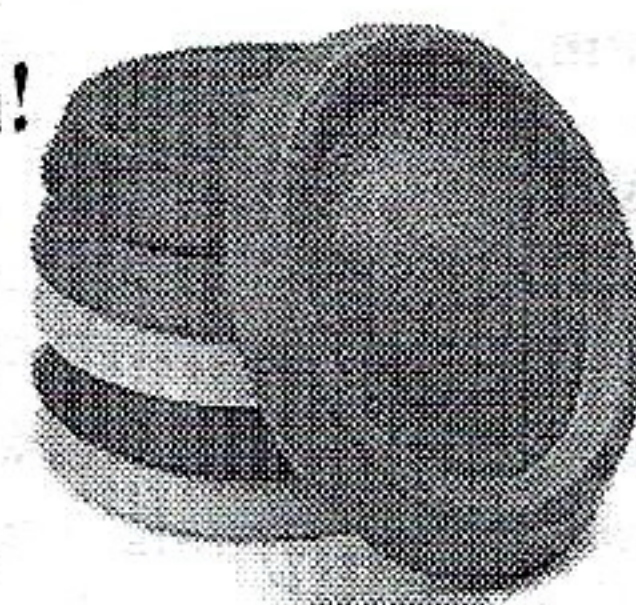
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Innovations in Training:

Our Guide Dog Wheelchair Pilot Project is on a Roll

From Guide Dogs for the Blind

Oregon Director of Research and Development Michele Pouliot, has taken the lead on a new pilot project as part of the ongoing Custom Needs Training. The project will help address the needs of current Guide Dog graduates who now must rely on wheelchairs due to accidents or degenerative conditions affecting their mobility.

Michele and her team have devised specialized dog-training techniques and equipment that can be used in conjunction with a motorized wheelchair. Two dogs have completed the specialized training and have been matched with experienced Guide Dog graduates.

The dog is trained to:

- Locate wheelchair ramps
- Disobey commands to approach stairs, high curbs or drop-offs
- Locate and negotiate electric wheelchair lifts
- Back through narrow doorways while facing handler allowing room for the wheelchair
- Heel next to wheelchair on either side and follow behind the wheelchair
- Place front feet on wheelchair footplate
- Ride on wheelchair with handler for electric lifts
- Negotiate tight spaces, as close to chair as is possible
- Retrieve common objects (cane, keys) to the handlers lap
- Maintain focused guidework at a slow pace

The first graduating wheelchair guide team, Mary Sue Dobbin's and her yellow lab "Lawford", is a prime example of how customized training makes a difference. Mary Sue has been and independent travel through the use of her 3 previous guide dogs since 1975. In 2000 a degenerative spinal disease began to take away her ability to walk. Michele Pouliot was delighted with the new team's progress. She reported, "They worked through the Portland and Minneapolis airports like a smooth dance team, turning heads along the way. For the first time in three years Mary Sue has regained her independence with a Guide Dog. Her beaming smile and 'Lawford's' wagging tail caused many a passerby to grin and exclaim 'What a beautiful dog!' Watching them work is inspiring – the ultimate goal of our mission."

Debra Hamilton received her first guide dog in 1994, thriving on the increased travel independence her guide provided. Neurological and bone disorders gradually restricted her endurance and ability to walk, requiring the use of a wheelchair. Debra graduated with her black lab wheelchair guide 'Ryerson' in



September and is ecstatic over regaining the ability to travel independently again.

The partnering of Guide Dogs first two wheelchair guide dog teams is a clear illustration of our lifelong commitment of service to our graduates.

Guide Dogs' Custom Needs Training Program was developed in the 1990s. It involves schooling a dog to perform tasks in addition to guidework, often in an alternative manner to the one usually taught. It often requires a longer training program for each dog in addition to specialized instruction for each student.

Other examples of custom needs training include training a dog for an individual who only has the use of one arm, or who has severe balance problems, in addition to their vision loss.

Guide Dogs for the Blind continues to be a leader in innovative training. We'd like to thank the generous donors who have made this intensive and creative work possible. We continue to seek grants and contributions to assist us in furthering our goal of ensuring independent mobility for our graduates.

This article was sent by Michele Pouliot of Guide Dogs for the Blind - MPouliot@guidedogs.com

UNCLE HARRY

Donald McCaig

After fifteen years trialing and training sheepdogs, I have come to wonder why people believe that a dogs' emotional life is so much less complicated than our own.

Harry is a powerful, shortcoated, ugly black and tan sheepdog. His head's so big some people think he's a pit bull. Every day we work sheep on our farm and on weekends to relax, we go to sheepdog trials. Harry's a natural dog, a pleasure to handle, and a bit of a know-it-all. A couple years ago, Harry was 34th of 178 dogs at the National Handler's Finals, the World Series of sheepdog trials.

At seven, Harry is our second oldest male and serves as dog shop steward. When I scold any dog, Harry puts his head on my knee and urges forbearance. Our latest litter of pups was born in the deep dark wintertime and sometimes, you have to put those pups outdoors RIGHT NOW but the farm borders Game Commission land and to a hungry bobcat fat puppies look like breakfast. Dark or light, whenever we pushed the puppies into the snow Uncle Harry went along to protect them. Uncle Harry made sure they didn't stray far outdoors and back in the house, if a puppy started fussing -be it two or three in the morning - Harry would bump open the bedroom door and jump on my chest and let me know there was a puppy in distress.

Harry and I have traveled thousands of miles to sheepdog trials, him snoozing on the front seat beside me. Harry knows how to behave in motels, hotels, livestock markets, bookstores, libraries, chutes and pens, TV stations, college classrooms, New York City, Washington and dozens of different trial fields.

In motels, I take one bed, Harry takes the other. One night, some people in the next motel room had a new puppy with them and at four am Harry was pawing my chest, wondering why I wasn't letting that poor puppy outside, was I deaf or something?

In the last couple years, we've been doing worse at the sheepdog trials. Competition is stiff and I am a mediocre handler, but in trial after trial, Harry does less well than I expected and I had come to think his National Finals performance was a fluke. . I was looking forward to the Edgeworth Trial. Good sheep, beautiful course, and, not incidently, a trial that rewards natural dogs. It's a 650 yard outrun up a breathtakingly steep hill and the dog is out of sight of the handler until it reaches its sheep. Four years ago, when Harry ran that course, he was beautiful and if I'd needed two commands to bring the sheep to my feet I'd not needed three.

On Saturday when Harry ran it was cool and though a light wind made the sheep spooky they weren't too bad. It takes nearly two minutes for the dog to get up that hill behind his sheep and those minutes seemed long to me, a lifetime. Harry made a perfect outrun and with my eyes shaded, I could see Harry and two sheep drifting off downhill, but three remained where they'd been and I whistled Harry to stop and go back for

them but he paid me no heed and his two sheep dawdled on down the slope. Harry was with them, sure, but he had no control of them. We retired. One of the three ewes he'd shunned had been a tough old beast and I figured Harry had opted for the two drifting off as the easier task. A sheepdog who doesn't bring all his sheep is a moral failure, yes, but every dog has his off days.

On Sunday there was no wind, cool day, terrific sheep - a chance for a fine run. Harry went out wider than before and it was easily three minutes before the sheep started to move. I whistled Harry to where he needed to be but he lagged. I yelled, "Hey!" and "Harry!" I shouted his commands. He took my commands too late or not at all, put no pressure on the sheep and for the second day in a row they simply drifted. I haven't been so angry at a dog in years. After we came off the field another handler said to me, "I'll bet you can't wait to get him home."

I replied, "I believe we'll do some attitude adjustment." No, I didn't lay a hand on Harry, physical or vocal, because, honestly, I couldn't think what to do. There's not much point making a correction unless you know what problem you're correcting. I had run out of dog before I'd offered my first command and had no idea in the world why. I managed to pat Harry's head before I went to bed but it was an effort. The next day our vet told me Harry has a heart murmur, an enlarged heart, probably a defective valve. After that long hard outrun Harry's heartbeat became irregular. I ran out of dog because Harry ran out of heart.

I am grateful that in my anger, I didn't raise my hand to Harry. When things go badly and an attitude adjustment is required, it isn't always the dog who needs it. So, Harry won't go to trials anymore. He'll live out his life on the farm and, until the night I pack my bags to take some other dog to a sheepdog trial I believe he'll be happy.

After a trial last January, Harry and I stayed with friends in Charlottesville. At midnight, when we went outside snow was falling, two or three inches, muffling the suburbs. I walked down the middle of the unmarked street while Harry ranged on both sides, over whitened lawns, underneath snow bulked pine trees. Some of the houses had security lights with motion sensors and wherever Harry ranged, lights blinked on. Everything ahead of us was darkness. Behind, wherever Harry had passed, it was light.

Donald McCaig is a much respected author on sheepdogs and their people. Donald can be found enjoying his dogs and sheep at Yucatec Farm, Williamsville, Virginia 24487 USA. He is also a Professional Member of IACP.

What We're Learning About Bloat

A Review – Shirley Greene

For over 30 years breeders and owners of large dogs have been concerned about reducing their dogs' risk of bloat. Here's some generalized information to help you understand new information learned from a Purdue University study.

Bloat (Gastric Dilation – Torsion Complex)

The term "Bloat" refers to any of three conditions:

- Acute gastric dilation
- Torsion
- Volvulus

Bloat, also known as the overfeeding or overeating syndrome, involves a swelling up of the stomach from gas, fluid or both (acute gastric dilation). Once distended, the stomach may twist abruptly on the long axis. If it does twist, but the twist is 180 degrees or less, it is called a *torsion*. A twist greater than 180 degrees is called a *volvulus*.

Signs and Symptoms of Non-Torsion Bloat – Acute Gastric Dilation

The signs are excessive salivation and drooling, extreme restlessness, attempts to vomit or pass stool and evidence of abdominal pain – the dog whines and groans when you push on the stomach wall. The abdomen will be distended.

If your dog can belch or vomit, quite likely the condition is not caused by a twist. You must take the dog to a veterinarian where a long rubber or plastic stomach tube will be passed into the stomach. If there is a rush of air from the tube, the swelling in the abdomen will subside and there is almost immediate relief.

Signs and Symptoms of Torsion or Volvulus – A LIFE AND DEATH SITUATION

The initial signs are those of acute gastric dilation, except the distress is more marked. The dog breathes rapidly, has cold and pale mouth membranes and may even collapse. The *shock-like* signs are caused by strangulation of the blood supply to the stomach and the spleen.

In torsion or volvulus, a tube cannot be passed into the stomach. The only treatment is **IMMEDIATE** surgery and you must rush the dog to closest veterinary surgeon.

Preventing Bloat – The Purdue University Study

Many measures have been recommended and tried, but until recently there has been little scientific evidence that any worked. Now, thanks to the *Purdue University Bloat Study*, that picture is starting to change.

Supported by grants from the American Kennel Club's Canine Health Foundation, Morris Animal Foundation and 11 parent breed clubs, this five-year study is the first of its kind. And it is

yielding information on what breeders and owners should and shouldn't do to reduce the risk of bloat.

**Note:* This information is specific to large breed dogs and additional information on giant breeds can also be found in the *Purdue Study*.

The Purdue researchers were led by veterinarian and epidemiologist Dr. Lawrence T. Glickman. These findings should cause breeders and owners of large dogs to step back and re-think bloat prevention information.

*One of the more important findings was that there are significant differences between the "large breeds" studied (Akita, Bloodhound, Collie, Irish Setter, Rottweiler, **Standard Poodle** and Weimaraner) and the "giant breeds" studied (Great Dane, Irish Wolfhound, Newfoundland and Saint Bernard).

The results reported here apply to the "large breeds" only.

Old Thoughts: What We Used to Think About Bloat

Over the years, breeders, owners and veterinarians have developed a body of lore about what causes bloat and how it can be prevented. Here are some of those things which we now know are **NOT** correct, i.e. bloat is caused by -

- Too much exercise on a full stomach.
- Overloading the stomach.
- Swallowing air when eating.

We **USED** to think that bloat could be prevented or reduced by

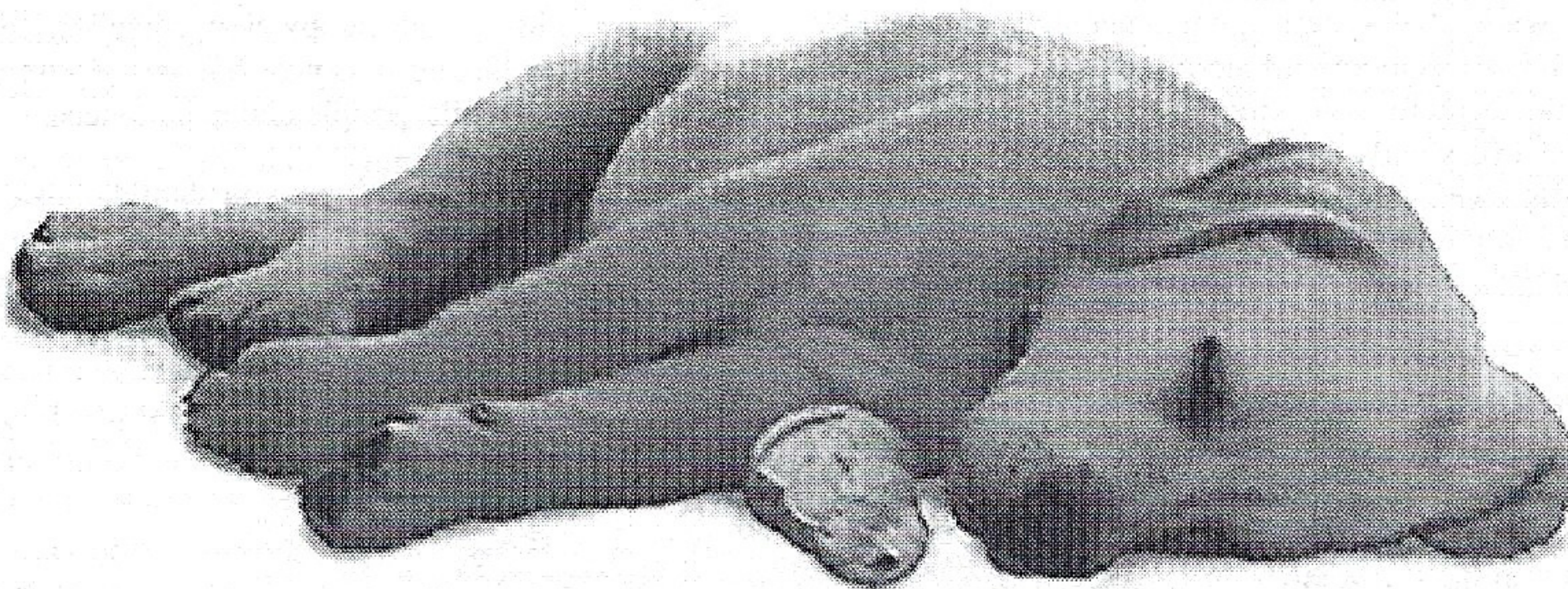
- Wetting dry kibble so that it won't swell in the stomach.
- Raising the food dish above floor level.

Weight, breed size, the ratio of the depth of the thorax to its width and stress were not significantly associated with the risk of bloat in *large* breed dogs. In addition, several measures that have long been recommended to reduce the risk of bloat were found to have no effect.

Factors That Make **NO** Difference

These measures, long been thought to reduce the risk of bloat, were found to have no effect:

- Restricting exercise before or after eating
- Restricting water intake before and/or after meals
- Feeding two or more meals per day
- Moistening dry kibble before feeding



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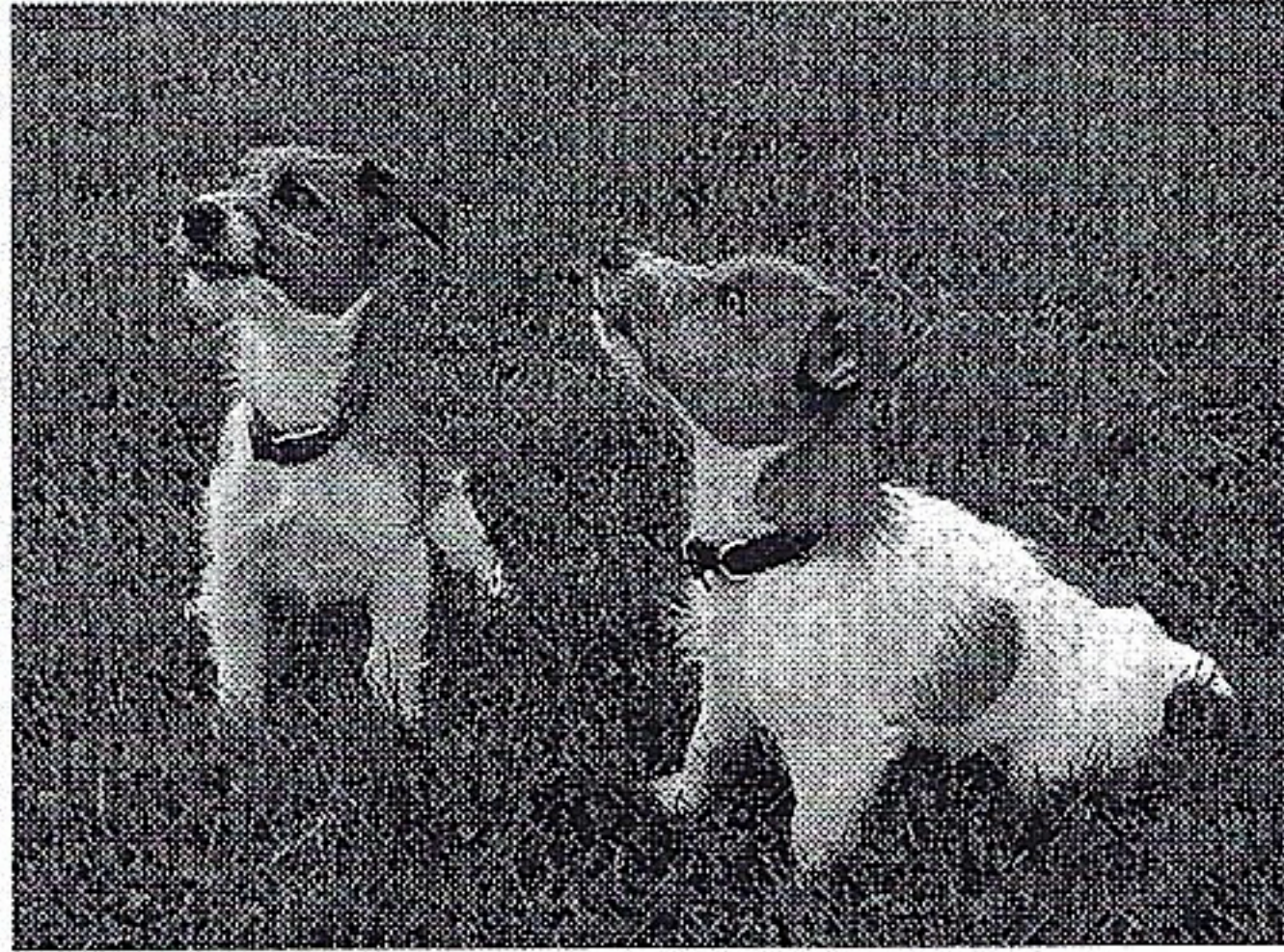
The Importance of Socializing Your Dog

Lauren Dube

Have you ever wondered why some dogs just love people and other animals, while others seem agitated and even annoyed by them? As an animal behaviorist, I am often asked why this happens. The answer is really quite simple; some dogs have been socialized from a very early age, while others haven't been. As a responsible pet owner, socializing your dog may be one of the most important things you can do, and it may even save their life.

To ensure proper socialization of your puppy, it is important to start early. Once your puppy has received his or her first series of puppy shots it would be a very good idea to enroll them in a Puppy Pre-Kindergarten program. These programs are designed to allow puppies to interact with other puppies and humans in a very intimate setting. Most classes will also teach basic behaviors, like 'sit' and 'down' and can help troubleshoot basic puppy development issues.

Conditioning your puppy to new experiences is another important way of socializing them. Diversity of exposure will help to prepare them for anything. A simple trip to the veterinarian's office or the groomer's will do wonders. Across the country, more and more dog parks and dog-friendly beaches are popping up. These offer wonderful opportunities to socialize your



dog. A thorough search may also highlight cafés and malls that may allow you to bring your puppy along. The key here is to go to as many different locations as possible and expose your puppy to different sounds, smells, people and experiences.

At around five months of age, you should consider enrolling your puppy in a Basic Obedience class. These are usually conducted as a group with approximately 8-10 dogs comprising a class. Here your dog will learn basic commands and continue to gain socialization skills. It is important to get all members of the family involved in the training process. A variety of handlers will also help your dog to feel comfortable in differing social situations. Basic classes also help to build your dog's confidence and strengthen the bond between you.

Any discussion about socialization should emphasize that it could make a life-saving difference. Dogs that are easy to approach and have little fear of humans or other animals are more adoptable and easier to rescue in times of crisis. This was made tragically evident during the wildfires devastating Southern California in 2003.

Article by Lauren Dube, of Four Paws Training and Natural Health located in San Diego, California. IACP Member.

What We're Learning About Bloat—A Review Cont'd

Factors That DO Make A Difference

These four (4) factors ARE associated with an increased risk of bloat in large breed dogs:

- **Raising the food dish** more than doubled the risk for bloat.
- **Speed of eating:** Dogs rated by their owners as very fast eaters had a 38% increased risk of bloat.
- **Age:** The study found that risk increased by 20% with each year of age. Owners should be more alert to early signs of bloat as their dogs grow older.
- **Family History:** Having a first-degree relative (parent, sibling or offspring) that had bloated increased a dog's risk by 63%.

Conclusions

The Purdue research team concluded these are the things you can do to prevent bloat:

- The strongest recommendation to prevent GVD (bloat) should be to not breed a dog that has a first

degree relative that has had bloat. This places a special responsibility on an owner to inform the breeder should their dog bloat.

- Do not raise the feeding dish.
- SLOW the dog's speed of eating.

Another report from the research team provides data on dietary factors and how they may or may not be associated with bloat risk.

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Shirley Green from Idaho writes regularly for breed and national dog magazines plus SafeHands Journal. She is a member of IACP

Relationship: The Hidden Motivator

Chad Mackin

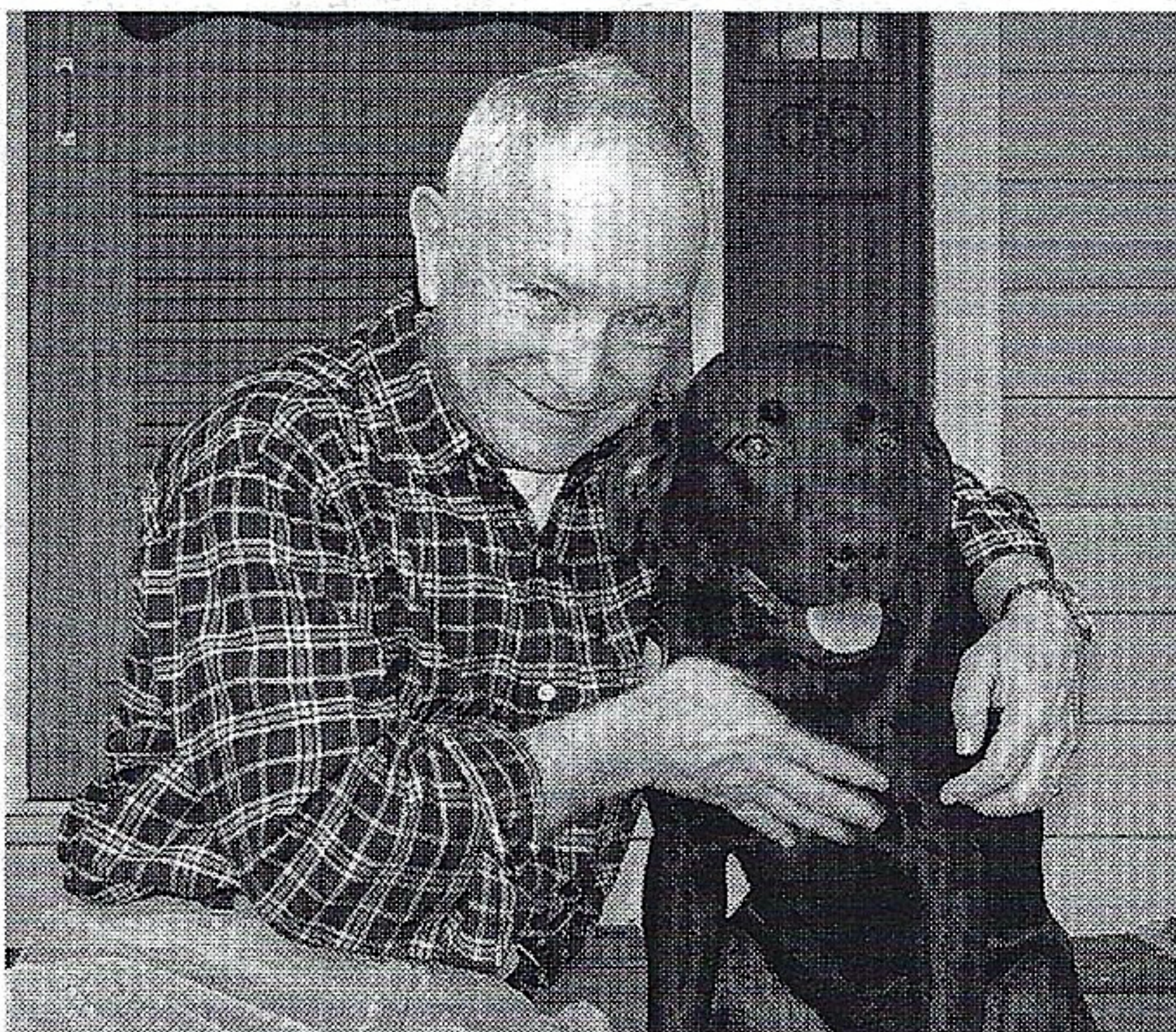
The moment we start teaching the dog we are presented with a problem. How do we get the dog interested in learning what we are going to teach? The fact is that the dog will not learn unless he is motivated to learn. In a sense the first "command" that our dogs must respond to is "learn this". Think about it. In order for a dog to learn, he must put forth some effort. It may require a minor effort, or a great effort, but anyone who has spent enough time on the end of the leash will tell you that some dogs simply want to learn and others couldn't care less. Dogs that are characterized as stubborn, dumb, or hardheaded are often simply not motivated to learn what they are being taught.

So the first question we must ask ourselves is, "How do I get my dog interested in what I am going to teach?" Most people rely on using outside (extrinsic) reinforcers to motivate the dog, such as giving the dog a treat, or a pat on the head, or using some type of negative "punishment". All effective training involves these extrinsic motivators and they are certainly valuable tools. However, it is my opinion that these motivators are largely misunderstood. As a result their potential is rarely realized. Worse, improper use of extrinsic motivators can contribute to certain behavior problems and even long-term emotional disorders.

The common understanding of extrinsic motivators is that the dog learns in an effort to earn the reward, avoid the correction, or earn the reward while avoiding the correction. In other words, the dog's primary motivator is the reward or the avoidance of the correction. I disagree with this assumption.

Alfie Kohn questioned the value of extrinsic motivators in his book "Punished by Rewards". For example he states, "Few readers will be shocked by the news that extrinsic motivators are a poor substitute for genuine interest in what one is doing." This, by itself, should be enough cause to reexamine our thoughts regarding motivation, but there is more. Kohn goes on to say "What is more likely to be far more disturbing is the further point that rewards, like punishments, actually undermine the intrinsic motivation that promotes optimal performance." This statement might sound absurd at first, but if you think about it you will begin to see the logic. As Kohn explains "...anything presented as a prerequisite for something else – that is, as a means toward some other end – comes to be less desirable. 'Do this and you'll get that' automatically devalues the 'this.'"

Kohn's words present us with a problem. We can readily see that proper reinforcement does seem to create more interest in learning, but we also know that just the opposite should be true. If we make the sit command nothing more than a method to earn a reward, we devalue the sit command. It becomes a means to an end for the dog. Likewise if we make it simply a way to avoid a correction, the word "sit" will automatically become a source of stress for the dog. Yet we see dogs enthusiastically sit when told to do so under all sorts of reinforcement methods. So what is happening?



The answer lies in the most powerful motivator we, as trainers, have at our disposal: relationship. The dog has an ongoing interest in his relationship with us. A scratch on the head, a treat, or a judicious leash correction becomes a sign of the state of that relationship. The reward is not the motivation. It is a message. The reward lets the dog know that you are pleased with him. Now, I don't for a minute wish to suggest dogs just want to please. I have spent too many years with a leash in my hand to buy into that myth. If the relationship is properly structured however, the dog does have an ongoing interest in

maintaining the quality of that relationship.

The dog wants to learn because he likes you. He enjoys interacting with you because you are his pack mate and leader. Dogs are fundamentally relationship driven. In the best dog training the dog does not view the commands as a means to an end. They are not a way to earn a reward or a way to avoid a correction. They are part of a valuable interaction. *The relationship represented by the interaction between handler and dog is the reward.* Praise, food, and leash corrections are ways that we signal the status of the relationship with the dog.

Consider the exercise of the "sit restraint" as presented in "The Art of Raising a Puppy". The handler sits on the floor with the dog in front of him and places the dog in a sit position. The handler then tells the dog to stay. At this time the dog does not know the meaning of the word stay, but he will soon learn. The handler will talk to the dog in a soothing voice while calmly petting him. Every time the dog gets up, the handler changes his voice to a less friendly tone and says "no." He then physically places the dog back in the sit posi-

Yes, I See What You Mean

Kris Butler

Prior to kindergarten, my children had learned and rehearsed specific word choices to politely express that they were uncomfortable with a situation. My children were assured repeatedly that their parents would support their actions as long as they had made an attempt to politely communicate their concerns. Over time, this simple social skill proved to be invaluable. I was surprised by adults, including school administrators, who admitted to being caught off guard by a young child who communicated effectively in order to resolve a stressful situation.

Even a professional educator can fail to observe a child's non-verbal communication such as fidgeting, excessive noise, or decreased activity. Any of these symptoms, without words, should clearly indicate discomfort. Sadly, because children are not always taught to verbalize effectively, their needs can go unnoticed until the discomfort and tension lead to inappropriate behavior - which usually results in trouble for an already anxious child.

Likewise, without guidance from trainers and obedience instructors, handlers remain unaware of their dogs' language, leaving the unfortunate animals in a family where nobody understands what they are trying to communicate. In addition to appropriate canine behavior, professional trainers and instructors shoulder the responsibility for teaching their human clients to observe and respond to communication signals offered by their dogs.

Kinesics is the study of non-verbal communication (body language). There are two elements to any communication: the delivery and the reception of the message. Body language enables any species to send messages, note reception of messages, and avoid conflict.

The process of communication is complicated. It becomes even more complicated when different species (humans and dogs in this case) have different interpretations for the signals included in the vocabulary of body language. Often, humans do not recognize their dogs' signals or misinterpret them as disinterest or disobedience; yet each signal is part of an important message.

During training, dogs are likely to communicate respect, appeasement, or discomfort. These "calming signals" include behaviors such as licking their lips, licking people, yawning, averting eye contact, turning their heads away, turning their bodies away, lying down, or rolling over. Calming signals are meant to convey "I know that we are in each other's territory, but don't worry, I mean you no harm." Sometimes calming signals convey "I am uncomfortable."

Sometimes dogs signal respect or appeasement by engaging themselves in activities that seem to have nothing to do with the strangers in their territory. These behaviors, often called "displacement signals," include sniffing the ground, self-grooming, scratching, or perhaps chewing on something. Displacement signals are meant to convey, "We are here in this

same territory, but don't be angry. I am not acknowledging you. See? I am totally doing something else." Doing something else also seems to lessen the stress associated with dogs' perceptions of inappropriate social contact. Unfortunately, handlers who do not understand the communication taking place might punish displacement behaviors.

Dogs also communicate fear. Their fear must be acknowledged early on or those fears can escalate into behaviors that look like aggression to humans. Barks and growls convey fear more often than they convey aggression. "You are in my territory and I am afraid. Move away!" It is easy enough for most people to believe that cornered or trapped dogs might react strongly out of fear, but people often don't recognize that trained dogs perceive that they *are* trapped when they are on leash or when they have been told to stay. If they feel that leaving is not an option for them, their perception is that they are trapped. The perception of being trapped leaves fearful dogs few options other than expressing, "Move away!"

In addition to respect and discomfort, dogs also react physically to stress. Even under the best of circumstances, learning is stressful. As if being introduced to new concepts weren't enough, dogs in training must also tolerate unfamiliar training environments, communication from other dogs that might seem threatening, handler behaviors that are inconsistent with what dogs are used to, and, perhaps, expectations that are too high in the moment.

Stress is not a dirty word. It is merely the body's way of coping with change and demand. Prolonged or frequent periods of stress produce anxiety. When any individual is in a state of anxiety, normal thinking stops and behaviors change. To unskilled observers, anxious dogs often appear to be disobedient dogs.

Individual behaviors will vary, but general signs of stress include changes in communication patterns and nonspecific body complaints. Shifts in canine communication patterns are detected through posture, body movement, head movement, and eye movement. Nonspecific body complaints that indicate stress reactions include sweating paws, salivating, panting, yawning, shaking off, sudden loss of hair, restlessness, withdrawal, muscle tenseness, suspiciousness, aggression, hyper-alertness, or intensified startle reflex,

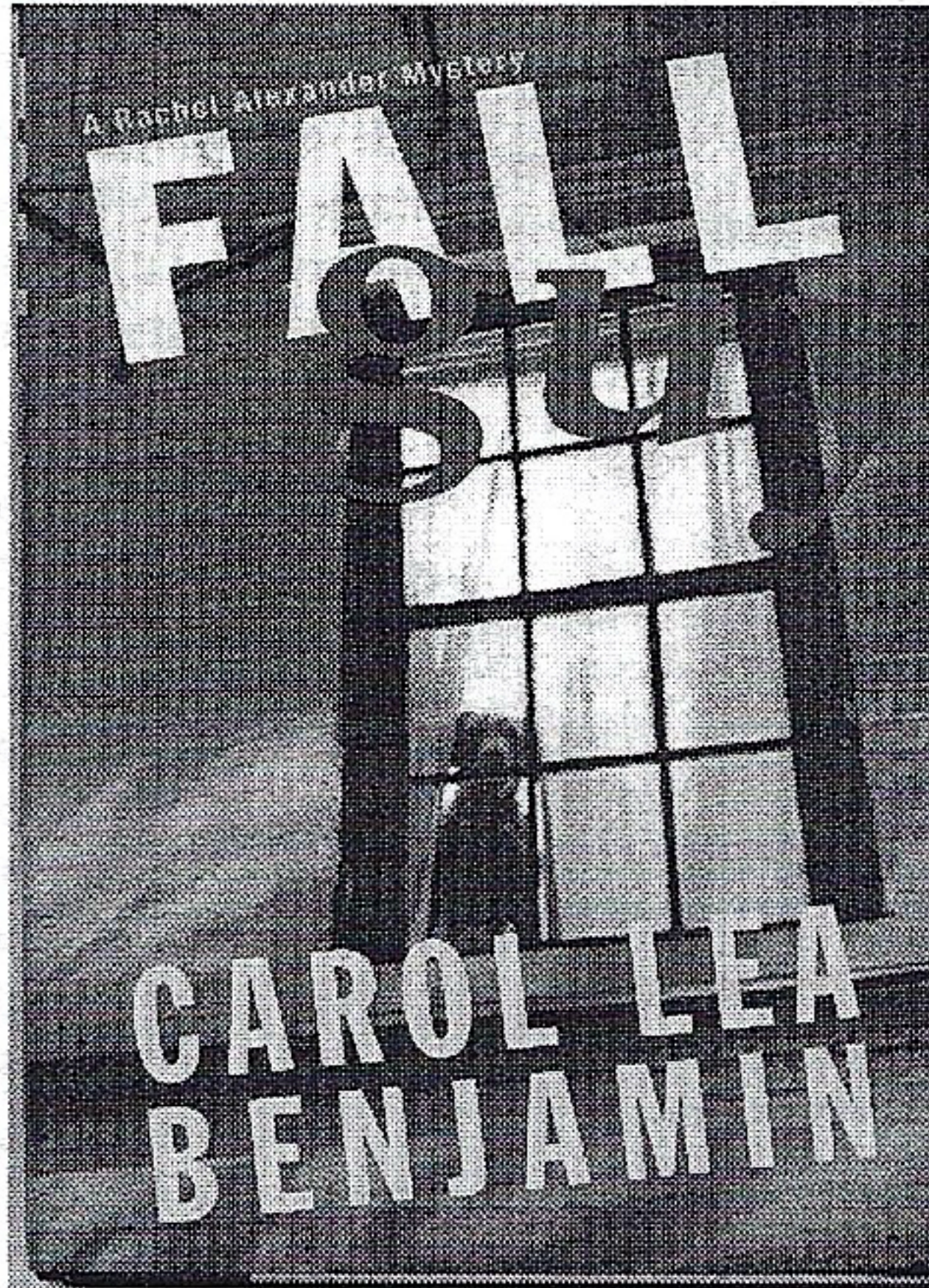
Adding to the social stress associated with training, instructors often incorporate exercises that are intrinsically stressful to dogs - just because those exercises have *always* been used. Many widely used training exercises were published and made popular by Blanche Saunders in the 1940s in response to the growing popularity of obedience competitions. Although the "how" for training dogs has evolved since the popularity of Blanche Saunders early training books, the

BOOK REVIEW: Fall Guy by Carol Lea Benjamin

William Morrow, An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

This is the seventh in the Rachel Alexander mystery series and before you ask; yes, I have read every single one of them. Up until now my favorite was Long Good Boy. The dog training scenes were great and I would have been willing to read it just for those scenes. How nice the surrounding material was a good read. Then along came Fall Guy.

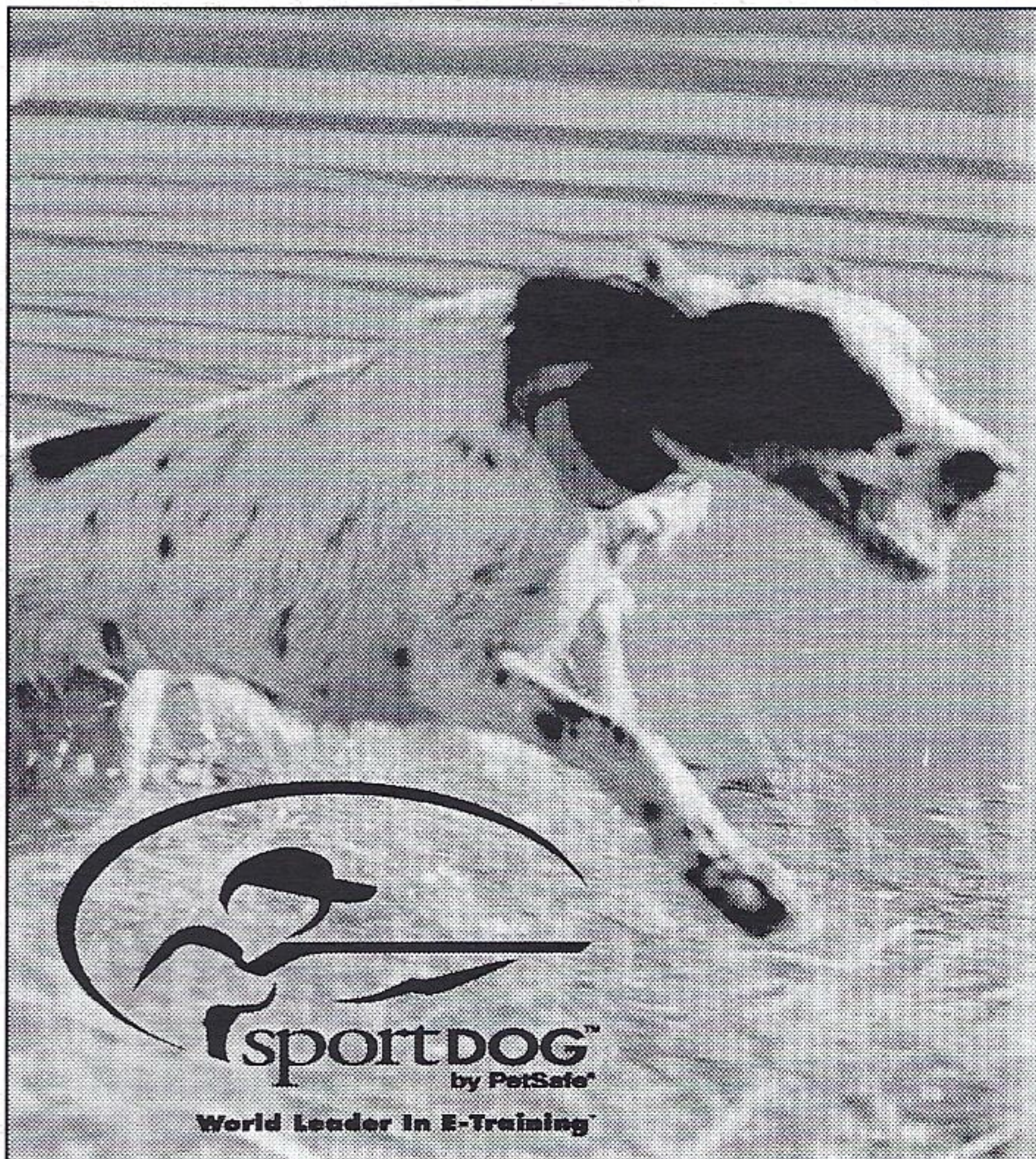
My copy arrived just before I was scheduled for a 4-hour flight. What wonderful timing, I got to take one of my favorite authors with me. Now mind you, I like a good mystery as much as the next mystery aficionado. The four hours out and then the four hours back slipped by quickly since I was totally engrossed in a good mystery. But, wait! This wasn't just any mystery. Once again, the main character of the series, Rachel Alexander, captured my imitation and better yet, Carol Lea didn't let me down. She has once again managed to slip in some darn good dog training. Nope, I'm not going to tell you what it is or how she did it. You are just going to have to buy a copy of Fall Guy and read it for your-



self. Dashiell, Rachel's canine sidekick, is quite the working partner and Carol Lea has seen fit to have Rachel teach him an entirely new task. If that wasn't enough, Dashiell took on additional duties on his own.

Not one single review I have read about "Fall Guy" bothers to do more than figuratively pat Dash on his rather boxy head. In fact, some of them actually praise this book because and here I quote, "...keeps the tail-wagging to a minimum". Phooey on them! Dash and Rachael's training are the best darn parts of the book. No, I lie. The rest of the book is really good as well. In fact, for once I wasn't able to figure out "who-done-it" until almost the very last page. This one is good enough to read more than once. You can read it as a mystery and then go back and read it for the really good dog stuff. Oh yes, definitely one to put on your gift list for the season. Happy reading!

Review by Margot Woods.
IACP Professional member
& Author



New Tools for your Box!

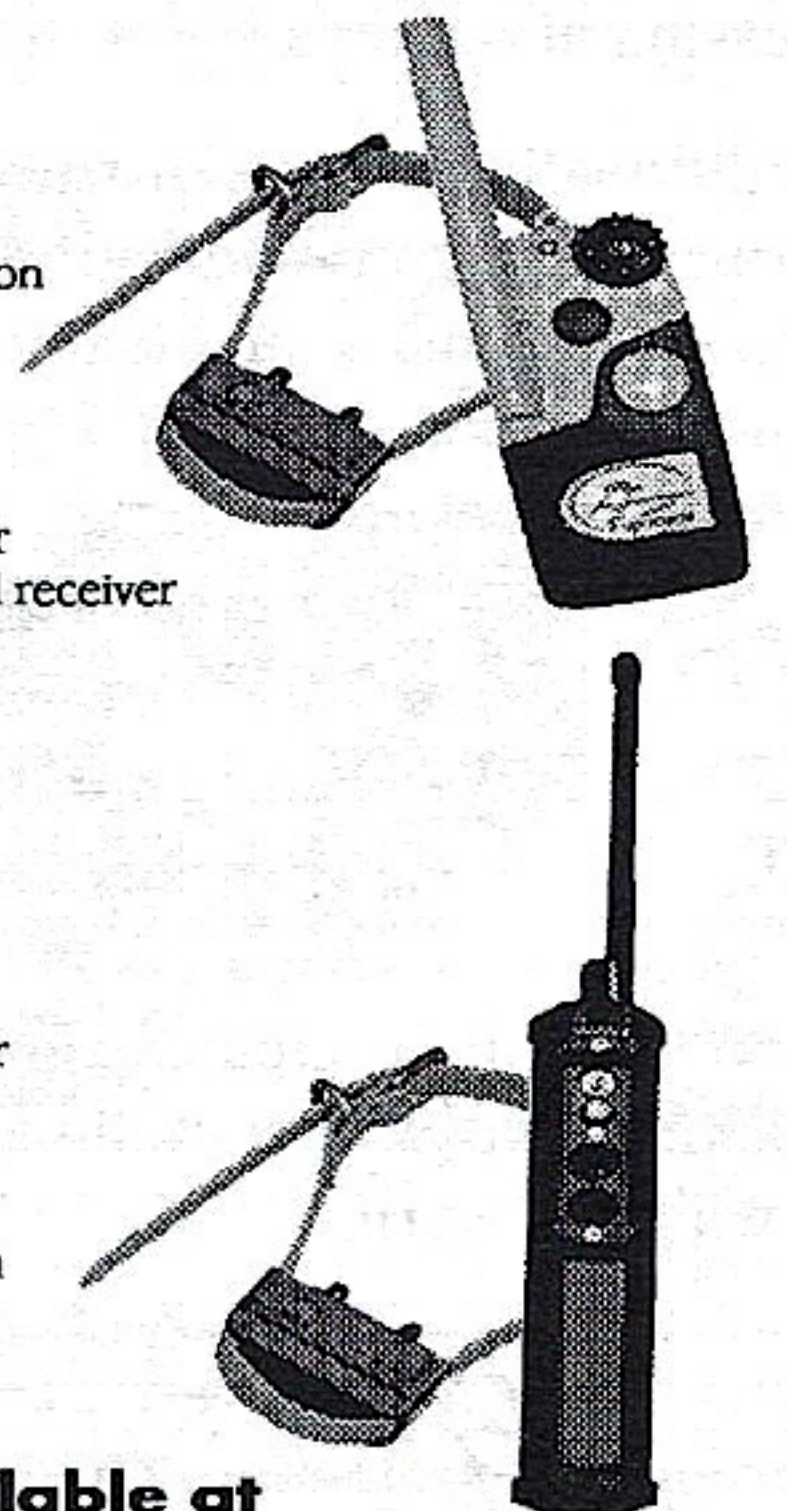
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Yes, I See What You Mean—Cont'd

specific exercises and expected responses remain unchanged in many pet dog training programs today.

For example, it's natural that coming straight toward, and sitting directly in front of, a rigidly-standing handler causes a dog to feel uncomfortable. Approaching rapidly from the front in a straight line can signal disrespect, even aggression, to a dog. Dogs naturally communicate respect and non-aggression by approaching at an angle or curve and moving (or sitting, if necessary) off to a side, perhaps followed by turning their heads away, perhaps licking lips.

Calming behaviors such as approaching in an arc and positioning to the side are, indeed, considered inappropriate in competitions; yet many training programs still teach recalls that must be performed in a rapid straight-to-the-front manner - even though most families have no competitive aspirations. More user-friendly recall options might result in easier, more effective recalls. Dogs can report promptly, stylishly, and *comfortably* to their handlers if dogs are allowed to approach respectfully at an angle or curve, and then either arc around behind the handler or make a complete horseshoe turn at the handler's side, ending with a sit at the handler's side, facing the same direction as the handler. These relaxed exercises incorporate obedience trial "finishes" as pieces of fluid recall processes, without demanding a straight-in approach to handlers' fronts. Likewise, teaching "stays" to pet dogs becomes more user-friendly when obedience trial objectives are replaced with more dog-friendly exercises. By looking away or averting eye contact and returning in a curve or at an angle back to their dogs' sides, handlers can signal respect while teaching their dogs to stay.

I appreciate early training books for offering ordinary people ways to teach their dogs at a time when not much information was available. Effective, results-oriented training is no less essential for every dog today. However, we can create better learning environments by evaluating the specific exercises we use to teach basic concepts and considering what our canine students are expressing about the effects of training on them.

Additionally, today's instructors must teach their human students about canine communication signals as they relate to respect, stress, discomfort, and learning. Every beginning-level obedience course and boarding school program can and should include information that empowers human family members to identify

- their dogs' calming signals, displacement signals, and signs of stress
- what their dogs are responding to
- appropriate handler responses to decrease discomfort and stress

I can think of no greater gift to offer our canine and human clients than two-way communication and comfortable environments in which to learn.

*Parts of this article were excerpted from Kris Butler's book **Therapy Dogs Today: Their Gifts, Our Obligation.***

Dog Training - Cont'd

I am lucky to have found a trainer who cares more about the dog/human relationship than she does about perfect sits and downs. This trainer uses whatever tool or technique is best suited for the particular dog. There is no "one-size fits all" training, and the training plan for each dog is continually modified until the desired combination is found. Most of the time, these modifications take place during group class and all the students benefit from the demonstrations and explanations. It helps people see that all dogs, like people, are individuals.

With my own three German Shepherds, I use a prong collar on Sara, a Martingale on Tracy, and an e-collar on Skeeter. Each collar is what that particular dog needs. Sara and Skeeter get food as a reward, Tracy would pass up a T-bone steak in favor of a tennis ball, so her reward is a tennis ball on a rope.

As a result of these individualized training plans, I've been a client for six years. That's right, six years. Six years of class fees every 8 weeks - and not for just one dog.

Which brings me to my second point. On an eight-week cycle of classes, that's 6 classes per year. Multiply that by three dogs. That's eighteen classes a year. Now multiply that by your class fee. I'm just one client. And the classes I do with my dogs are FUN. FUN for all of us. We do Agility, Rally Obedience and Precision Obedience. All of this training allows me to sharpen my dogs' skills, but in a FUN way.

And I'm not alone in this desire to spend FUN, quality time with my dogs. We started with a core of 30 humans who own 49 dogs between them. And each one of these students and dogs has been training with the same trainer for over two years. Many of us have been with this trainer for five or more years, and we constantly refer new clients. What would a faithful client base like that do for your business?

Don't think this is all just "fluff" training to give bored housewives something to do. We have dogs competing at Excellence level in Agility. We have dogs who have earned their "Rally-O" titles and are just waiting for January 2005 to compete in AKC Rally. We provide Flyball demonstrations at half time during local sporting events. And we have FUN doing it.

I hope you will accept these random thoughts by a pet owner in the spirit in which they are intended. Sometimes it takes an "outsider's" view to provide a new perspective.

I don't consider myself to be a great trainer for the very reason that I don't think my four years of piano lessons qualifies me to play at Carnegie Hall. I simply don't have the talent. I know the mechanics, the equipment and the theories, but I don't have the ability to get inside dogs' heads. But I am a great pet owner.

Maggi Oswald is an assistant trainer with FamilyDog Obedience, based in San Antonio, Texas. She has three German Shepherds.

BOOK REVIEW: Therapy Dogs Today, Their Gifts, Our Obligations

Kris Butler, Funpuddle Publishing Associates, Norman, OK

The entire therapy dog movement is one that has been close to my heart from its very inception. To me, the idea that dogs no longer have to be smuggled into a health care facility or school has enormous appeal. Having made such a statement I then have to confess to the worries that have chased and haunted me since the very beginning, are the dog's needs being considered at all? Are the visits structured to meet the needs of all three parties? The three parties I have in mind being; client, handler and dog.

Just the subtitle alone, "Their Gifts, Our Obligations" hit a strong cord in both my heart and head. A slim 88 page read, Kris Butler's little book would a first glance appear to be a fast easy read. It's not what it appears because it is chock full of much thought provoking material.

Starting with the subtitle, "Their Gifts, Our Obligations" the need to think about what Kris has written is apparent. I am willing to bet I have mulled over the implications of both the gift and the obligation parts for hours and hours. I wonder just how many new therapy dog teams have a human member that has even given a passing thought to the obligation side of the therapy dog team equation. How many people think the obligation or obligations referred to are directed exclusively toward the clients? Kris has looked at the oft overlooked or forgotten part, the dog. How does the dog fit into the picture? Bet you think that is a strange question to be asking since the entire point of therapy dog work is having a dog to facilitate any therapy

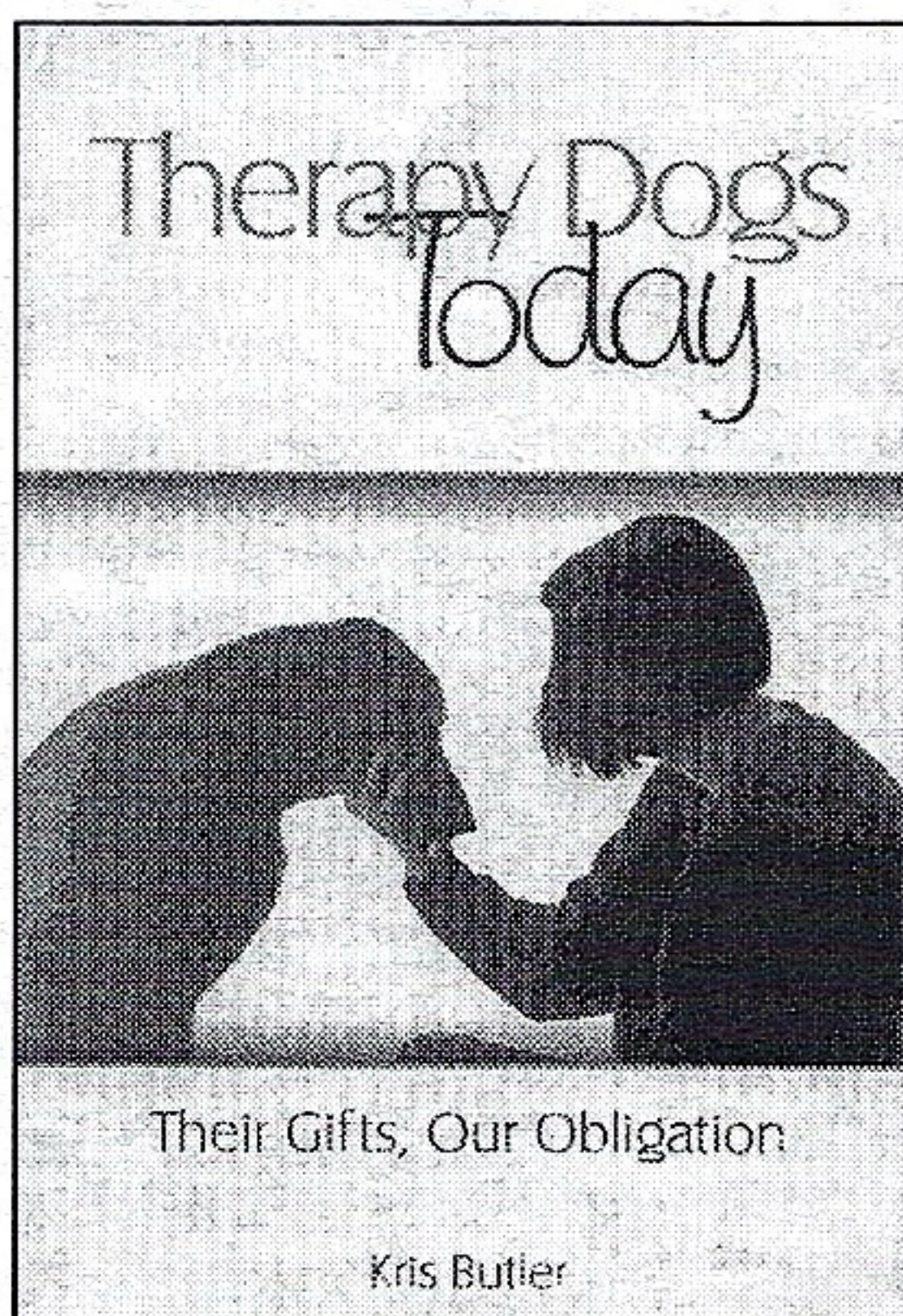
My complaint with Therapy Dogs Today is that it didn't dig deep enough, nor were the wonderful thoughts present fleshed out to the fullest degree possible. I wish Kris would come back and address the issue again. Using her current book as the foundation and develop the thesis of gift/obligation to its maximum potential.

Should you have any thoughts of involvement in a therapy dog program you need to read this book. In fact, I feel so strongly on this point that I will say it again. You need to read this book. Here is a quote worth pondering at length. "Ethical handlers develop time frames and environmental policies that allow their dogs to visit only within environments that are comfortable for them.." Goodness, that is a real mouthful and a thoughtful person would want to think that any ethical handler would indeed consider the needs of the dog when choosing the working environment. Sadly, all too often that is not the case and the dog is the last thing considered, even while at the very same time the dog is the first reason for ar-

ranging the visit.

I put "Therapy Dogs Today" aside, thought about what I had read and then picked it back up and read it again. It is a book that demands more than one reading. As the focal point for group discussion it shines. This is a book well worth adding to your library.

Review by Margot Woods Professional Member IACP and Author



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Motivation Cont'd

tion. There is no physical correction, no unpleasantness, nothing to convince the dog to stay except for the kind words and pleasing touch of the handler. The dog does learn to stay, usually in a few minutes.

Let us look at this technique in terms of motivation. Why does the dog want to learn what we are teaching? Some might suggest that the dog wants the physical praise, that he is enjoying the attention. I am sure this is true, but I am also sure this is not the primary motivator. It is not hard to demonstrate this. The reason we have to stop the "reward" of praise and petting is precisely because the dog is trying to get away from us. To suggest that he would rather get the praise than go away when he obviously is trying to go away is contradictory. We simply cannot conclude that the dog stays only because he wants to continue the praise and affection. We have to accept that there is something else at work. Likewise, we cannot conclude that the threat of physical punishment is the motivator either. The answer lies elsewhere.

If we look at the praise and the affection (and the cessation thereof) as signals of the condition of an ongoing relationship, the puppy's response makes perfect sense. When we stop the praise and affection and we change our tone of voice, we communicate to the dog that the state of the relationship is changing for the worse. We then put the dog back where he was and resume the praise and petting letting him know that everything has been set right again. It is this relationship that motivates the dog. *He will do what he pleases so long as the relationship remains unchanged.*

For the most part, the relationship is the base for dog's natural motivation to learn. Regardless of what the owner understands about this process, the dog is always seeking to improve the relationship, unless we inadvertently program him otherwise.

All dogs have three common desires, and these drives are the basis for most reinforcement. If we are to understand our options for motivating our dogs and why our choices are so important, we need to understand the basic drives that are shared by all dogs.

The drives that drive the dog

- ☐ Food drive
- ☐ Comfort drive
- ☐ Pack drive

Food drive: In the wild, dogs live a largely scavenger existence. They hunt and they forage, but are always, to some extent, at the mercy of their environment. They are very motivated by food. Food-based reinforcements rely on this drive for their success. So long as a dog is hungry, food will keep his attention. The food drive rarely shuts off; even when full, a dog often will keep scarfing treats. Food has proven to be a very valuable motivator and is extraordinarily popular, but many trainers discourage its use for various reasons. The most common reason is that they

see food reward as akin to bribery. There is no small amount of truth to this view either. Food reward is quite probably the most abused form of motivation available. I often see clients whose dogs refuse to work until they see the treat.

However, using food reward does not cause this problem; using food reward inappropriately or incorrectly causes it. Food rewards have their place in responsible dog training. Like anything else, the fact that they can be misused does not mean that all uses constitute misuse.

Comfort Drive: I used to call this the avoidance drive, but comfort drive more accurately describes its function. The comfort drive is the drive that causes the dog to seek the most comfortable existence. It is this drive that compels him to seek shelter against the elements. It is also the drive that compels him to avoid pain and discomfort. Any attempt to "punish" a dog is an appeal to the dog's comfort drive. "If you want to avoid this, then you had better. . . ."

Misuse of discomfort in an attempt to teach a dog to mind, however, is a common abuse, so much so that some trainers have denounced the concept of physically correcting a dog as barbaric and useless. The problem with this attitude is that anyone who has watched dogs interact for any length of time knows that dogs physically correct each other. It is part of their dynamic and, as such, we should recognize it as having a place in responsible training.

Why should we limit our shared vocabulary because the idea of physical correction offends our sensibilities? While leash corrections similarly target the dog's comfort drive, strictly speaking they are not punitive and usually are a useful training tool. Of course all corrections should be calibrated for the particular dog in question. If the correction is too harsh, the dog will be confused and/or fearful and the learning process will stop. The point at which correction becomes "too much" will differ for each dog.

Pack Drive: This is, in my opinion, the universal drive. Pack drive refers to the dog's desire to remain in good standing within the group. The pack drive is fundamentally tied to the other two drives and a hierarchical relationship exists among them.

The comfort drive cannot be satisfied unless the food drive is satisfied; one cannot be hungry and entirely comfortable at the same time. So, it could be said that the comfort drive is partially satisfied by the food drive.

However, because of the teamwork essential to acquiring food by hunting and scavenging dog packs, the food drive likely will not be satisfied outside of the pack. Given this, the pack drive also can be viewed as developing from the food drive – which is an outgrowth of the comfort drive.

Logical progression then may lead one to believe that the comfort drive is the all-encompassing drive, forcing the dog into a pack so food may be sought through strategies avail-



Sit.
Stay.
Kennel...

Fetch?

Roll over, please?

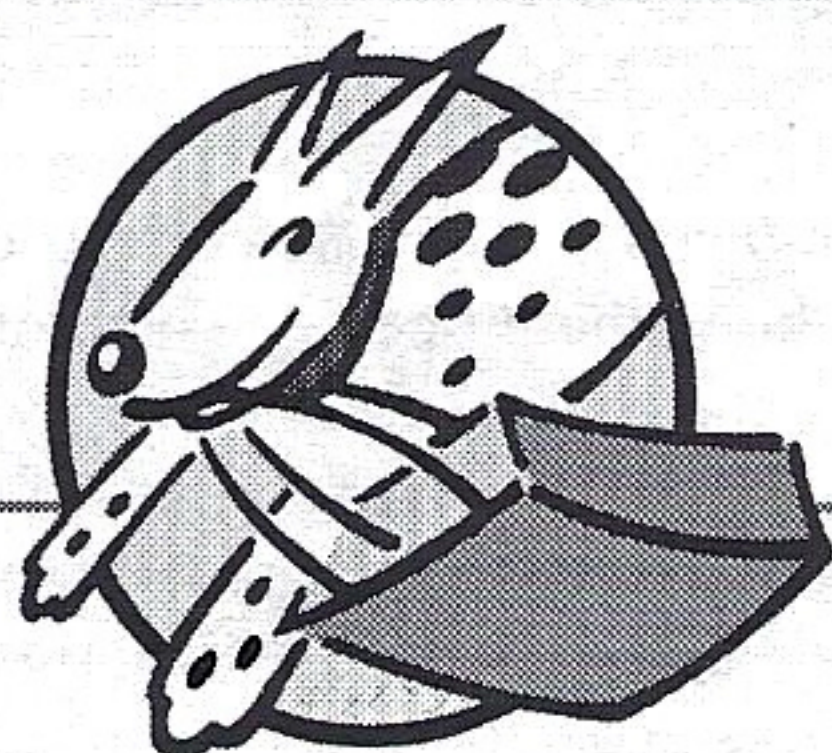
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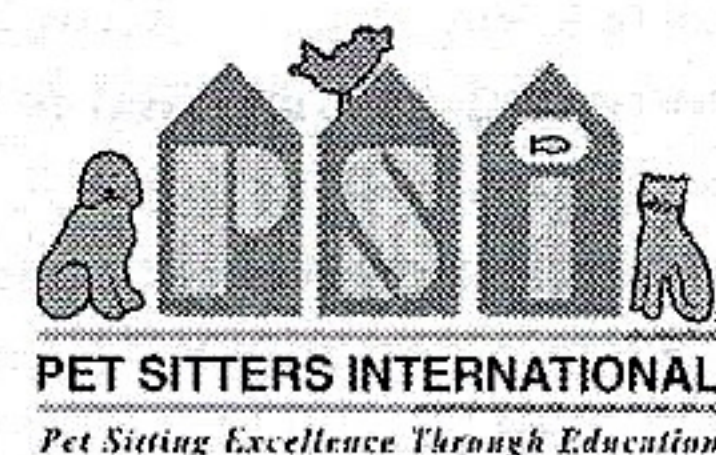
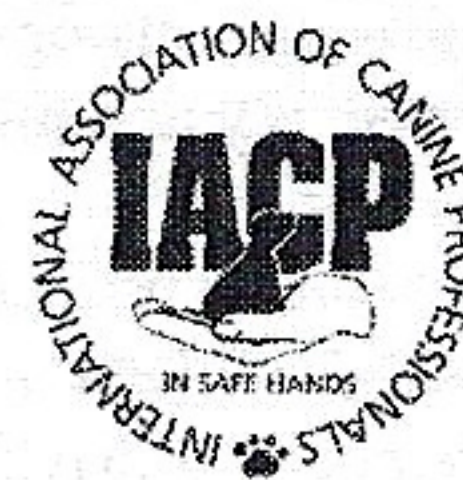
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able only within a pack structure. That would not be entirely correct. Because of the dog's emotional makeup, he will not be comfortable, no matter how well fed and protected against the elements, if he is with a poorly structured pack.

The pack drive is so strong that the comfort drive must seek to fulfill it, even before it fulfills the food drive. Neither the comfort drive nor the food drive can be fully satisfied outside of the pack relationship. Once more we see that everything ties back to relationship.

We can, and should, utilize all three drives when they are appropriate, but the food drive and comfort drive always should be viewed in terms of pack drive. This is how the dog naturally frames them anyway.

Building it Bigger, or Tearing it Down?

One thing we must always be aware of as we train our dogs is the "build it bigger" effect. Whichever drive or drives we use to motivate the dog will, by that process, become stronger. Think of it like exercise: The more you exercise a muscle, the bigger and stronger it becomes. This is the same for all skills and even fundamental drives.

A man who habitually eats too much will end up with a more voracious appetite than someone who can only afford one meal a day. When we focus the dog's attention on gathering food, for example, we condition him to go to extreme measures to get food. Trainers who use food as their primary motivator can readily attest to the results.

The more food is used, the more the dog focuses on food. If we are not careful we can unnaturally inflate his food-gathering instinct, possibly giving it precedence over his pack drive and even his comfort drive. Such dogs are being inadvertently (let us hope) conditioned to seek food above everything else. They often become annoyingly insistent, constantly nudging those around them in an effort to get more food. It is not unreasonable to expect that these dogs will readily dump trashcans and climb on counters to get food.

The same thing can happen if we over-emphasize the comfort drive and diminish the pack drive. In such cases, we get a dog that sees pack interaction as a potential danger and withdraws from it. The dog should find comfort in the pack, even if he is physically in pain, even if the pack is causing the pain. A dog with a strong pack drive will accept reasonable corrections without running away. However, this may change if the dog is over-corrected or corrected inappropriately and unpredictably.

The comfort drive may become more powerful than the pack drive. Such a dog might become withdrawn and resistant to handling, and may seek to fulfill his comfort drive outside the confines of the pack. In this effort the dog will fail. His internal programming will not allow him to be satisfied outside of the group. Such a dog must learn to trust his pack, or he will forever fall short of his potential.

Likewise, if we concentrate on exercising the dog's pack drive, we will be able to put the "build it bigger" effect to good use. The dog will increasingly crave those rewards and avoid those corrections, not because of the food drive and the comfort drive, but because of the pack drive. This will have the result of building all the drives at once, and they will be built in the proper context and proportion. This will give us a better, happier and more responsive dog.

Fully Functioning Motivation

Most people are not aware of the vital role relationship plays in the motivation and learning process, and therefore either don't consider it all or take it for granted. They get married to a reinforcement process without truly considering the motivation that makes the reinforcement work.

As Kohn pointed out, nothing replaces genuine interest in an activity. In the relationship-based model, the activity of interest is the conversation between handler and dog. The dog is motivated to learn and respond, not because he fears the correction or craves a scratch or a treat, but because he avoids what the correction signifies and craves what the reward represents. It is all about relationship.

Throughout the training process we should encourage, enhance and clarify this relationship. The commands, the corrections, the rewards should all be seen as tools to accomplish this. If the dog has a genuine interest in interacting with us and a genuine interest in maintaining the relationship, he will be ready to learn, ready to comply, and will genuinely enjoy the training process. This will become a self-perpetuating cycle.

The more time we spend engaged in activity with our dog, the more interested he will be in the process. The more interested he is in the process, the easier and more enjoyable it will be for us to train him. The more enjoyable it is for us to train him, the more time we will spend training him, which, as stated before, will make him even more interested in the process. There is a catch, however. In order for this to work we must keep the process interesting for him. If the training becomes boring, the dog will begin to lose interest, and that will strain the relationship and make it harder to teach him.

You see, maintaining the relationship is a two-way street. It is not merely about our getting out of the dog what we expect or want. We must provide the dog with a reason to want to be with us. Again, that reason should not be something that we sporadically interject into the relationship such as a treat or a pat on the head. A dog that is not mentally engaged in the training process will become bored, stop working for rewards, and, to some extent will begin to ignore corrections. You may not see the dog refuse to respond but you will, at the very least, see less enthusiastic responses.

Some might say, "It doesn't matter if they are bored, they

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Motivation Cont'd

work in new environments. There are all sorts of things that we can do to keep dog's interest. *Treats will not keep the dog's interest, and neither will incessant corrections. These things might get his attention, but not his interest. There is a difference.*

Training is a conversation, not a lecture. It involves a form of listening as well as speaking. When handling a dog we must speak with our whole body, not just our mouth. We must recognize that the dog is speaking to us with his entire body. By paying attention to what we are doing and to what the dog is doing, we will begin to pick up on his signals and recognize how our signals affect him. This ability will aid us in all interactions, not merely the moments of training. Relationships are built on trust. Trust is built on communication. Without real communication, we have no real trust. Without real trust, we have no real relationship.

Our relationship exists outside of, as well as within, the training sessions. While our communication may be more methodical during formal training sessions, our relationship should not change between formal sessions and mundane interaction.

Whatever strides we make during formal sessions should carry over into all aspects of daily life. Likewise, progress made during daily interactions should directly affect our training sessions.

Early on, I suggested that rewards and consequences were merely symbols that communicated something more vital to the dog. I said that they were indicators of the state of the ongoing relationship. Anytime we train, we emphasize and amplify at least one of those basic drives. As trainers we must determine which drive will produce the best long-term results. For my money, the clear answer is pack drive.

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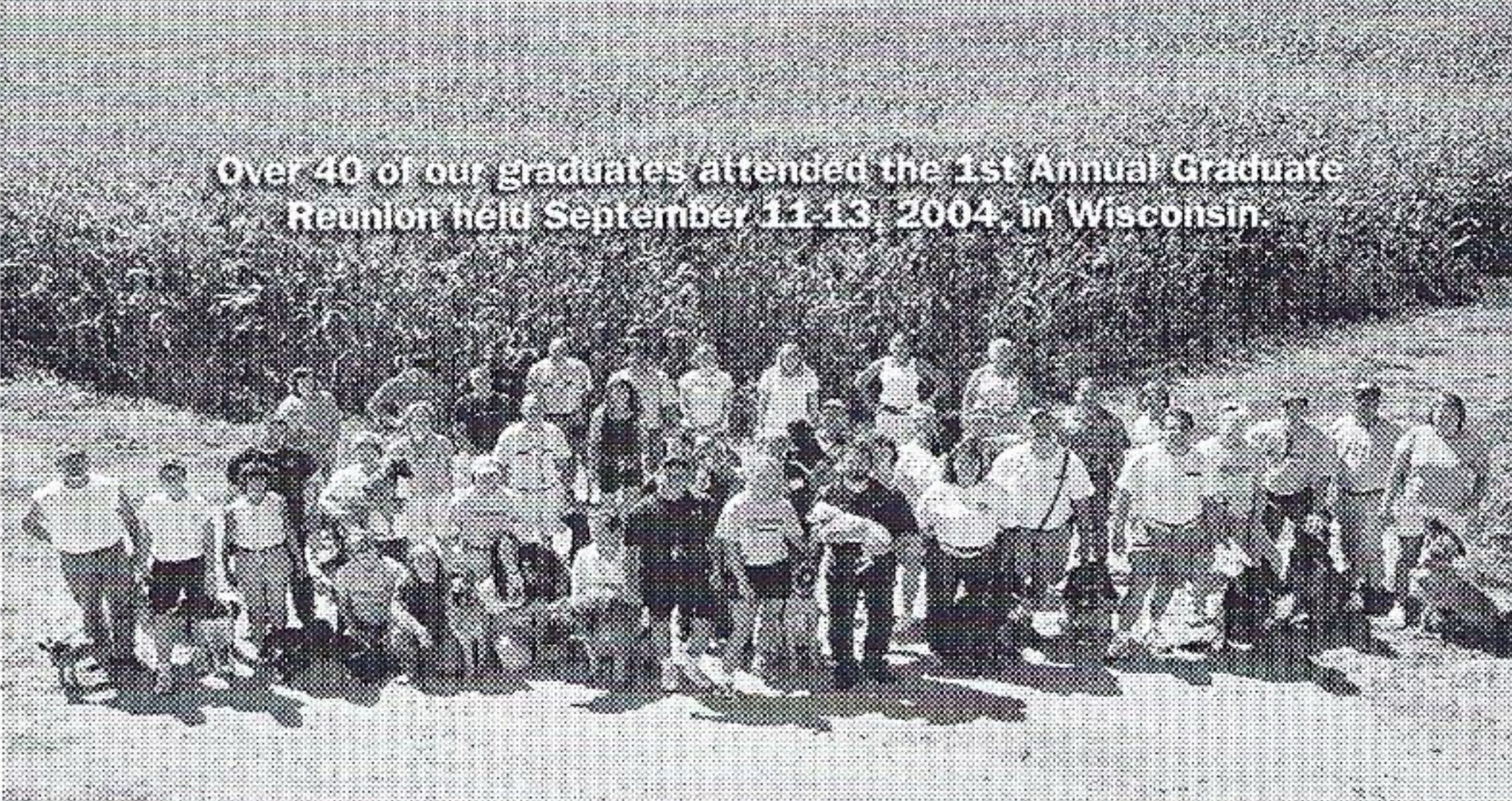
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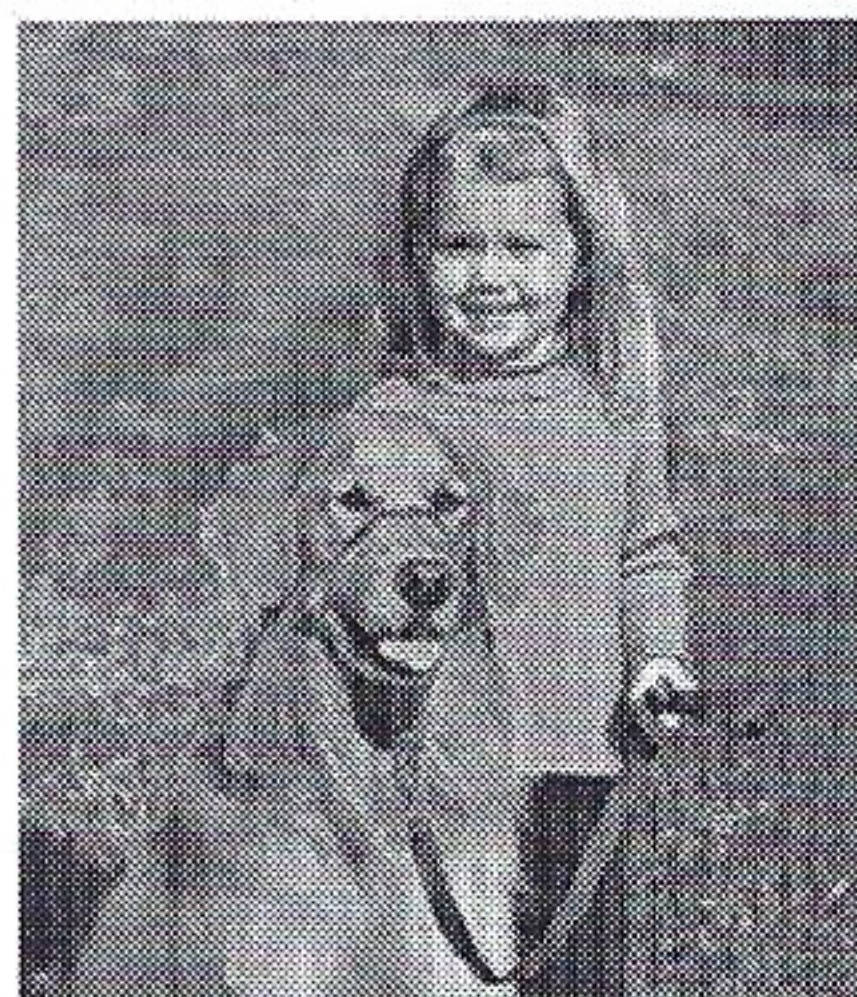
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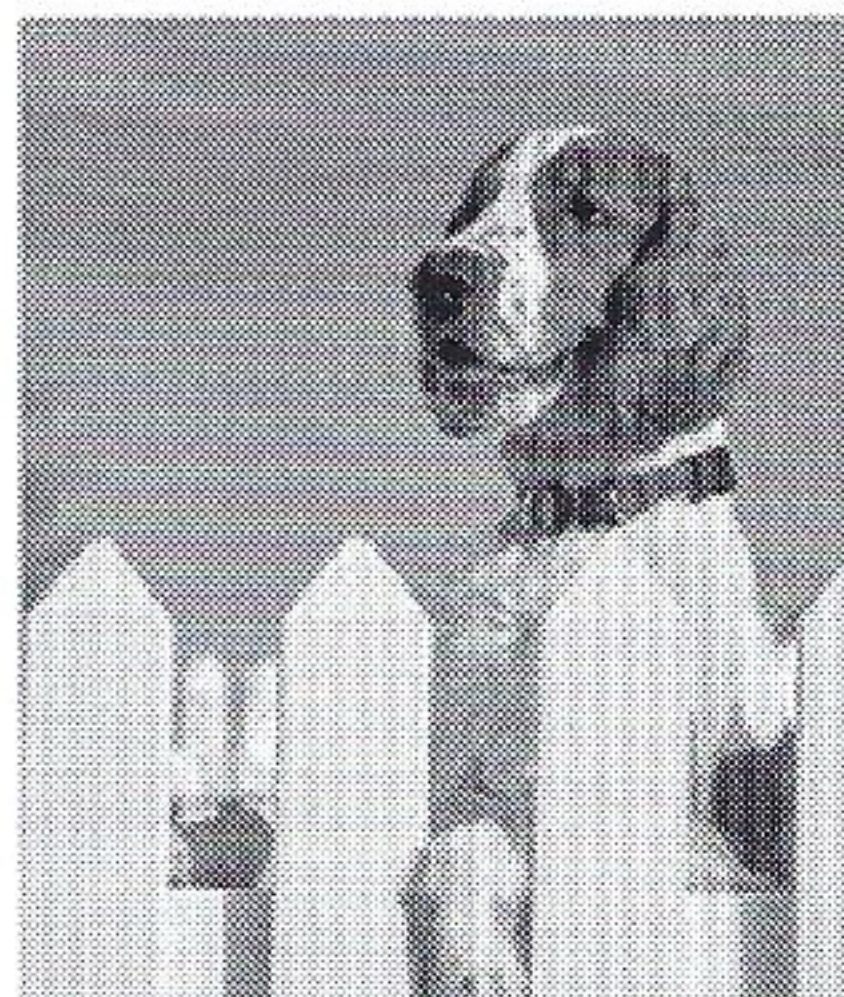
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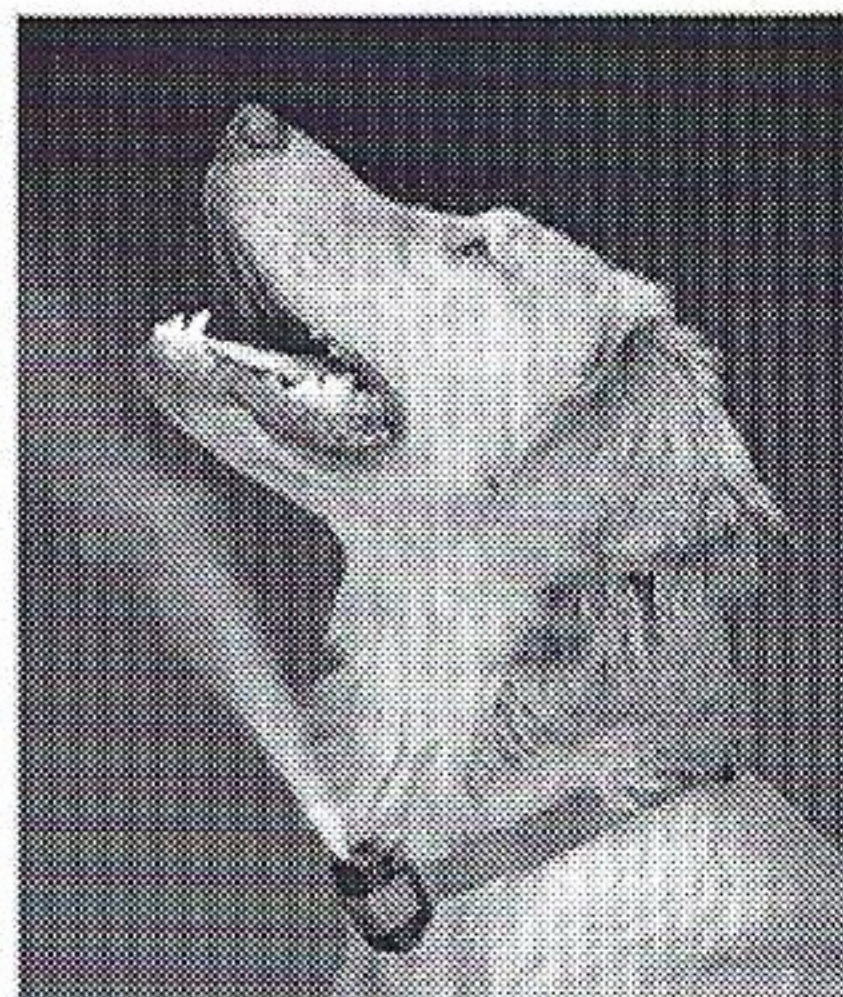
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