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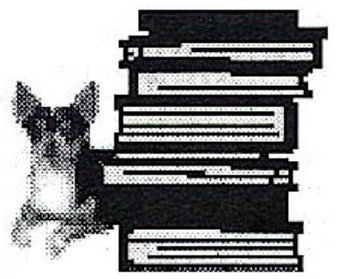

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

.IACP -Organization of the Year Award.

At Christmas, the International Association of Canine Professionals was actively involved in collecting gifts and much needed supplies for dogs and handlers serving overseas with the armed forces. This project led to a record amount of supplies being sent to the IACP. Head Office. Everything from dog boots for search and rescue to gloves for handlers in cold regions, from toys and special treats for the dogs to personal hygiene articles for handlers and even phone cards helping them to call home at this important time of the year.

Martin Deeley, Johnny Mayo (Author of Bucks Heroes) and Sheri Wells (Secretary of Space Coast War Dogs)

This initiative by the IACP was met by an overwhelming response from not only members but also the general public who had contacts with the Association. "Head Office became a warehouse for goods." explained IACP President Martin Deeley. Their hard work was rewarded with letters or thanks and photographs from service men and women and their dogs enjoying the gifts in Iraq. "I know it brought a lump to the throat of all of us when we saw photographs of our two and four legged heroes opening and enjoying specific items we had sent. Some members had made items especially for them." This initiative was not about politics; this was about support for those who give of themselves for the service and security of their fellow man. Working K-9's are often our forgotten or unrealized heroes. The lives they save goes un-noticed except by their devoted handlers. Handlers who also risk their lives with their canine partners to ensure others are safe.

The IACP were more than pleased to help with this initiative and were even more delighted when Martin Deeley, visiting the annual War Veterans Memorial Event in Melbourne Florida, was presented with the award for the **IACP as the Organization of the Year** by the Space Coast War Dogs Association. This award was in recognition of the donations (over 2000 pounds in weight) for the war dogs in Iraq. "This was a most unexpected, yet wonderful honor the IACP was given. Talking to the War dog handlers and those who train the dogs makes you realize how important they are and how much a part of the lives of their handlers and the services they become. It left me very emotional and wanting to do even more through the IACP."

Although working for government organizations, many times the supplies and specific equipment these dogs and their handlers need are not available. Whether it is budgets that create the problems, or political decisions that dictate, there are deficiencies that we can help overcome. Boots for dogs searching through rubble of bombed buildings is one example, boots that need to be non reflective in a war zone – not easy to find. The IACP have now established a Working K-9 Section which is aimed at supporting those who train and handle Working K-9's and there is no doubt that once more the IACP will be on the front line to support our War Dogs and their handlers when the needs arise.

Thank you all our members and friends who helped with this tremendous project.

Martin Deeley

President IACP

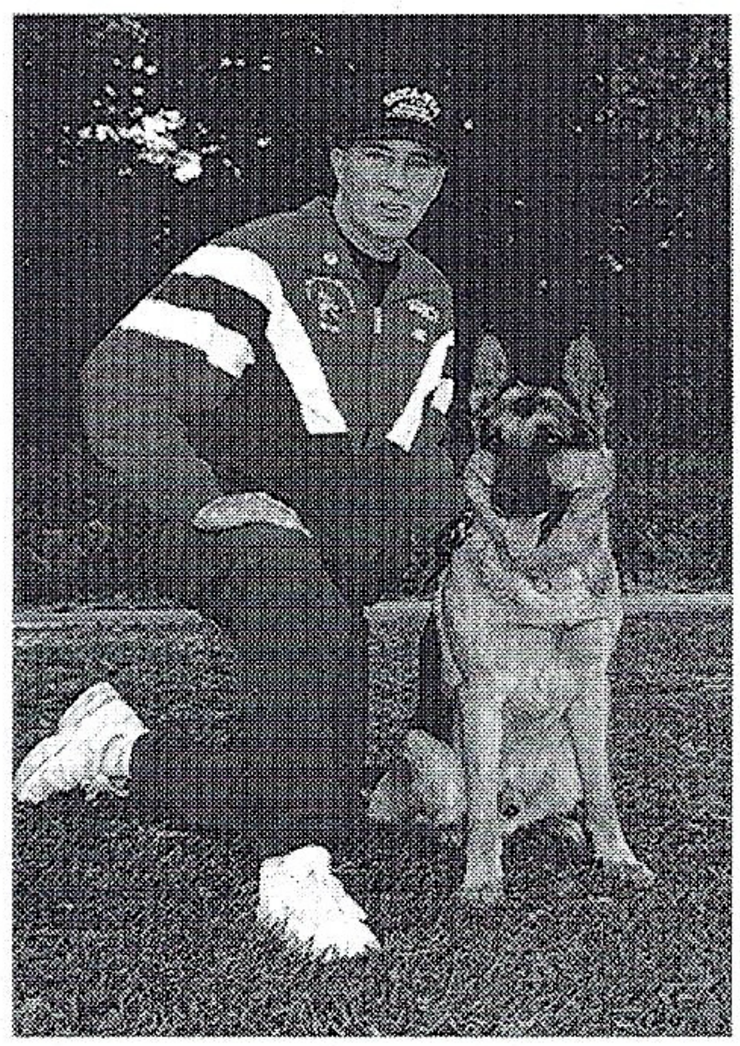
Human-Directed Canine Aggression

Evaluation, Treatment, and Methodology

By Steve Robinson

In a previous issue of SafeHands, we presented an empirical view of human-directed canine aggression. Our purpose and premise was to establish the root cause of aggressive behavior so that it could be treated from the ground up. Proper interpretation is necessary for proper treatment.

As previously described, an aggressive response is triggered by two psychological forces which lie at opposite ends of a continuum: the perception of challenge, which triggers dominance, and the perception of threat, which triggers fear. Both dominance-based and fear-based aggression are a part of the complex behavior pattern driven by the dog's biological goal for self-preservation. They are designed to control and neutralize perceived danger. The balance point between fear-based and dominance-based aggression varies considerably by specific event, and is highly influenced by the personality type (temperament) of each individual dog.



DEALING WITH FEAR-BASED AGGRESSION

The most frequent cause of human-directed canine aggression is fear. Fear is a normal state in nature; it's what keeps all higher-level animals alive. It is instinctive for an animal to fear an adult human who is imposing in both size and stature. The degree of fear shown by the dog and how it is manifested will vary by individual.

Treating fear-based aggression involves three specific tools:

1. Reducing the fear eliciting stimuli
2. Raising the dog's threshold of reactivity
3. Pre-empting and controlling aggressive reactions.

1.Reducing fear-eliciting stimuli. If we accept the premise that all dogs are endowed with an instinct for self-preservation, and that aggression is one of the options available for defense, then one obvious strategy for dealing with this type of aggression is to eliminate or reduce the stimuli which trigger the perceived threat of physical harm.

A key to implementing this strategy is understanding the world through our dog's eyes. The dog's perception is his reality. He cannot distinguish between a truly dangerous situation and one he perceives as threatening. By controlling the dog's access and exposure to potentially fearful stimuli, we can significantly reduce displays of fear-based aggression. In simpler terms, we manage the dog's environment. By simply removing him from contact with certain visitors, not allowing access to the front window, or avoiding situations with a negative association, we can dramatically reduce the perceived threat that triggers aggression.

Another important element of this strategy is elimination of physical punishment and other strong aversives. Any owner reaction which is perceived as threatening or intimidating has the potential to trigger aggression. It teaches the dog to "fight back". Control of undesirable responses, while important, can be better achieved in other ways.

2. Raising the dog's threshold of reactivity
A program of structured socialization should be instituted to build the dog's confidence and make him less reactive. This program utilizes the tools of classical conditioning to make the dog more comfortable with unfamiliar people, places, objects, and other dogs.

Systematic Desensitization – by gradually increasing exposure to a fear-eliciting stimulus over time, we can begin to neutralize the dog's reaction to that stimulus. In doing so, it is important that the stimulus be presented in small enough increments that the dog can learn to accept or tolerate the stimulus without triggering a negative response. Desensitization can be a long and arduous process, but it is important to move only at a pace that avoids setbacks.

Counter-conditioning – by creating a positive association with a stimulus that the dog perceives as negative (threatening) we can alter the dog's response when presented with that stimulus. This can be accomplished by use of positive reinforcers – primarily food and praise – in the presence of the negative stimulus. Timing of the reinforcement is critical, as the dog must be displaying a neutral or positive response at the moment of reinforcement. As an example, a dog that is frightened by the presence of a stranger should be positively reinforced whenever his behavior in the presence of the stranger is neutral or positive (e.g. playing with a toy or allowing physical contact). If the positive reinforcement is applied when the dog is barking or growling, we would be inadvertently rewarding this negative response, giving the dog the wrong message. Counter conditioning is often used in conjunction with systematic desensitization and habituation (see below).

Continued page 6

Habituation –like desensitization, is also designed to condition the dog to a negative stimulus over time. However, instead of escalating the stimulus, it remains a constant. For habituation to be effective, the dog's reaction to the stimulus should diminish with repeated exposures. An example would be bringing a dog into a class setting with other handlers and their dogs. Mild anxiety on first exposure is acceptable, however, an extreme reaction would suggest that desensitization would be a better strategy. Over time, the anxiety should decrease as the dog becomes accustomed to the group. It is vital that no negative experiences happen during this exposure. The odds of success can also be markedly increased by using counter conditioning in conjunction with this exposure.

The implementation of this process requires that the owner take total control of all the dog's interactions. It is easy to wipe out virtually all gains with one impactful negative experience. This is a very labor intensive task, that requires a significant commitment by the owners. A summary of this process is as follows:

People - Interactions with people must be structured to allow the dog an opportunity to become familiar with a visitor from behind a containment barrier. Approaches must be made at the dog's volition without overtures from the person being greeted. The people to whom the dog will be introduced should be carefully screened. Only those with no reservations and a genuine interest in the dog should be given an opportunity for interaction. A high value food source for classical conditioning should be used to facilitate the process.

Places - Visiting new places should be done carefully, beginning with a relatively neutral environment and working up to those with more activity and distraction. Both neutral and positive reactions should be reinforced by use of counter conditioning. A retreat plan should always be thought out in advance should the dog become overly anxious or aggressive.

Objects -An attempt should be made to make the dog more comfortable with objects that are a part of his environment. Any strange visual or auditory stimuli should also be included. Both systematic desensitization and habituation are valuable tools for accomplishing this process.

Other dogs -Neutralizing the dog to other unfamiliar dogs is a complex process. Not all dogs that are aggressive to humans are dog aggressive. The reverse is also true. If the dog is aggressive to other dogs, assistance of a professional and access to neutral dogs is essential. Systematic desensitization, habituation and counter conditioning are all useful in teaching the dog that other dogs pose no immediate threat to his safety.

3. Pre-emptive Control requires that the dog understands and complies with specific commands designed to place the dog under control in <u>advance</u> of a potentially fear evoking stimulus that might trigger aggression. A particularly effective exercise for this purpose is the "controlled sit". The execution of this strategy requires that the dog be placed in a sit position at heel, be commanded to "watch" the owner's eyes, and commanded to ignore the situation ("leave it"). If the dog breaks his position, the owner must quickly and calmly re-establish control by immediately placing the dog back into position unless released. The controlled sit establishes three basic principles:

1. The owner is taking charge of the situation and the matter is no longer a concern or issue for the dog.
2. The owner is demanding attention and asserting his authority (eye contact).
3. The owner will not allow or tolerate any behavior which alters the status quo.

The controlled sit is a form of discipline that reinforces the superior- subordinate relationship <u>without triggering conflict</u>. As previously discussed, physical discipline, especially in a volatile situation, is likely to evoke an aggressive reaction either toward the stimulus or redirected toward the owner.

<u>DEALING WITH THE DOMINANT-AGGRESSIVE DOG.</u>

Unlike the dog who aggresses primarily in reaction to fear, the typical profile of a dominant-aggressive dog is one of confidence and aloofness. He normally does not walk around with a chip on his shoulder, and generally has a fairly high threshold of reactivity. However, when faced with a perceived challenge, he will answer it. The more common response will be a gradual escalation from body posture, to growl, to baring teeth, to a bite. In some respects, this gradual escalation makes this dog easier to read, as there are usually specific triggers and overt warning signs. This is in contrast to the dog displaying fear-based aggression, who is usually quicker to react and more unpredictable with regard to aggression triggers.

The major strategy in controlling dominance-based aggression involves three key elements: eliminating challenge-evoking stimuli, restructuring the dog's relationship with it's owner and pre-emptive control.

1. Eliminating triggers for aggression.

The dominant dog claims ownership of its surroundings (sovereignty) and elements within. He covets anything he considers a resource or an object of value. The higher the value the more vigorously he will defend its possession. While it is not possible to remove everything this dog will consider a valuable resource, conflicts over these possessions can be avoided by limiting or eliminating their availability. For example, dogs who will guard rawhides can be given a rawhide in their crate or other confined space, and left alone until finished or the rawhide abandoned. Alternatively, all rawhides, bones, pig ears, table scraps and other consumables can be totally eliminated. The need for chewing can often be satisfied with a nylon bone, rubber chew toy, or other product of lesser value to the dog.

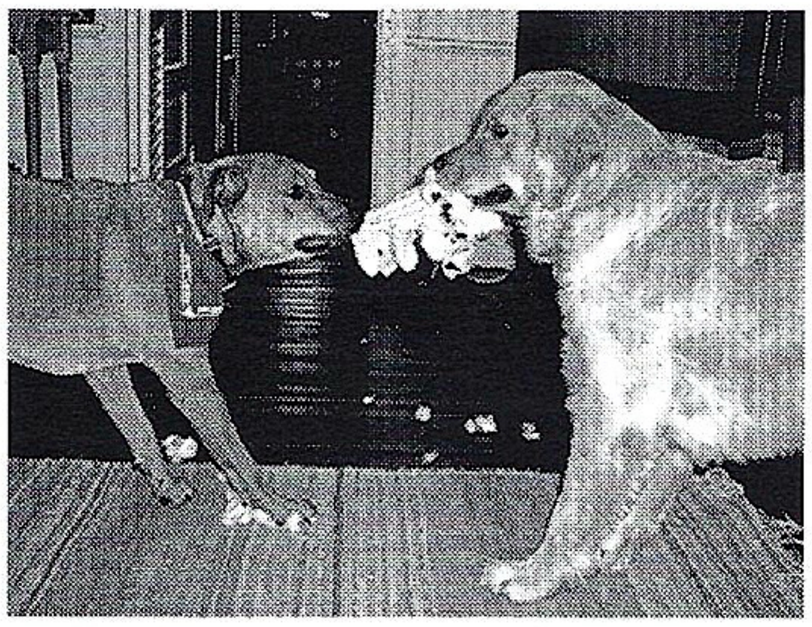
Feeding should be done in a confined space where the dog is

Contd page 7

left alone until finished. Access to visitors can likewise be controlled by crating or confining the dog prior to letting the visitor in the home. Toy-focused play can be structured to eliminate conflict with giving the object up – usually by introducing multiple objects that are used for trading. Children in homes with dominant dogs need to be schooled about avoiding conflict, and all interaction supervised. Contact between a dominant dog and other pets must also be closely supervised to avoid dominance "practice" and reinforcement of aggressive behavior.

2. Restructuring the dog-owner relationship.

An important part of gaining control over a dog is to establish a position of authority, with the dog assuming a subordinate role. This can be a difficult proposition with a dominant-aggressive type who typically resists authority. Strong aversives will inevitably create conflict, with the dog mounting an ever- increasing effort to resist. This could ultimately result in a dangerous confrontation. On the other hand, giving in to the dog by ignoring unwanted behavior will only make the dog's position stronger. The answer lies in middle ground. By "drawing a line in the sand", the dog can learn to accept a subordinate position which does not make him feel vulnerable or powerless. The message must be "I won't cross the line if you don't ". This is not a physical challenge, but rather a test of wills. The objective is to gain compliance, not submission. It takes resolve, patience, persistence, and most important, a presence of authority. An effective part of this strategy is limiting dog's options so he can't easily cross the line. It also means that the owner cannot lose his or her temper, causing them to cross it.



Finally, it's important that the dog understand and accept a position subordinate to the owner. All "freebies" should be eliminated, with the dog being asked to perform a simple obedience exercise whenever he is given something of value, e.g., "sit" for his meals.

This approach can yield good results. A note of caution: if the owner is afraid of the dominant-aggressive dog - even a "little bit" – he or she will not gain authority and control over him. Even if the owner is not afraid, but others in the household are, the dog will sense this and exploit it. If this is the case, you may be better off to place the dog – if he is placeable – before the situation results in an injury. The guilt in removing a dangerous dog from the home will be more than overshadowed by the guilt from a preventable, serious injury.

3. Pre-Emptive Control

The need for pre-emptive control applies equally to displays of both fear and dominance based aggression, albeit in a different context. Both situations require bringing the dog under control to pre-empt a reaction, however, given these two different situations, the reaction will take a path toward opposite ends of the fear – dominance continuum. As previously described, a fear-based reaction mobilizes the dog's defenses in the face of a perceived *threat*. The dog will react faster, with a higher degree of intensity. Care must be taken to bring about the control without creating additional anxiety that may precipitate the loss of control and push the dog into self-preservation mode. Coming on too strong may actually trigger the aggression. On the other hand, control of dominance-based aggression requires a firm hand that establishes authority without anger or conflict. It puts the lid on what is usually a slow, more deliberate escalation of aggression by the dog who is responding to a perceived *challenge*. Controlling this escalation requires that the handler take charge in a persistent, unyielding, but non-threatening matter-of-fact way. The biggest impediment to execution of this strategy is fear on the part of the owner. If this is the case, a dominant dog will sense it immediately, rise to the challenge, and usually win. Given this set of circumstances, even with the help of a professional, the prognosis is poor. A dominant-aggressive dog will always be able to sense when he has the upper hand.

In summary, both fear-based and dominance –based aggression are treatable. Both involve commitment and compromises by the owner, family, and those who will come into contact with the dog. The decision to move forward with such a program is a highly individual and emotional one. In many cases, placement is not an option, and the only choice left is euthanasia. The family's attachment to the pet and the risks involved must be carefully considered. The help of a professional well versed in dealing with canine aggression should be involved in both the treatment and the decision making process.

Steve Robinson is a degreed animal behaviorist with a pet training and counseling practice located in Ortonville Michigan, approximately 40 miles north of Detroit. Steve started training his first dog in 1975 and became fascinated with the process of associative learning. In 1982, Steve abandoned his business career and returned to school to earn a B.S. degree in Animal Behavior. Since that time, he has helped innumerable clients and their dogs with pet behavior problems.

When Steve isn't engrossed in his business, he loves working with his own dogs. He is a world- class competitor in the sport of Schutzhund, and has competed internationally in seven different countries with dogs he raised and trained from eight week old puppies.

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BOOK REVIEW
Starting a Visiting-Animal Group
Written by Ann Howie, ACSW.
Reviewed by Kris Butler

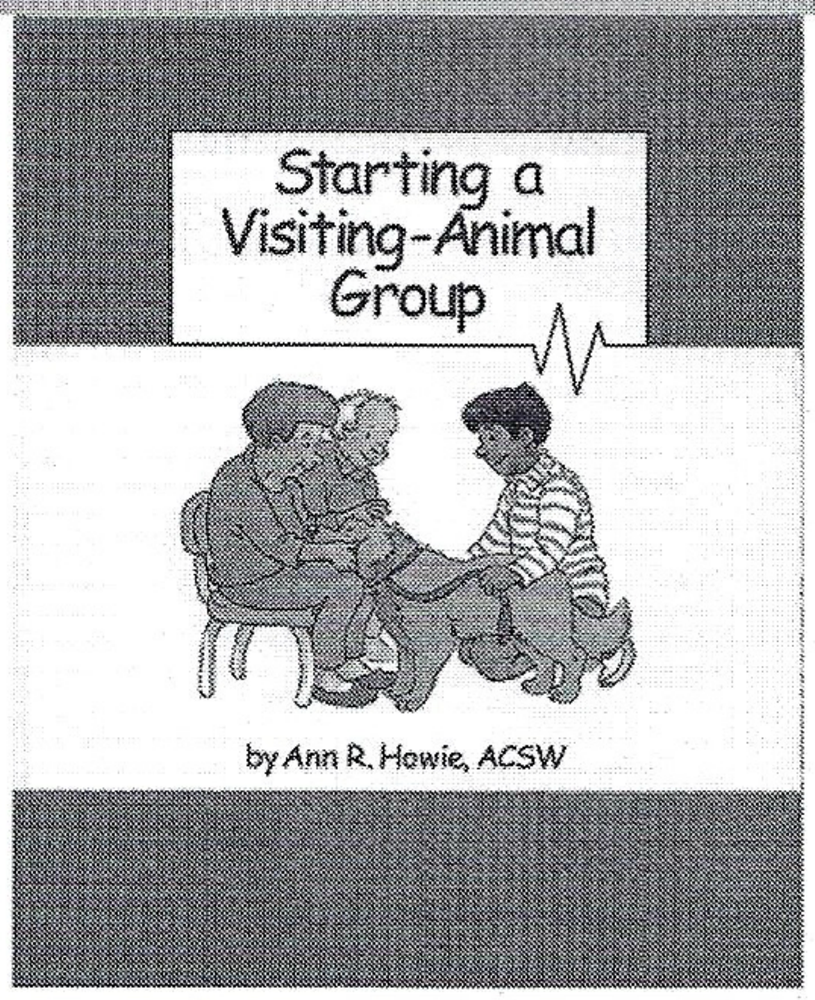
Published by Providence Animal-Assisted Activities & Therapy Program, Olympia, Washington, 2000. Project funded by The Pet Care Trust. All proceeds from the sale of this book go directly to support the Providence Animal-Assisted Activities & Therapy program. ISBN 0-9700365-0-7.

Starting a Visiting Animal Group is a complete guide on how to plan, organize and maintain a visiting-animal (therapy dog) group. It is a comprehensive manual that walks readers through each step, moving beyond what its title suggests. In addition to helping readers "get it all together," it is developed to assist groups in "keeping it together" as well. Topics addressed throughout the book include starting a group, identifying structure, liabilities, funding, recruiting members, publicity, training, finding facilities that wants what a group is able to offer, working with staff, managing volunteers, record keeping, and more.

Motivational posters often use a Margaret Mead quotation to drive home the point that small groups of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. The advertising campaign for a sportswear company challenges people to just "do it." They make it seem so easy! But what if you want to bring together a small group of committed therapy dog handlers, who might indeed change the world, one struggling child at a time – and you don't know where to start? S*tarting a Visiting Animal Group* is the result of author Ann Howie's many years of actually *doing* what many people only dream about.

Starting a Visiting Animal Group is a complete guide on how to plan, organize and maintain a visiting-animal (therapy dog) group. It is a comprehensive manual that walks readers through each step, moving beyond what its title suggests. In addition to helping readers "get it all together," it is developed to assist groups in "keeping it together" as well. Topics addressed throughout the book include starting a group, identifying structure, liabilities, funding, recruiting members, publicity, training, finding facilities that wants what a group is able to offer, working with staff, managing volunteers, record keeping, and more.

Ms. Howie states she is targeting volunteers who wish to form groups; but I feel facility staff, responsible for overseeing volunteer programs, will definitely find this information worthwhile, too. My vision of the future includes professional dog trainers in key roles, preparing dogs and their handlers to visit effectively. Trainers and instructors who include therapy dog handlers among their clients will become candidates for starting visiting groups. Trainers – even those trainers with no actual visiting experience – will benefit from studying the options presented here.



This book references Delta Society® and the Pet Partners Program®, to the exclusion of other therapy dog registries. When this book was published, in 2000, Ms. Howie worked for Delta Society. While I, too, believe Delta Society is a fine choice for meeting volunteer groups' needs, there are additional options readers might seek to explore.

Ann. Howie's presentation style is completely professional, yet simple and straightforward. Chapters are placed in chronological order, to enable readers to proceed step-by-step. The book resembles a text book: 8 ½ x 11 inches, 102 pages. Great formatting makes *Starting a Visiting Animal Group* extremely user friendly. It's easy to read and understand. Original illustrations by Amy Aitken add an interesting, light touch.

I believe that local groups offer the best ways to enhance the missions of therapy dog handlers in communities everywhere. Groups help every member by sharing the workload, the joys, and the challenges of working with dogs – thus improving the quality of life for people who have special needs. *Starting a Visiting Animal Group* is a much needed resource, a well-written book that I recommend to my colleagues.

Kris Butler serves on IACP's Board of Directors as Therapy Dogs Division Director. She trains dogs and their busy humans at American Dog Obedience Center LLC, her board-and-train facility in Norman, Oklahoma.. ***Kris@DogPrograms.com***

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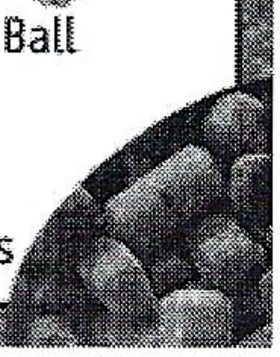

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THE ABUSE EXCUSE and WHY ITS BAD FOR DOGS

by Julia V. McDonough

We are a nation of animal lovers. Raised on Bambi and Black Beauty, we grow up believing in the inherent innocence and good nature of all creatures, and in the notion that if left to their own devices, all animals would exist in a sort of modern Peaceable Kingdom. When someone adopts a dog from a shelter or rescue agency, there is an assumption that the dog is there solely because of some heartless negligence or outright violence. While this can be the case in all too many situations, a more honest look at the facts will show that most pets are given up to shelters by people who are not all that different than the people who wish to adopt or who work at the agency in question. Job relocation, divorce, a death in the family, loss of income, medical problems, and the threat of insurance cancellation for the owners of some breeds are the most common practical reasons people give up their dogs. While we are all familiar with the staggering number who are turned in for real or imagined behavior problems, even that diagnosis doesnt necessarily jibe with the invocation of abuse that usually accompanies it. If anything, the more common behavior problems associated with most surrendered dogs are symptomatic of an indulgent or at worst, benignly neglectful home where no one took time to address the issues before they got out of hand

However, the cases of outright abuse against any animal are heinous enough to make the evening news, and will almost always find their way into the public eye. As animal lovers, we are horrified to hear about what a few truly brutal humans enact upon an animal unfortunate enough to cross their path. We feel a genuine surge of compassion for the beaten dog, the deliberately starved horse, and the litter of kittens saved from drowning, and we want to distance ourselves from the type of person who could commit such an act. It is proof of our empathy when such a story gets public attention in the media, and hundreds of outraged citizens line up to adopt the victim. But it is also proof of our relative shallowness that the victims less notorious kennelmates at the shelter go unnoticed and unadopted, perhaps for lack of such a tragic backstory. It may be cynical to say that many of the people who devote so much of their energy and emotion to shelter and rescue work feel best when they feel bad, but as someone who works full time in the shelter industry, I dont think its untrue.

Based on the horrific nature of the abuse cases which actually make the news and on the institutional support of their prevalence among some of the major fundraising humane organizations and animal rights groups, it only follows that an animal lover interprets any defensive, aggressive or predatory behavior on the part of his dog as being evidence of some sort of abuse. Abuse vs. neglect and the effects of each on rehabilitation

First, what is the difference between neglect and abuse? On a very basic level, we define neglect as passive and usually a result of ignorance rather than malice, and abuse as active and intentional. Neglect is a dog who is raised outside, tied to a tree, hardly fed or attended to. Abuse is a dog who is struck, kicked or otherwise used as an object of physical violence. Neglect is embodied in the dog of an animal collector: living in a cage, parasite-laden, ignored except as a possession; a notch on the belt of a sick person who, ironically, usually thinks he is saving the dog from a worse fate. The local sociopath who was prosecuted for the hoarding of over one hundred Shar Pei but who called himself a rescuer who didn't believe in giving up on a dog is an extreme, but telling, example. Abuse is embodied in the dog of a violent human (who, according to sociologists, is also much more likely to abuse human members of the family): physically threatened and beaten, with the attacks usually culminating in an extremely sadistic event which causes the animal to finally die or be abandoned in critical condition and/or the abuser to be reported. A female Dobe in our system who had been corrected with a baseball bat to the jaw for barking is one of our more grotesque in-house models of true abuse. Neither condition paints a pretty picture. Neither is better than the other. But they are different, and I find they have different effects on the unfortunate animals subjected to them. There is a third condition which merits more attention than either neglect or abuse in its devastating effect on a dog. Ill save that for last

How does the abused dog differ from the neglected dog when it comes to behavioral rehabilitation? To explain to new volunteers and employees at our facility, I use the following anthropomorphic analogy. Obviously, because of self-awareness, the concept of morality and the ability to question another's motives (among so many other things that contribute to what we think of as human consciousness),a human psyche can be much more permanently scarred by the type of mistreatment were discussing. With that in mind, please accept this analogy as a parable rather than a literal comparison.

Three young adolescent kids are put into a progressive reform school. One has been smacked around and verbally abused since he could answer back. One was the middle child of a huge family, and it was hardly ever noticed if he was around or not. One was the spoiled only son and heir of an indulgent parent. How do you think each of them will do?

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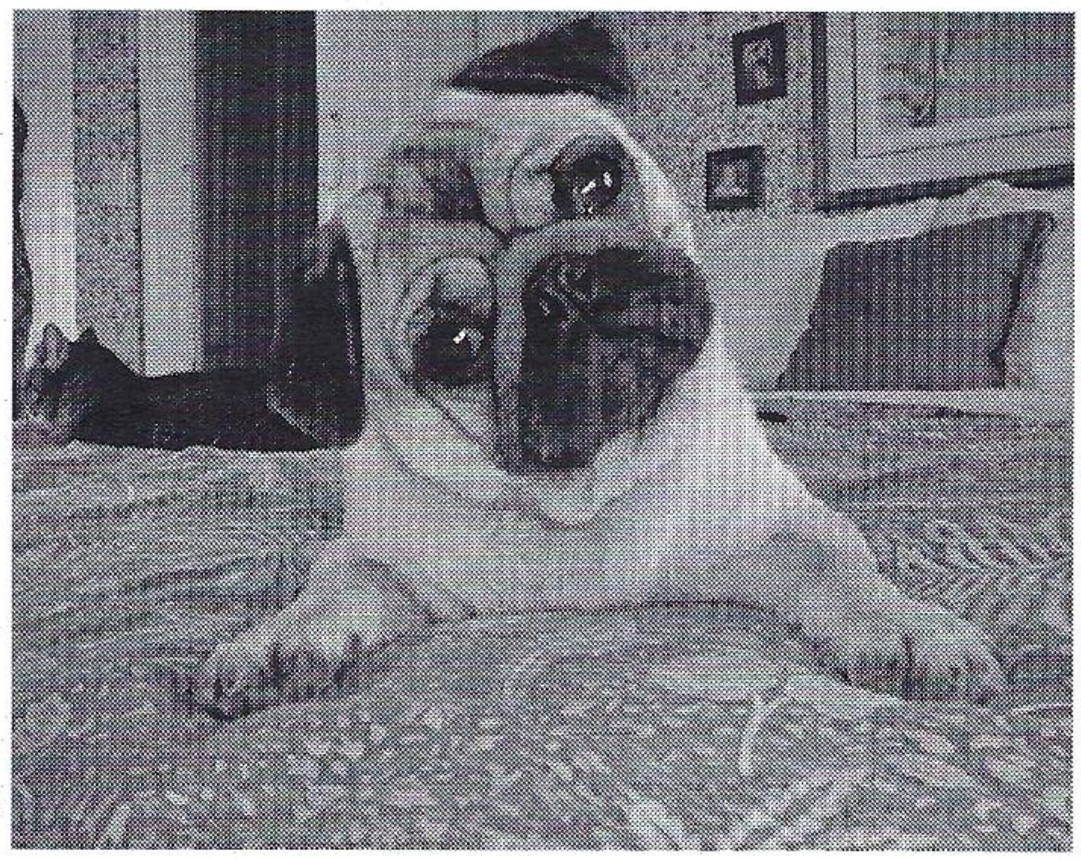
The abused kid will have a hard time for awhile. He is so used to ducking his head and cringing that its an automatic response. His teachers and leaders are tough, but unlike anyone else in his previous life, they're fair. At first, their demands on him seem too challenging, and he assumes that he will always be punished for whatever effort he puts forth. But as time passes he realizes that what theyre asking him to do isn't that hard. More importantly, its actually something concrete and doable. Pretty soon he starts hearing how smart he is, and how far he'll go. Maybe hell never forget what happened to him in the past. But he's better equipped to deal with the future thanks to the trust he's learned.

The neglected kid figures hes just another number. Hes not used to it when he gets called on, and hes nervous. Sometimes he stammers. He's afraid to get things wrong, but hes almost afraid to get things right, because he doesn't know how to deal with the attention. Sometimes he's the opposite: hes too overbearing and exuberant in social situations because hes really never learned how to deal with others. Sometimes he goes from one extreme to the other...school is pretty overwhelming. With time he finds a middle ground, and eventually he begins to set himself apart as an individual. He still has the security of a big group, but he also knows his name and his place in that group, and hes happy with it. Hes prepared for the world.

The spoiled kid has a problem. Who do all these peasants think theyre talking to? Dont they know who he IS? When pouting and sulking dont make things grind to a halt like they did at home with Mummy, he throws tantrums. Sometimes he hurts people when he throws tantrums. No matter what his teachers do, they cant convince him that he is part of a team. They can never tell what will offend him and how hell express that offense. He is finally expelled. And, the administrators and teachers say, its a shame, because sometimes he could be such a sweet kid. But he doesnt have what it takes to succeed in real life.

But why does it matter if we assume the worst about a dogs past? When one works on the front lines of rescue and animal care, one sees some real toe-curling horrors enacted by genuinely stupid or evil humans upon their dogs. Any abuse is too much. But we owe it to the dogs who rely on us to improve their lives to recognize the limits that abuse has on their minds and behavior. I firmly believe that any behavior or reaction a person puts into a dog is something a knowledgeable and determined person can remove. Dogs are far more resilient than the people who care for them. In my practice I have worked with dogs who have been struck with shovels, who have had cigarettes put out on them, who have been repeatedly booted and beaten, according to actual documentation, and in all too few cases, with prosecution of the offending humans. Regaining their trust is nowhere near as difficult as it was for their abusers to lose it. We all marvel at a beaten dogs tendency to adore its abuser, yet we cant imagine that very same dog acting normally ever again once its in a normal home. To blame defensive or aggressive behavior solely on an abusive past can end up hurting the dog even more. How?

First, writing off a dogs inappropriate behavior as a byproduct of abuse cancels out the diagnosis of other potential reasons: health problems, ineffective training, bad genetics are just a few of the possibilities. I have had clients in the past whose dogs suffered from epilepsy, half-blindness, and severe hypothyroidism to name a few examples but who went undiagnosed for months: the owners were advised by other trusted canine professionals that their respective dogs were spooky and defensive because they had been abused. They were assured by well-meaning animal lovers that all their dogs needed was love and understanding, when what they truly needed was veterinary attention.



Photo—Aimee Sadler

More commonly, the abuse excuse also prevents people from training and controlling their dogs. Convinced that their dog has suffered enough hardship, they decide to make up to the dog for his past torment at the hands of lesser humans. This is poisonous, as the overindulgence of a dog is the main reason he fails in a home. When he arrives with an either real or supposed diagnosis of abusive treatment, the more compassionate nature of his caregivers is to spoil him. When he responds to the lack of leadership and structure by becoming possessive or defensive, his abused status is invoked and a few more privileges are added in the hopes that he might be placated into pethood. Suggestions to take away these freebies and to insist on serious compliance with obedience commands are met with accusations of cruelty and lack of empathy. In too many cases, this dog is literally spoiled to death: his nasty, defensive behavior finally results in an injury to a human family member, he is turned in to a shelter or brought to the vet for euthanasia with the reassurance that they tried everything and that the dog is hopelessly unable to overcome his horrible past and is better off at rest.

Although their history may not be as colorfully violent as

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The Abuse Excuse Cont'd

the abused dog, the dogs who have been either benignly or intentionally neglected are sometimes tougher to help. Often, they only view a human being as the bearer of a food dish and the occasional giver of a pat on the head. When they are exposed to humans who actually want to interact with them, to touch them and speak with them and be close, they are sometimes overwhelmed with confusion, and can give off a number of mixed messages. This is the trait that gets them labeled as unpredictable. In almost every abuse case Ive dealt with, the dog is often a pet who has lived in the house and who suffered his fate due to some transgression of house rules he was never taught in the first place. The neglected dog is more often a stranger to normal human contact, good or bad. His rehabilitation tends to take longer than the dog who has been actively, and usually by human standards, much more abusively treated.The seriously abused dogs Ive worked with were always a challenge. The neglected ones required the patience of a saint. But the very worst Dobermans Ive ever dealt with in rescue have been the ones that came from super-indulgent homes where the dog was allowed to rule like a privileged princeling; treated as a human child; and otherwise given full charge of the house, its contents and occupants. Unlike their neglected or abused cousins, these dogs frequently have bitten people in their own family, and usually more than once. To see them surrendered to the shelter with an
honor guard of teddy bears, a soft bed, special treats and a long list of requests is particularly heartbreaking, as these are often the dogs that we are least likely to be able to help. Rather than experiencing a specific, violent set of horrible behaviors enacted on them by a human, or the desolate vacuum of total neglect, these dogs have been insidiously and actively lied to for their entire lives. If their innate temperament is particularly defensive or aggressive, convincing them that they must respectfully defer to kind human leadership is sometimes impossible. They have been conditioned in such a way that they have an entirely upside-down view of the world which is often unchangeable in a shelter setting and which therefore makes them unadoptable. Compared to the neglect or abuse cases, "removing" the damage done by their well-meaning past owners is a much slower-moving process with many more risks to the people charged with doing the rehab, two conditions which get them placed in the highest risk category of training/rehab subjects. Dig deep enough in the history of one of these tragic cases, and you are likely to find that there was no actual training or structure in the dogs life, or if there was it was abandoned as being too mean or because he didnt like it. The owners of these dogs are the ones most likely to call the shelter frequently, demanding a detailed update on the welfare of their ex-dog. They wish to know how he's eating, how many times a day does he get run in the yard, have we found a family "just as loving as theirs" except one without kids, other dogs, old people, men with beards, cats, etc etc. When it is my sad duty to inform this type of owner that his dog is beyond my help, it is why I will answer his angry protests by telling him that he has abused his dog in a much more damaging way than if he had put his boot in its side.

The number of dogs surrendered to our agency with a documented abuse is slight. I have only seen about five actual abuse cases in the past six years, out of the hundreds who have passed through DRU's system. Severely neglected dogs often come in as singles or groups from Animal Control cases; picture emaciated, wormy, physically compromised animals with no normal human contact and you will understand what I mean by genuine neglect. Sadly, we see a comparatively high number of those, compared to the abuse cases. But the number of dogs surrendered with an over-indulged history (ie, no training, no crating, total and unearned freedom in the house, free choice feeding, furniture and bed access, etc) is far higher. Of the dogs with known backgrounds euthanized for serious and irreversible behavior issues in our records, almost all come from the indulged profile. None have a documented or even circumstantially estimated abuse history.

The other side of the coin: abuse as an excuse against adoption. In the first year that I officially worked for DRU, I had an experience that Ill never tire of describing. A young couple had come to look at dogs. The man had done a lot of research and considered himself quite dog savvy. I stood with them in one of the large outdoor pens, where a candidate for adoption was trotting around. We were having a friendly conversation,
occasionally punctuated by the nudge of the Dobermans nose, when suddenly the man stomped his foot violently in the direction of the dog, raising his arm above his head. The dog startled and decided to confine his explorations to the far side of the pen. Well, that ones out, said the young man to his lady friend, Hes obviously been abused. I asked the fellow what exactly that was that he had done. I had entertained the possibilities of some sort of Tourettes or a bad reaction to his cold medicine. But he informed me that he had been reading about temperament testing in one of the many dog books he was using, and that this test was engineered to diagnose past abuse, with the understanding that an abused dog is not going to be a good pet. He described pretty much all of the beliefs held by the Everything Has Been Abused contingent and informed me that the only reason a Dobe would turn on you was because he had been abused. I let him go on for a few minutes, and during a pause in the conversation I jumped toward him, raising my arm. He shrank back, obviously surprised. You may want to look at a different guy, I told his girlfriend, This one has obviously been abused .

While he wasnt happy about it, it made the point nicely. Strangers coming into a kennel to look at dogs (especially adult dogs of a breed which is perhaps a little suspicious of strangers) should NEVER take it upon themselves to raise their hands, shout, stomp or any of the other foolishness I have seen done in the name of checking for signs of abuse. The most violently abused dog Ive trained (Roxie, who took a steel shovel to the back of the head) wouldn't blink

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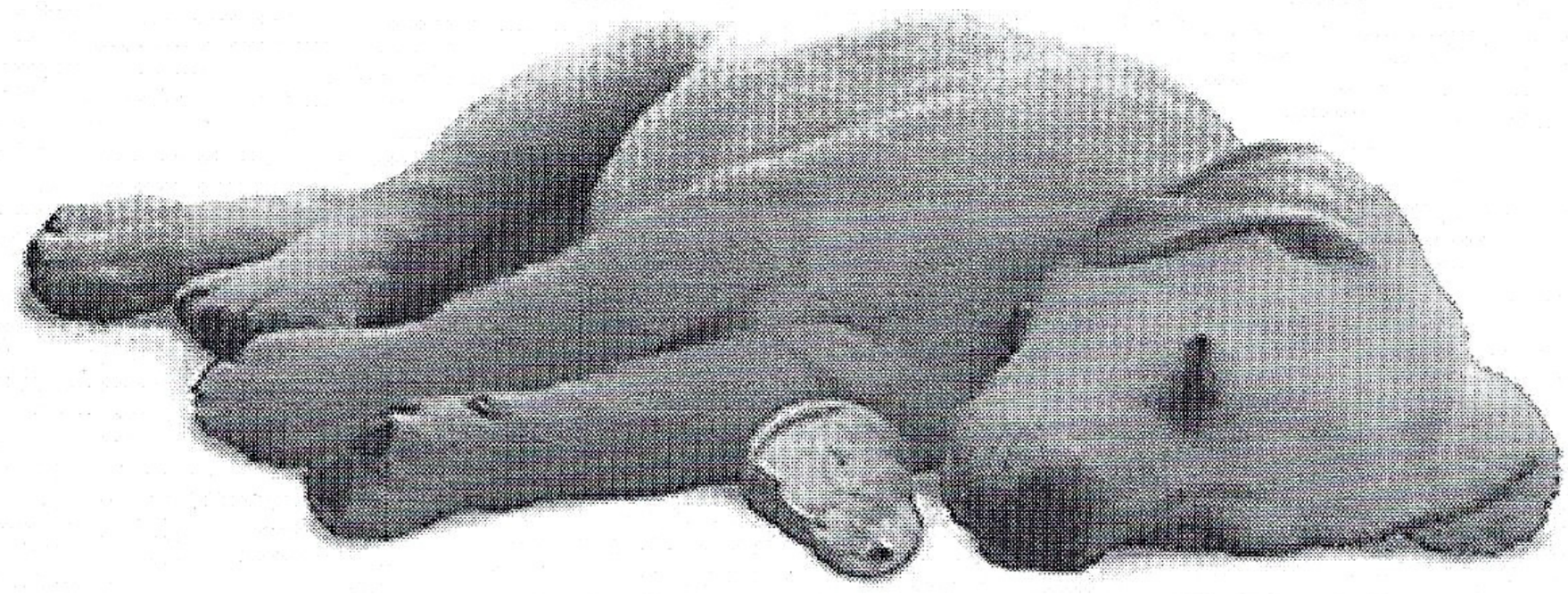

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PUTTING JOY BACK INTO OBEDIENCE

By Marc Goldberg

Recently, I received a phone call from a frustrated obedience exhibitor.

"My Rottie knows all her exercises," the caller complained. "But we have blown four trials in a row. Now she doesn't want to work in the ring at all."

The most interesting part of this conversation was when the caller told me her Rott works fine at fun matches, and in practice. She heels well instead of moping, never fails to return over the high jump, and doesn't do half-hearted drops on recall.

When a dog works well in practice, but not in the ring, it is not normally the dog's fault. When handlers become nervous, we undergo changes in breathing patterns, voice tonality, and body language. With knocking knees, our very walk can change.

For the rest of our chat, I quizzed my new friend not about her dog, but about her own feelings in the ring. Sure enough, she confessed to extreme nerves when showing. With each successive failure, the jitters became worse. From the dog's perspective, one person is doing the training and matching. And an entirely different person emerges at the last second, to take her into the ring. This "new" person looks and smells remarkably like her mistress. But the subtle changes are enough to give the "danger vibe" to a highly bonded and sensitive dog.

What, then, is the cure? Certainly, nerve control will help. I asked the caller to attend her next trials, two in one weekend, with no intention of qualifying. After all, the shows were in only four days. That is no time to begin a radical effort to retrain from scratch.

Instead, I asked her to bomb spectacularly. But in the bombing, I wanted her to rediscover the joy of obedience. Training and joy, after all, begin with the trainer. So I requested my friend simply find nuggets of fun in the experience, regardless of score.

Of course, this is very non-specific advice. I threw in some breathing exercises, and a bit of voice control technique. Both were intended to help the trainer "be" the same person both in and out of the ring. We also discussed walking, and we found a couple of ring rituals we could eliminate. This handler had come to crack her neck in the ring before saying "ready." She also cracked her knuckles. She engaged in none of this behavior in regular training, nor at fun matches. We agreed to eliminate them, along with the giggling banter she'd come to do with ring stewards only at trials.

After the Saturday trial, she called me.

"We're on the way home now and we did NQ. But it wasn't quite as bad as usual. Her heeling was sloppy, but she did heel this time. And everything else went decently, other than the high jump. She didn't jump back until I gave her a second command."

I was encouraged by this report. After all, this had been the very first time the Rott had been taken into a formal ring by her old, familiar handler. I didn't expect her to "get it" all at once. It seems to me that an unsure dog might wait on the other side of the jump, seeking some sign of approval before returning. Not desirable behavior, mind you. But sometimes this is a sign of uncertainty, rather than outright disobedience. We'd have to wait until Sunday to learn more.

Sunday came and once again my phone rang. This morning, my handler friend sounded a great deal more chipper that the day before.

"Well we NQ'd again, but everything was much, much better. She still lost points on heeling, but better than yesterday. And today she returned over the high jump. In fact, the only thing that really went wrong was that her elbows didn't touch the ground on the drop on recall."

I was happy with this report. It told me that the dog was coming around. The Rott was realizing that her trainer, mom and handler were one in the same person...whether at club, match or trial. This was real progress. I congratulated the

handler, and reminded her that sometimes we just have to do this for fun rather than for points and ribbons. I suggested she and her dog come to see me for a session or two. I'd like to teach her how to play with her dog.

Have you ever noticed that Open level work can become routine? Often we drill the dog to achieve precision. If we're not careful, we can accidentally drain the joy right out of obedience as we train for the Open ring.

I have tried to take each exercise and make a matching game to go along with it. Our goal is to put *fun* back into the process, for both dog and handler. For example, I may carry a hidden ball with me during the Figure 8. Whether I must correct or not, I want to achieve one or two good passes around the pattern. Then, I'm likely to bolt out of the pattern altogether, releasing the dog to a tossed ball. Dogs who have never been given permission to play during training may resist you at first. They may think it's a set up, a distraction to be ignored. But if you show them that they really *can* play, you'll find they catch on mighty quick.

The trick with this game, like all the others, is that they become random. They don't come every time. But the dog thinks, "Hey, if I do well, maybe we get to play the Figure 8 game!" Before long you find alert, attentive dogs wrapping beautifully through the 8, hoping to play the game. If they anticipate and bolt, I correct, and they quickly learn to wait until *I* initiate the play.

Drop on Recall is a relatively pointless exercise from the dog's point of view. He knows you will call him, drop him, then just call again. If we practice by rote, the dog may well begin to anticipate. If we do not repeat the action enough, the dog may fail to drop. Thus, you may both profit from and enjoy the Drop on Recall Game.

First, you must teach a reliable and *fast* drop. I do not like to teach this from the sit. That simply bores the dog. I move the dog, either heeling or simply walking at side, and suddenly swing my right foot around in front of him to stop his forward motion. Simultaneously, I'm reaching in for the leash, taking it close to the snap, and popping the dog with slight pressure into position, as I command "Down." I do the arm motion with a "swoop," so I am teaching the hand signal at the same time.

When the dog is in the down, I praise, and then release to a tossed toy or food. The correction for a slow drop is to *not* toss the toy, but to repeat the sequence. I then make greater effort to help the dog down *quickly*, setting him up for success, and enabling me to release the dog to a tossed toy.

Once the dog understands this sequence, I begin to help less and less. For quite a long time, I still block his movement, and reach in for the leash. But if I'm doing it right, he will depend on my motion less and less each day. When he's consistently beating me to the down, I phase out hand motion altogether. I command "down" while I'm on the move, and without breaking stride. I instantly mark the good drop with praise, and randomly release to a toy or food from several feet away.

If you do this right, rather than resenting the mind numbing drills for Drop on Recall, your dog can't wait to play the game. This will pay off in competition when you get a screeching down, and an alert look to see whether we're

playing this time...or not.

Finally, I rarely put the drop together for a complete ring exercise. I normally release from the drop, either to a toy, or simply release and praise. Yet, once in a while, put the entire daisy chain together, and call to front from the drop. If you like, you may randomly reward at front. Your dog won't lose focus come drop time. He'll be looking forward to finding out if it's game time.

In a future article, we will discuss the broad and high jumps, and how to make them fascinating to dogs. The jumping game makes bored dogs interested again. And it can teach a geared dog several great reasons to wait for commands, rather than anticipating them.

Playing games while training pays off with faster learning, reduced stress for the dog, and fun for both members of the team. Come ring time, you're less likely to suffer the jitters...if you have spent time putting the joy back in obedience.

Marc Goldberg is a professional member of the IACP. He enjoys preparing for competition only when his dogs learn to love the training process. Visit him on the web at www.ChicagoDogTrainer.com.

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MY VISIT WITH CESAR MILLAN

By: Ami Moore

I wished that I'd had another trainer with me for this adventure. I could have used the trained eyes of another professional to help me verify and validate all the information that I received. I was struck dumb. I didn't ask enough questions. When I talked, I asked the wrong ones. Hopefully, Cesar Millan wasn't left with the impression that I am suffering from mental retardation.

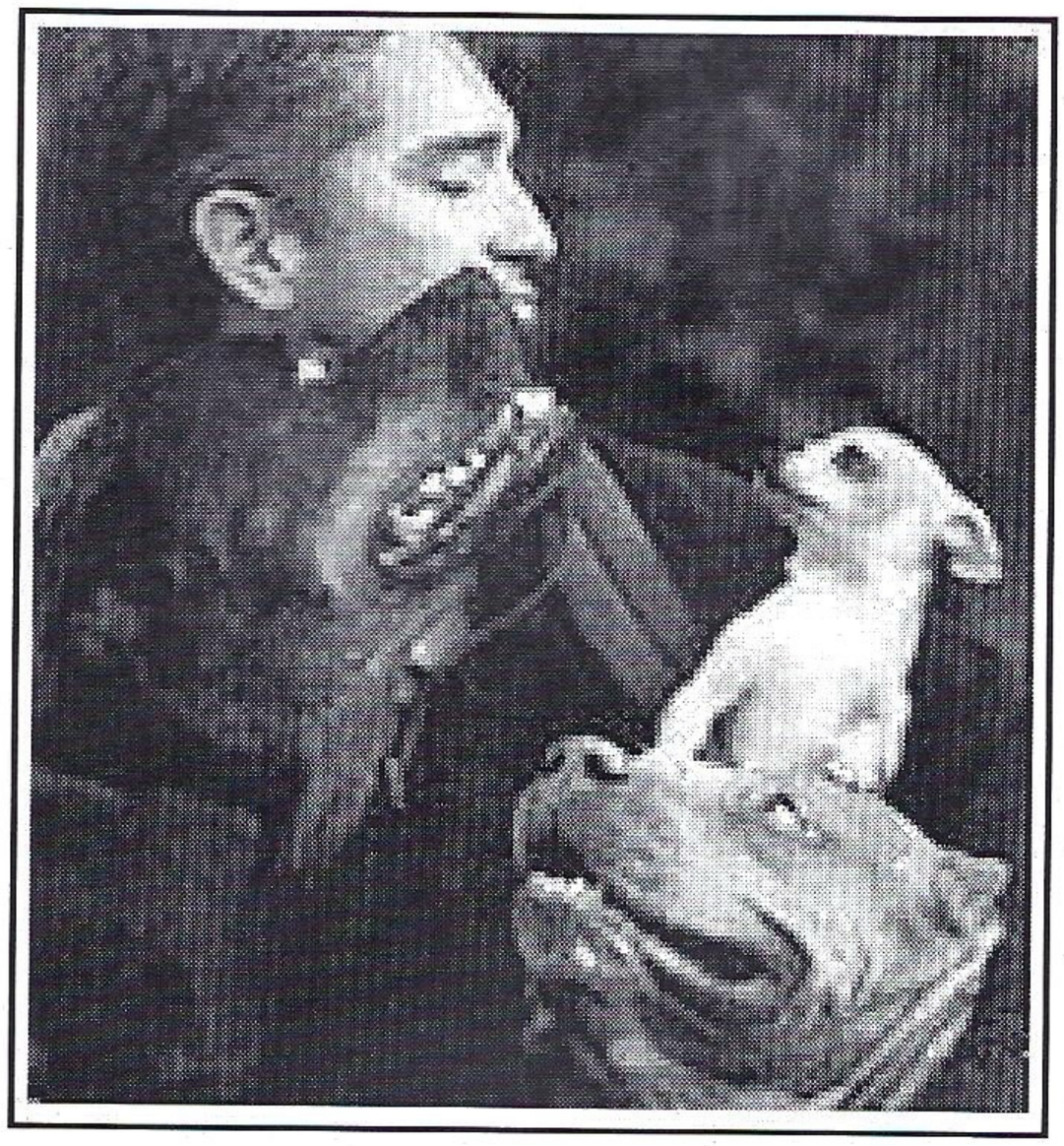
Cesar Millan is on to something brand new. It is, I believe, something not seen before. One may not like what Cesar Millan does with dogs. One may not like Cesar's philosophy, but no one on the planet is doing **ANYTHING** like this. Dick Russell in Louisiana, and David "the Dogman" Klein in Spain, are developing similar programs with something called Large Field Socialization. There is one difference; Dick and David say that their method will not work with battle breeds (dogs that are bred for dog fighting). Cesar Millan says that his method will ***rehabilitate*** battle breeds.

Well, I walked up to Cesar Millan's gate and kicked it with my foot. The gate is tall. Maybe 12 feet high or more, and made of chain link, with some covering over the holes that makes it opaque. I had my mother with me, and two bottles of wine. One white and one red. Cesar Millan opened the gate, and we all did the people greeting thing. The first area that you go into is about the size of a living room, and it is separated from the rest of the compound by a chain link fence. Cesar Millan keeps his big doggie van there, and he had a wooden bench in the shade for visitors (like my MUM) who really aren't all that interested in dogs.

Cesar Millan opened the gate of the compound. He gave me the same instructions that those of you that have seen his show have heard him give other people who have visited. "Keep moving, no eye contact, touch no one." It was cool. All these dogs, somewhere around 30-50, swarmed both of us. Then just me. I kept moving forward through this swirl of dogs. It is as if the dogs push you forward, but strangely, they don't touch you. At least they didn't touch me. Later, I talked to Cesar Millan about this. He said that one's entrance into the yard, and how his dogs react to the person's energy, tells him quite a lot about that person's "energy." He said that sometimes a person's energy causes the dogs to poke at them, whereas others' energy might cause the dogs to jump up on them. He claims he's seen these reactions even when the visitors seem to physically do the same things or act in the same ways. Most of the dogs that were there that day were Pit Bull Dogs, Pit Bull mixes (of all shapes and sizes), Mastiff Mixes, German Shepherd Dogs, Rottweilers, Shar-pei's, one Poodle, one Dalmatian, several American Bulldogs, and a handful of other bull-breed mixes. Most dogs had human aggression problems. The next big group had dog aggression problems. Others were just roughnecks or long-term boarders. Cesar Millan's personal dogs were there in the pack. A dog-killing parti-colored French Bulldog, and two typically fearful Italian Greyhounds.

Cesar has several areas all separated by chain link fence. There is an area where he plans to build an obstacle course. He also has a spot picked out for a pool. There is an area in the rear that has trampolines, a weight bench and a dog house. In his television show, this was the area that contained the doggie jogger. In the back near the office, there is a place where all the dogs sleep. The pens were big, but they never kept just one dog to a pen. The big sleeping pens had platforms with pillows and beds on them. Very comfy.

I did not see the office. There was a little seating area right



off the office that had a table with an umbrella and some chairs. In back of the compound, Cesar has a dog park for the use of his dogs. He complained that it was muddy. It seems the park is mostly grass. I suggested that he put a thick layer of straw down as a way to keep the dogs clean until the rainy season ended. We went into this patio area outside the office, and most of the dogs (of their own will) stayed outside. Only one or two slipped in with us. Cesar ignored them. I followed his lead and ignored them too. Interestingly, most of the pack dogs, once the greeting is over with are relatively uninterested with hanging out with people. At least they were this way with me.

Cesar Millan sat me down and asked about me about my interest in dogs. I told him that I travel to see people who are doing new things with dogs. I mentioned Fred Hassen, Dick Russell, and David "the Dogman" Klein. I explained how I

Cesar Millan Cont'd

used the remote electronic collar. He asked me how I got people to get over their feelings of fear, and I told him. He laughed. Then I noticed the remote electronic collar lying on his table. I asked him about it, and he told me that it just one of the tools that he uses. He said he likes them.

There was a cute Malamute puppy there that belonged to Cesar Millan's helper. I got down on my knees and did the girly-squeaky thing. Bad Move! I wasn't thinking. The dogs in the patio area circled me like tiger sharks hot on the scent of blood. They started "nose popping" me on my back and arms, and then, (good for me) I got up and elbowed them back. I restrained myself, since I knew Cesar Millan had my back. He did the "shhh", and a couple of finger pokes to the dogs that didn't get the message. Then I got back to loving the pup.

Once I got enough of Malamute puppy, Cesar Millan offered to let me see him feed the dogs. Cesar's helper (whose name I have now forgotten) told Cesar that they had already been feed. So, instead, I got a tour of the place. There were several interesting things about the compound. No smell of dog waste, one source of water on a platform, and lots of small and medium platforms sprinkled around the compound (just like on television). I asked him about the platforms. He told me that they were used as places to groom the dogs, or used as part of exercises that teach the dogs to stay in one place. From his description he uses them like the gun dog trainers use tables/drums or like the No Limitations trainers use stools/cots to teach place-board exercises.

As we were walking around, some of the dogs would occasionally growl at each other. While Cesar was aware of it, he didn't correct it. I asked why and he explained that dogs have a right to communicate with each other, and as long as they don't go overboard with it, or as long as they stop when he commands, he lets them do their "dog thing". He then said, "Hey, want to see a cool dog?" He told me that he had a dog that was tough, and would not surrender to him. So, I said sure. Cesar took me to the back pen and showed me this funky looking dog. It was in there with a couple of other dogs. Just hanging out. I said, "What are you doing with that THING?" He looked at me and said, "Do you know what it is?" "Hell yeah." I told him, "That's a Thai Ridgeback. That breed's crazy, with a capital C." He grinned! The history, according to Cesar Millan, was that the dog had "tenderized" his owner several times. It seems that after the last incident (bites to both arms); she decided that the dog needed a firmer hand than hers. The dog was interesting. He wouldn't let Cesar Millan get with in arm's reach, but wasn't running away either. Head up, ears up, and tail up. It seemed like the dog knew a lot about the limited of range of human hands, and he wasn't much interested in getting touched. The dog was naked, meaning it wasn't restrained with any type of training equipment at all. I thought that was unwise, but I didn't say so to Cesar.

Finally, Cesar shrugged his shoulders and we turned and walked away. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw that Cuddles (this Tai Ridgeback) had slipped out right behind us. Strange creature. Very feral, very calculating. In my honest estimation: needs a bullet. While Cesar Millan and I kind of hung around and watched the dogs, the little French Bulldog started barking at my Mum. All the

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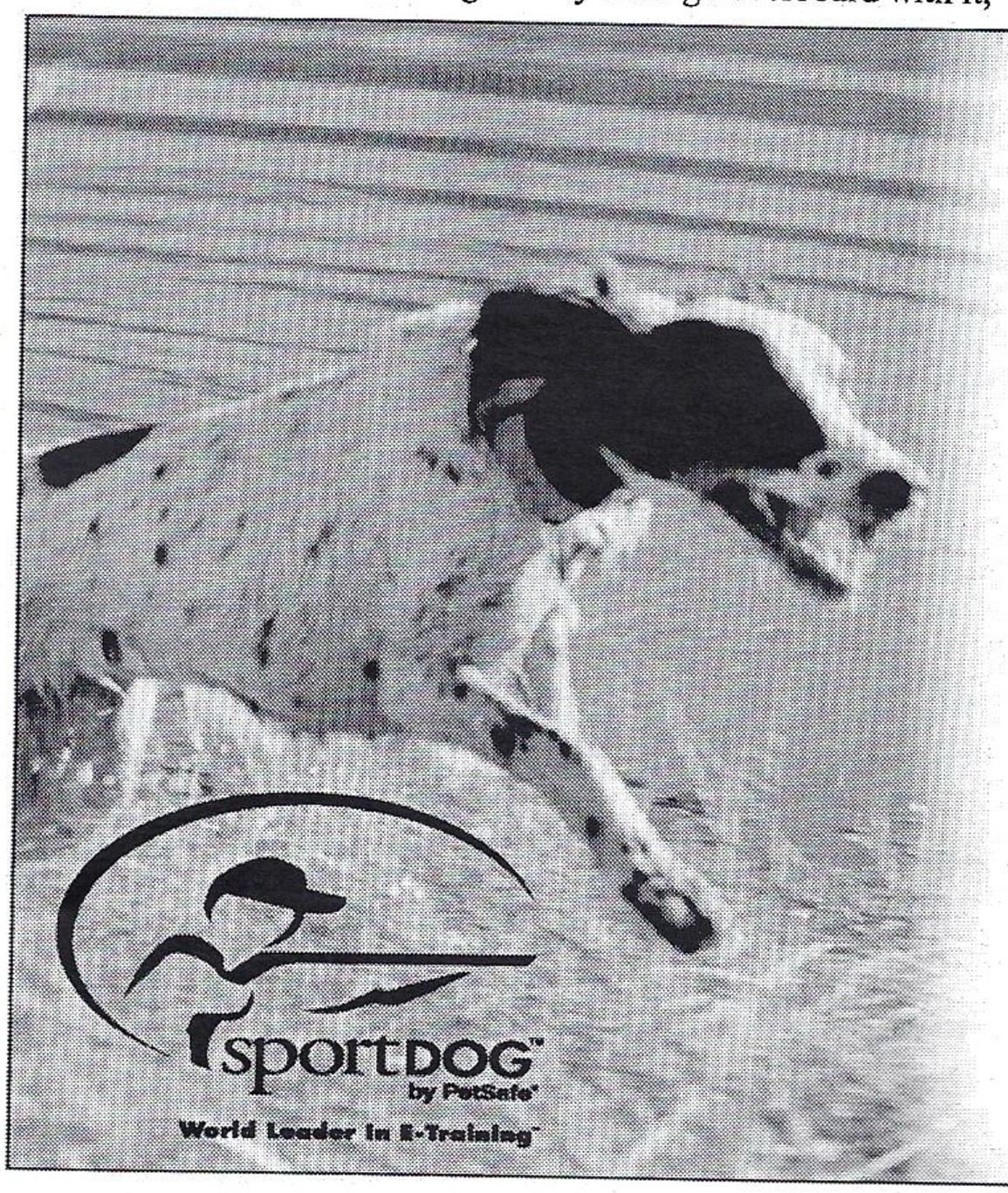

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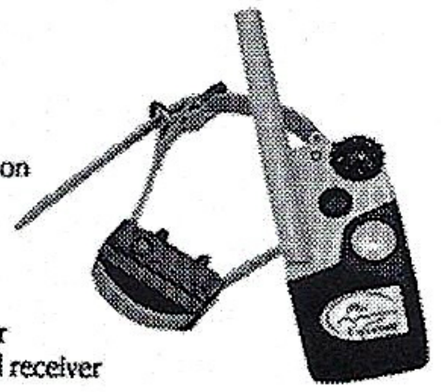

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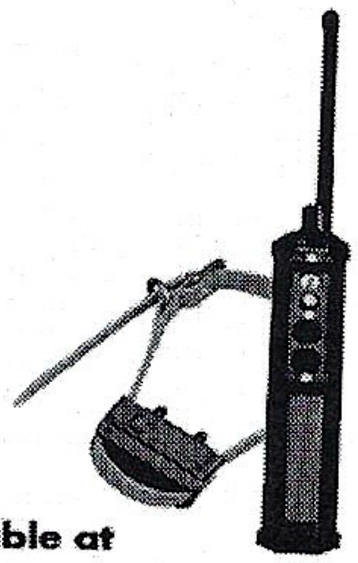

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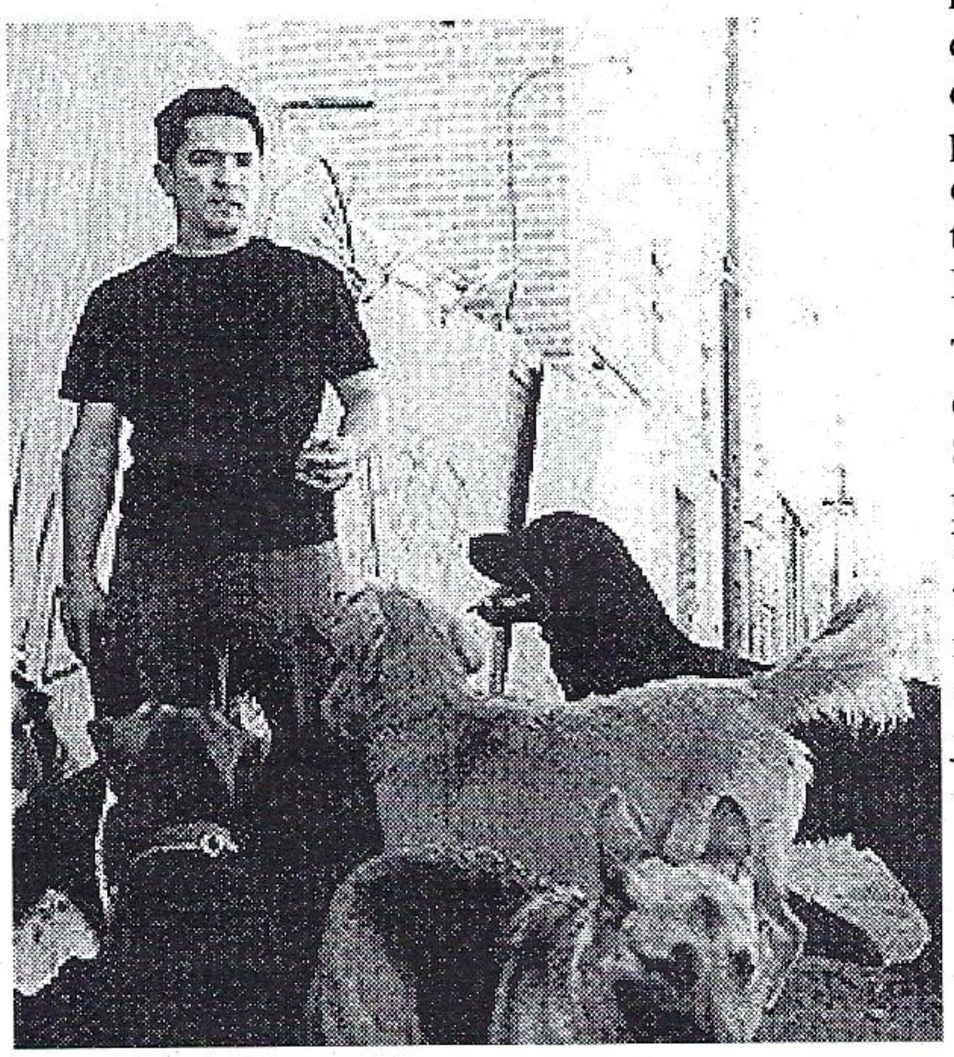
dogs in the compound joined in, and began moving to the fence. I went to the front of the compound, as did Cesar Millan, just to check on things. Me, because I know that my Mum does silly things, and Cesar Millan, just because it's his place. Well, Cuddles, the Thai Ridgeback, ran up to the fence, and was eying my Mum like a choice piece of steak. Beautiful beast. Chow red and cinnamon. I hung out there with him, about 10 feet to the side, just watching. Then, out of the corner of my eye, Cesar Millan starts actually stalking Cuddles, like an African Lion. His posture was very erect and he had a very hard stare on the Thai Ridgeback. Cesar Millan started slow, and when he saw that Cuddles had noticed him, and had turned to face his approach, Cesar Millan speeds up to almost a run. He stopped right on top of Cuddles. Just like an AKC Obedience Competition "Front". Cuddles had his lower jaw on the zipper of Cesar's pants, eyeball to eyeball with Cesar Millan. It looked like they were in love. If only it was so.

I shook my head and eyeballed Cesar Millan. He kept staring at Cuddles, and Cuddles stared back. I moved closer. Neither shifted their eyes to me as I approached. The energy between them was palpable. You could feel them wrestling with each other. Will against will. Then, I saw it! Cuddles the Thai Ridgeback blinked sssslllllooooow-wllly. Then more rapidly. He'd broke! But, he didn't turn his head, didn't lower his head, and didn't shift his eyes from side to side. Cesar Millan won, he still had his balls!! Cesar Millan told me; "I do this all day with him. I charge him! I make him submit. Just a little more each time." Now, during all this time, Cesar Millan and Cuddles the Thai Ridgeback still held eye contact. Then, Cesar Millan said; "Watch this." He raised a hand as if to touch Cuddles on the side of the head. Cuddles made that lovely pursed lip pucker, showing those long, white canines, with a belly growl and stopped blinking. Cesar Millan lowered his hand, but continued to stare. Cuddles blinked. "See Ami, he still won't accept my energy. The dog is too smart. He knows he can beat humans. He has too much skill at biting. He still fights me. But, every day he is better. Every day I win more." Then, Cesar Millan just walked away like Cuddles didn't exist. I shifted my eyes to Cesar Millan, and then back to Cuddles, who had already streaked to the back of the compound. Even Cesar seemed a little taken aback. "Wow, he moves fast." I said; "Yep, Krazy, with a capital K. Why do you still have your huevos?" He laughed. He told me he knows when not to push his luck. Cuddles the Thai Ridgeback just went back to watching us, and we watched him. The other dogs just milled around. We walked around the compound. Cesar gave me more of the "canned Cesar Millan" which was fine, and, as nothing was going to happen, I was going to leave.



Right then, a guy came in with a weird looking dog, and Cesar Millan said, "Great! A client is coming to drop-off a dog. This you should see." This guy comes in with a dog that looks like a Boxer mix. Brindle with white markings. The dog is walking on two legs, even with a prong collar on. You know, the standard bouncy Boxer stuff. Cesar Millan took the dog from the guy, and had him fill out some paper work. The guy filled out the paperwork and left. He didn't stay to watch the show.

Anyway, Cesar Millan held the Boxer at his side, and opened the gate to the compound. All the dogs on the inside crowded around, but this is the cool part, he just did that "shhhh" sound, and they all moved back. I asked him why he was doing that, and he said, "I have to get the pack's energy calm and submissive before I bring the dog in. Otherwise they will fight." The German Shepherd Dogs seemed to test Cesar Millan's boundaries the most. They pushed forward, and had to be sent back more that any of the others types of dogs. Then, Cesar let a few of the dogs come out of the main compound and sniff the dog that he had on the leash. I don't know why he let those dogs out to make first contact. I forgot to ask.

Then I felt it. It was weird. The energy of all the dogs ramped down. Spooky. It was like a drop in temperature. Right then, Cesar Millan brought the dog in, and let him off the leash. The dog was spooky and moved fast all around the perimeter of the compound. Most of the dogs just ignored him, but there were about 10 that really followed closely. Cesar Millan followed this core group. He began to correct some of the dogs. Some were close to the Boxer, but others where at least a body's length away from the Boxer. Cesar Millan really was focused on this little nucleus of dogs. Once things settled down Cesar told me what he was doing. First, he corrected for any social dominant body language no matter how subtle. Any dog's head or any dog's nose positioned over the Boxer's body at all was taboo. Any body slamming or any nose bopping was also forbidden. Then, he also corrected dogs for 'intense' energy. These were all Pit Bulls. Once he pointed it out I could feel it. The Pit Bull dogs would just lock on to the Boxer, but Cesar Millan could make them turn it off. Cesar Millan could even sense what the dogs were doing when he had his back to the pack. Really interesting. Very much like the skills that a good kindergarten teacher has. The eyes in the back of the head deal.

We watched the Boxer for a while. I really felt sorry for it. The poor dog had no idea about how to fit in with a pack of dogs. It did everything wrong. It moved to fast, too close, and too soon. It tried to play with some of the dogs, but the energy of the

Cont'd Page 19

Cesar Millan —cont'd

pack was clearly not "playful." It almost hurt your "soul and spirit" to watch and feel the Boxer. He grated against one's nerves like fingernails on chalkboard. We watched him for an hour. He drooled, and paced, and acted like a geek. The German Shepherd Dogs kept pseudo-herding him. You could tell that they wanted to teach him a lesson, but they all kept an eye on Cesar Millan. When they got too "anal", like Shepherds are prone to do, Cesar Millan made them back off. They were really persistent. More persistent than the battle-breeds. I thought that was interesting. Then, all of a sudden, the pack just went to bed. They all lay down at once. You could feel it, like a text-message went out! Even the Cuddles the Thai Ridgeback laid down. Not the Boxer. He just paced and drooled and kept away from all the people and all the dogs. Poor guy. When I left, the Boxer slipped out, but Cesar got him back. Cesar did the kneeling, side to dog maneuver and changed his energy. That dog just sucked up and into to him!

The closest thing that I have seen to what Cesar does is how the "Force" is used in Star Wars. Cesar Millan really uses the "Force". Like in a "Jedi Knight" kind of way. I have never seen anyone else do that. It is really, really cool. It works and it looks like magic! The "magic" is that he influences all of the dogs (30-60) pretty much all at one time, without training equipment. The dogs all have different histories, different personalities, and yet, they all submit. The cool thing is that the dogs act like a school of salt water fish. They move as one! It is also very interesting to see how the new dog is really at odds with the pack energy! And, yes it can be taught. Cesar has no program set-up, but it is coming. But, if you have **YOU**, and **A DOG** that works with you, you can do Cesar Millan's program. I asked Cesar Millan specifically about this, and he said that in order to make his program work you need a person and a trained dog, plus the dog to be rehabbed. Cesar said that a pack consists of two calm and assertive energies. With a pack of two, you can rehabilitate one dog or a dozen. He said you need the trained dog to translate and demonstrate the skills to the rehab dog. An interesting concept! Cesar has a helper. A young Latino, who, per Cesar Millan, was deathly afraid of dogs before his training as Cesar's helper. This helper handled the dogs well, but compared to Cesar Millan, he was very, very cautious. He "corrected" Cuddles the Thai Ridgeback, but instead of having the dog's jaws on his balls, he kept a distance of about 18 to 24 inches between his body and the dog. Those of you who know about social/flight/fight parameters will know why the man did this.

Cesar Millan will be at 2006 IACP Conference.

****

Ami Moore owns a dog training business in Illinois, Doggie Do Right! Dog Training. She provides two styles of dog training programs, private dog training and doggie boot camp serving the City of Chicago and the surrounding suburbs.

Ami's web address is www.dogdoright.com phone number is 847-284-77760.

The Abuse Excuse—Cont'd

if you swung a golf club at her. And some of the most lovingly treated dogs Ive worked with hit the deck when you clear your throat. My ex-husbands admittedly spoiled Dobe, Ludwig, had lived with us since his conception: I caught him in my own hands as he was born. In many ways he lived a softer life than my dogs (although that life was still filled with fair limitations and training).Luddy never felt a human hand in anything other than an expression of affection. But if one quickly raised one's hand to hang up the car keys or reach down a can of soup from the top shelf, he would cringe a little bit. He would fail this abuse test instantly. To think that a sweet but perhaps genetically soft dog much like Luddy might lose
the chance at a great home because he had a fairly normal reaction to a sudden, unpredictable movement on the part of some well-meaning but totally misguided person is hard to believe. But based on how many times Ive seen people do some type of extemporaneous temperament testing based on what they've read or heard from an erstwhile "expert", Im sure it happens at shelters all the time.

Some adopters tell us point blank that they dont want an abused dog. They assume that because we are a rescue, that most of our dogs are abuse cases. They further assume that if they take a dog which has been abused, there will be a huge problem. Sometimes, it feels like we are trying to "deprogram" this adopter from a cultish belief system as we try to convince him that even the most brutishly treated dog will be very pleased to move on and succeed if guided with compassion and balance . Its our job as responsible dog people to use our heads and not just our hearts, and to remember that there is both more and less to the abuse factor than meets the eye.

A rescued or shelter dog is more than his past experiences. He is a marvelous individual combination of genes, personality traits, nerve, humor and most of all, potential. Those who see him as a victim make him one. Ironically, that in itself is a serious form of psychological abuse:
limiting a dogs ultimate potential in order to feel like we are protecting him from a past he would easily forget, if we would only let go of our hearts ego and allow him to do so.

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NARCOTIC DOGS AND THEIR TRAINING

By Dave McMahon

Is your dog looking for new career directions?

If so, he may want to consider the growing private narcotic detection industry. Narcotic dogs check lockers at high schools and cubicles in office buildings. They help "frisk" students on their way into substance-free dances. Parents even hire drug dogs to check their adolescent' rooms for narcotics.

Drug detection can be lucrative. Private searches start at about $300 for a fully qualified dog and handler team.

Although it's a career instead of a sport, when it comes to drive, rewards and proofing, there are plenty of applications for canine performance from drug dog training techniques.

The first thing to look for is a potential drug dog with high play drive, high ball drive, and lots of retrieving instinct. The dog needs to be extremely well socialized with people and exposed to various environments including unusual terrain or flooring, darkness, various kinds of light, and different smells. The dog's temperament needs to be bomb-proof. A dog that's very sensitive to distractions wont' be able to function in many different situations.

I test dogs for suitability with a hunt drive test. When the dog is about eight weeks old, I put him on a flat -buckle collar and take his favorite toy out to some long grass. I hold the collar, and "load 'em up" or build excitement by enticing him with the toy. Then I throw the toy about six feet. As it lands in tall grass, I let go of the collar and release the dog. What you're looking for is that the dog stays committed to searching for the toy. You don't want a dog that sniffs briefly, then comes back for help.

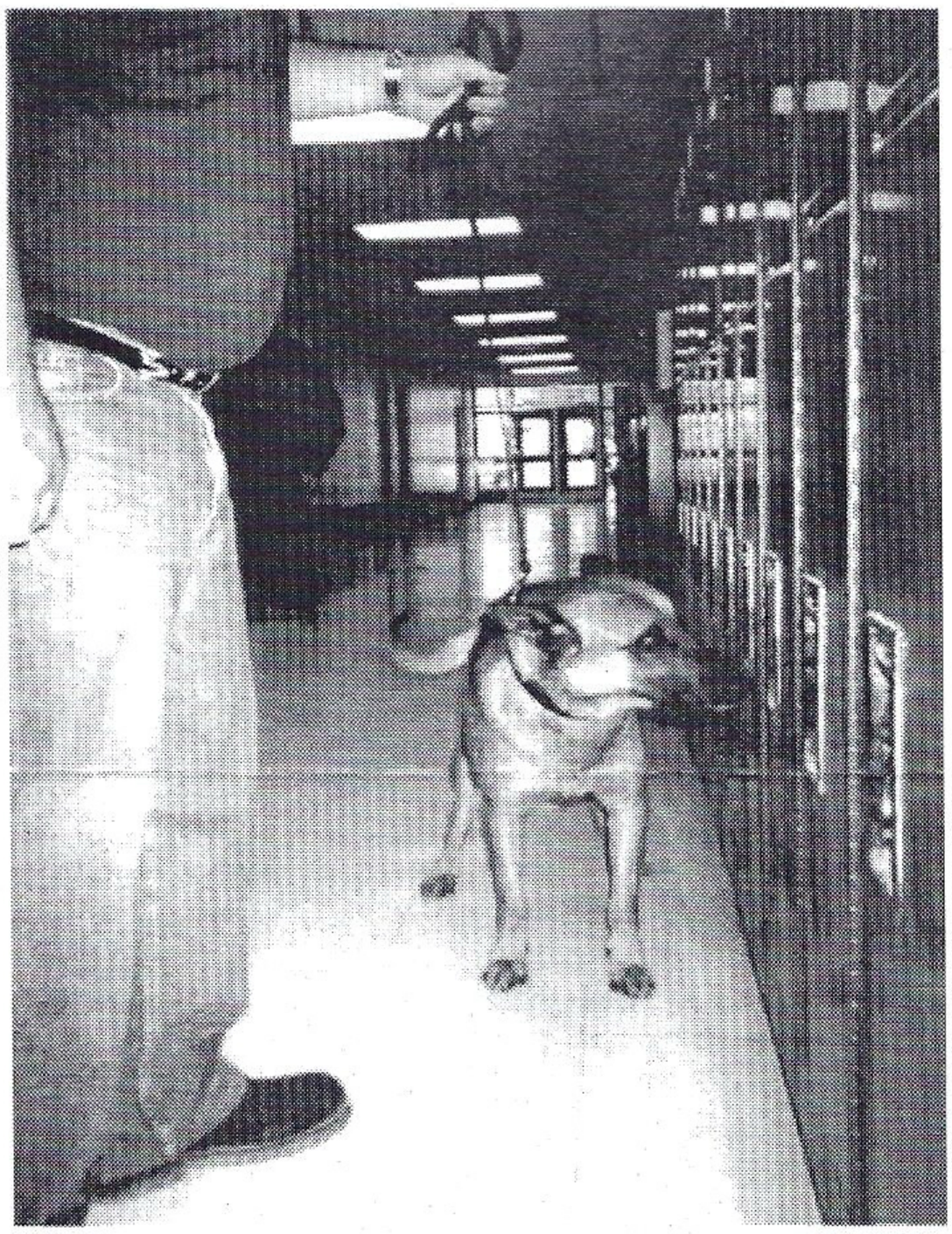
With a good dog, the next step is to focus on socialization, obedience training and building drive. You don't want to encourage your dog to be too submissive or quiet; it's good for him to have some spunk.

When the dog has some maturity and a good foundations, usually at about 15 months old, I start the actual scent training. I purchase some pseudo-synthetics, or phony narcotics. They come in liquid or powder form and are perfectly safe. There is a pseudo-synthetic for every possible narcotic. They don't contain the actual drug; they just smell like they do.

To get the dog to associate his ball with the narcotic scent, I cut open a tennis ball and put the powder inside. Then I poke holes with pins so scent perforates through the ball. This toy is never accessible to the dog except as a reward.

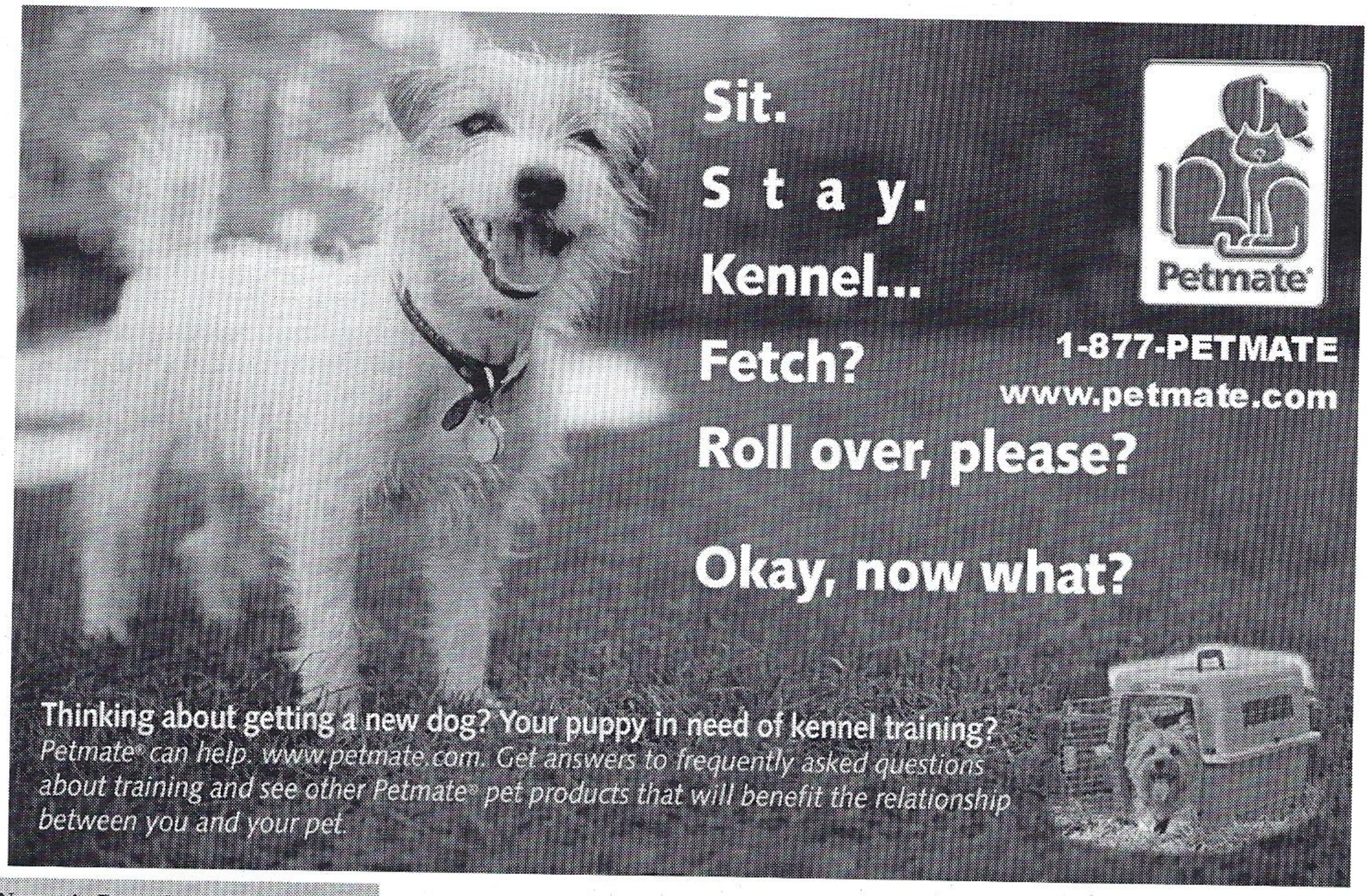
I start with the dog on a leash and a flat-buckle collar, not a pinch or a gentle leader. I get out a pylon. Then I play with the ball to entice the dog, and tuck it under the pylon. I make sure that the dog sees me doing it. I'll give the dog a "search" command and let him go. When he starts to scratch at the pylon, I'll move the pylon to release the ball, and do a play retrieve with the dog.

When the dog gets his ball, it's a primary reinforcer. Through repetition, the dog starts to associate the narcotic scent with his reinforcer, so the narcotic scent becomes a conditioned reinforcer. I'll work at this for several weeks.



Stay on each step longer than you think you need to in order to make it solid. Don't progress too quickly or the dog won't learn thoroughly. Short sessions are important.

The next step is to have two pylons about a foot apart and hide the ball underneath one. Now the dog has to figure out where the ball is. Point to the wrong pylon first, and he won't smell it. The show him the right pylon and allow him to indicate. As you progress, you'll add more and more pylons. Then you can start using different shapes and sizes to conceal the ball, such as a box, a water bowl, etc.



Narcotic Dogs Cont'd

When you introduce proofing, put some food under on of the containers. I use half of a bologna sandwich. If the dog indicates the food, I move him away gently, but I don't pop or correct, so he learns to only scratch for the ball.

The next step is to keep the secondary reinforcer, the ball, kong or toy, hidden on the handler. Place some pseudo-synthetic underneath the container, without the toy. When the dog indicates the drug smell by scratching, drop the ball to the dog without him seeing where it came from. As far as he's concerned, the ball magically appears when he finds the scent.

The next progression is to put the scent in a baggie or a coffee container. Then instead of under a container, gradually the scent becomes more difficult for the dog until he's doing finds on various levels, in different locations and environments, so that pseudo-synthetic is farther away from where the dog can scent.

A great dog training principle that applies here is don't skip steps. If you do, you'll usually have to go back to square one. Help create success fro your dog by going through every step in training until the dog thoroughly learns his job. The dog should win and feel great during every training session.

The final step is to proof the behavior to environments where the dog will have to work, such as schools or community centres. Never expect your dog to learn something at home, then go out and be able to do it in a new environment.

If narcotic dogs search people, they must be taught "passive indication" since it's not appropriate to scratch at a person. This is similar to the kind of passive indication that a bomb dog needs to learn.

Currently I'm training my Malinois for black mold indication. Black mold is caused by water damage and can be very toxic to people.

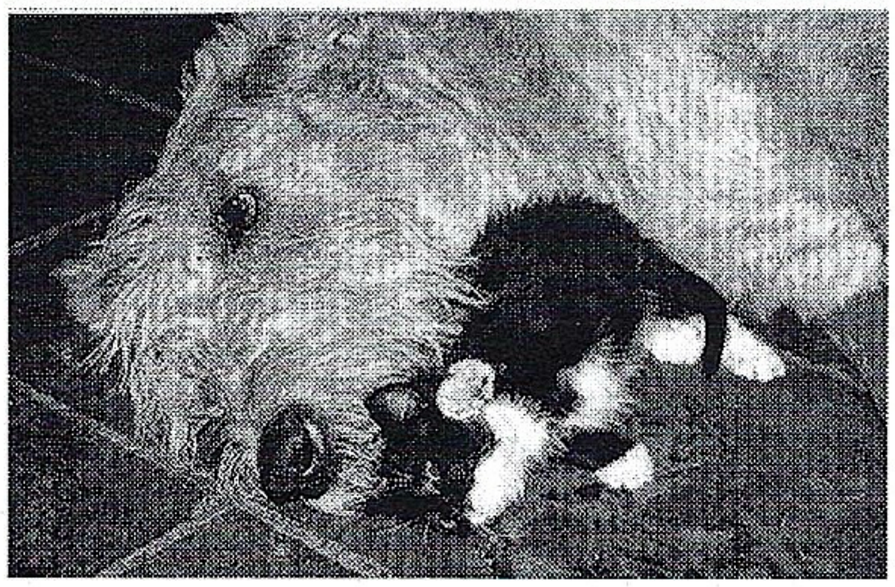
It's very satisfying to give your dog a job that helps people and creates a safer living environment for everyone.

Dave Mc Mahon is a member of the International Association of Canine Professionals. He owns and runs McMahon Dog Training in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Dave comes from a competitive obedience background, and now teaches courses in narcotic detection, canine security and black mold detection. He can be reached through his web site at www.mcmahondogtraining.com.

SOCIALIZATION

by George Hobson and Lynne Gifford

Socialization is not a one time, short-term experience. Socialization is the ongoing exposure of the dog to all of the experiences of life. To be fully successful, it must be done continuously, and on a recurring basis with the possible and varied distractions. The goal of socialization is to help the dog learn to act appropriately around people, other animals, and in the different public and private social situations of human life. A dog can not be considered well socialized until it has demonstrated the ability to act in a confident and relaxed manner to changing environments.



Developing a dog that is mentally balanced, and able to readily adapt to changing environments can not be approached haphazardly. There are well-defined, critical periods in the development of a dog from puppy to adult that need special attention in the work of socialization. These critical periods are recognized because the dog's experiences during them results in documented behaviors and attitudes later in the dogs' life. The first of the periods occurs at age 12 to 16 weeks, and is generally viewed as the most critical. A dog's inappropriate or unacceptable behaviors and attitudes resulting from experiences during this period are often the most difficult to correct.

Recognizing that these periods are when experiences will have a significant impact on the dog, owners must plan and set up the activities and exposures to ensure positive results. As in any training, the factors of distance, duration, degree of difficulty, and distraction level must be integrated into the learning experience. For example, we want to expose a dog to heavy traffic with blaring vehicle horns and loud mufflers for the first time. How would we consider the four factors in planning the exposure?

One approach would be to take the dog to a large, busy parking lot at a mall, and park at the away from the high level of traffic (distance). We would then gradually work closer to the higher levels of traffic and noise (duration) until the dog showed signs of anxiety (degree of difficulty for the dog). Now we have established the level of comfort for the dog that tells us the activity of vehicles and noise (distraction) has become more than the dog can deal with in a calm manner. At this point, socialization has moved from just exposure to a situation, to training for that situation. Failure to recognize a requirement for transition from exposure to specific training is one of the most common reasons for failure, and development of undesirable behaviors.

During socialization that introduces the dog to what could be frightening situations, it is especially critical that the trainer remains calm, and transmits that composure and confidence to the dog. A tight leash, or letting the dog lead its handler away from such situations, has put the human in the follower position with the dog fully in charge. The training has now moved from socialization to fear reinforcement, and the probable development of fear aggression in the dog.

It is also possible for activities not previously causing undesirable reaction, to become ones that are unexpectedly doing so. This may be because there are later periods that required special awareness of the dog's mental development. These periods are generally in the time frames of four to six months, eight to ten months, and sometimes as late as sixteen to twenty months of age. In all cases of expected or unexpected shy or fearful behavior, it is vital that the behavior is not reinforced by coddling or soothing. The dog's actions must be met with the handler's confident, normal demeanor and tone of voice. The sequence of actions for the handler is to: 1. Distract, 2. Redirect, 3. Train.

Fearful and aggressive attitudes regarding a given situation won't go away just because they are ignored, or have been brought under control at a given point. That is why training must take place over the dog's entire life, and distractions repeated whenever possible: exposure to all the vagaries of life is a necessary part of the program. Socialization is no different from other training in that it requires practice to maintain a given level of response, and issues identified during training should be carefully noted for future emphasis in maintaining a mentally healthy and balanced dog.

Keeping a record of the distractions and social situations to which a dog is exposed during its training is a valuable tool in achieving a well-rounded socialization program. A very effective way to do this is by creating a table of activities, which you will use to expose the dog to a wide variety of people, dogs, other animals, and environments. Then use this table as a record of what has been done. This not only provides a record of what has been done, but should be used to identify areas of concern, activities yet to be accomplished, and how long since any given activity has had a turn in the training. The following categories should be used, and expanded to meet individual training needs, in developing a range of activities and issues that should be included in a socialization program.

People

People and dogs get along best when each is respectful of the other. Unfortunately for the dog, many humans have no idea

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how to be respectful from the dog's point of view, and thus the burden of appropriate action falls most heavily on the canine. The dog must be prepared to meet lowed voiced and towering humans that unintentionally present a threatening aura, and small children that back into a corner. It must endure the rough pat of the unknowing as well as the syrupy voice of the uninitiated when offering their unskilled attention. The dog must learn to be calm and confident around men, women, young children, teenagers, and the elderly. It must be exposed to various ethnic groups, sizes of people, and all manner of dress and deportment. This includes people wearing hats or glasses, thick jackets and men with beards. Other examples include people using walkers, canes, or wheelchairs, and those holding umbrellas. It is important to think ahead of any human type or behavior the dog may possibly face in the future and set up the appropriate training scenarios. An effective technique in this particular realm of socialization is to enlist the aid of friends and relatives to stage training scenarios involving unusual dress and activities, and introduce the dog to a variety of different types of people.

Other dogs

Interaction with other dogs is an important element in a well-rounded socialization program. A dangerous misconception is that of a dog getting along with all dogs, just because it gets along with one or two others. Dog parks are not recommended for this activity as the variety of untrained dogs, on and off leash, presents a significant potential for a bad experience. In general, if you see another dog owner approaching you with their dog in the lead or on a tight leash, you should move away and ask the owner not to approach you as both of these activities are warning signs about an uncontrolled dog with unpredictable actions. The best place to develop canine social skill is in a controlled class. The ideal situation is to find a class that offers group socialization with all dogs off leash. Regardless of the class situation for socialization, it's imperative to find a trainer knowledgeable in dog body postures and behavior during socialization, and who will help to maintain control of the situation. Groups where the ideal socialization can occur should include big dogs, little dogs, young dogs, old dogs, and dogs from a variety of breeds. These dogs should be allowed to do dog things under control. Humans cannot teach dog-to-dog manners and social skills to dogs. For example, we must not assume obedience to heeling past other dogs (reliability to command) is a display of socialization (lack of anxiety while doing so). Owners can certainly train to a level that achieves one dog ignoring another while under command, but the dog's level of confidence to act appropriately in the absence of command will be enhanced by socialization.

Other animals

Dogs should also be exposed to a wide variety of other types of animals. Pet stores that allow dogs are good places to encounter birds, fish in tanks, cats, strange dogs, and sights and scents not otherwise available. Consider again what other animals the dog might possibly encounter in his lifetime. Consider finding a place where the city dog might come across horses, cows, ducks, squirrels, rabbits, etc. As with all work in socialization, the handler's calm and confident attitude is critical in achieving and maintaining a calm attitude in the dog.

Environment

Environmental challenges can come in the most mundane form, as well as the exotic. There are dogs that absolutely refuse to walk on tile flooring, and others that find a glass door an unexpected and painful barrier. The country dog that must endure a hotel elevator for the first time, should not do so with a crowd of people. The city dog that is given its freedom in the forest may quickly become lost, just as the farm dog loose on a city street is apt to be overwhelmed by the cacophony of vehicle noise, fumes, and general activity. Careful and planned introduction into new environments should start early and with short duration. Just as country dogs need exposure to city life, city dogs need to go to the country to encounter new sights, smells, animals and terrain. Whether they are city or country dogs, they should be exposed to various types and levels of noises, and visual stimuli (including bright lights, the dark, and moving objects). Also important are a variety of textures and walking surfaces such as metal grates, tile, gravel, dirt, cement, linoleum, grass, wood, and moving surfaces.

How much, and when to expose the dog to any given activity, are two important considerations in developing your socialization plan. The planned use of activities, the duration of exposure to them, the degree of difficulty they represent to the dog, and the distance of the activity from the dog at its first exposure, must be mixed and matched in that decision. When to do so must be done with judgment rather than any set formula or time frame. The critical periods may vary somewhat from dog to dog, and sensitivity is affected by previous exposure and genetics. The decisions as to how much, and when are as much in the realm of art as in the practical implementation.

However, there are three rules that may be applied to every socialization activity. First, the handler must be calm and in control from the dog's point of view. When the handler projects the confidence and energy that he is going to take care of this "normal but unusual" situation the dog is far less likely to attempt to do so by flight or fight. Secondly, any given situation must be handled according to the needs of the dog. Always introduce activities that may be highly stressful or unusual at a level that will allow the dog to encounter them at distance, and without feeling threatened. Lastly, remember that socialization is a lifelong activity, and those activities not revisited will fade in the order of reliable and predictable response.

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George Hobson and Lynn Gifford are both Professional Members of IACP

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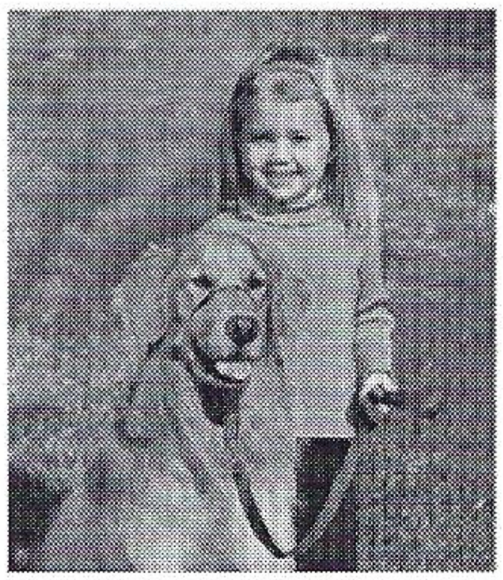

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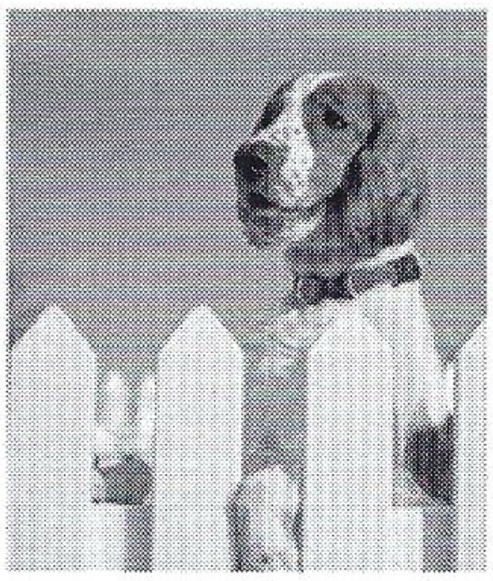

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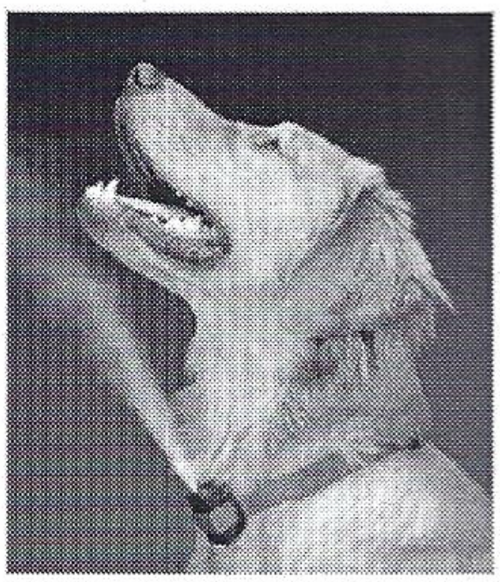

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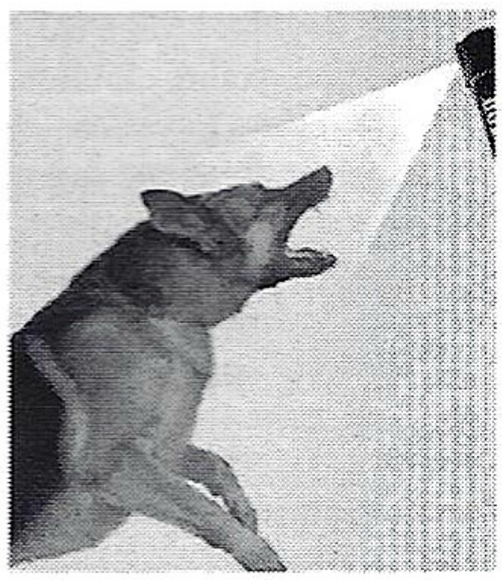

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