

IACP

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANINE PROFESSIONALS

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International Association of Canine Professionals

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The International Association of Canine Professionals is dedicated to the education, development, and support of dog training professionals world-wide. The IACP provides a community where experienced dog trainers mentor, guide and cultivate members to their full potential. Our commitment to the highest quality training increases our members' skills and abilities, develops professional recognition, and improves communication on training best practices. We support our members' rights to properly use and promote effective, humane training tools and methods to create success for each dog and owner, while expanding the understanding and cooperation among canine professionals and dog owners across the full spectrum of the canine industry.

In achieving these aims through education and training, the IACP works actively to reduce cruelty and abuse to canine partners.

For Those Dedicated to the Well Being of Dogs



How to Join IACP:

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

ASSOCIATE MEMBER — Less than five years experience as a canine professional but practicing as a professional. Can use the IACP name and logo on business materials. May not vote.

AFFILIATE MEMBER — intended for those who support the goals, positions, and mission of the IACP, but are not canine industry professionals. This membership applies to everyone who loves dogs and wishes to support the IACP's mission to insure the betterment of dogs worldwide. See website for membership restrictions.

Annual Fees:

Professional \$125.00; Associate \$100.00; Affiliate \$65.00

An additional \$30 fee applies for initial processing costs of Professional and Associate members only.

Benefits:

All IACP members receive an electronic copy of The Canine Professional Journal, have access to our email list, seminars, educational materials, business support materials, events and activity calendars, regional group participation, and our Certification Programs. Discounts for sponsor services are available to members.

Applications and renewals can now be paid through MasterCard, Visa, and AMEX.

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Cover photo by Derek Bryson

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Want to be published? Here's your chance!

The Canine Professional Journal editor is looking for submissions relating to all aspects of professional canine care. Articles should be of interest to a diverse membership of canine pros and should range from 800 to 1,500 words. Articles are subject to editing.

PHOTO submissions are welcome, too!

Cover submissions should be vertical/portrait orientation, high quality, and in original format.

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President's Letter

by Melanie Benware

Change isn't always easy, but it is necessary and inevitable. The IACP is in its twenty-second year and has come a long way since our founders came together to create an organization that was needed for an ever-changing industry. They knew that the best way to stand up for our rights to use tools and methodologies that allow for flexibility in working with dogs was to come together. Each Board has dealt with its own fair share of changes and struggles, all trying to do what they felt was right for the organization. This current board is not only aiming to ensure that those that came before us would be proud, but that the boards of the future would have a brighter path.

We are a Board with diverse backgrounds, loads of opinions, and a drive to make lasting change for a solid future. We understand we cannot please everyone and are willing to have deep, hard discussions to make informed decisions. Below are some changes you can expect to see in the near future.

The Board has voted to start the process of hiring a professional, qualified, and experienced Executive Director. This is a huge decision for the organization, but we feel strongly that for us to move to the next level and be the premier canine professional organization, we need to put someone in place that will work with the board to solidify our future.

As an organization that has been around for over 20 years, we know that to set the new Executive Director and the Board up for success we need to be assessed by a Not-for-Profit Consulting Company. This company will

not only assess our policies and procedures, they will look for areas in home office that can be streamlined and upgraded to help us run more efficiently as well as training for the Board and Officers. They will also be helping us with a plan for marketing, fundraising and growth.

As this Board is putting in countless hours for the organization, we could not do it without our hard-working committees. Many times volunteering for an organization is a thankless job but we all do it because we have a strong passion and dedication to the IACP. I want to take this time to thank our committees: Certification Committee, Education Committee, European Members Committee, Legislative Committee, Service Dog Committee, and our Therapy Dog Committee.

The Board has also decided to add on three new committees to focus on areas we know are essential to the organization.

Marketing Committee: Marketing is an area that we have always struggled with. Although we have grown over the years, that growth can explode with a proper marketing strategy and a strong team to focus on it. We not only need to market ourselves to the canine profession, we need to have a strong presence with the public and our own members. It never ceases to amaze me how little our members actually know about what the board and the committees are doing. The minutes are available, and updates are given periodically, but we need to improve our process for sharing what we do. We know this will help increase engagement and passion from all of you!



Member Support Committee: This committee will focus on growth and retention for the organization. Helping to take new members and bring them into the organization with a sense of purpose and belonging as well as making sure our longer-term members have the support and benefits they need to find value in their membership.

Protection Sport Committee: We chose to focus on Protection Sport because we know that of the sports we can participate in with our dogs, bite sports are often the most misunderstood to the public. We not only want to highlight the level of passion, skill and standards this area of the industry requires, but that it is our first line of defense against laws banning us to participate in sports with our dogs. If activist groups can successfully ban bite sports they will use it as a model to come after other sports as well.

I want to also take this time to thank all of the Board and Officers who have put in so much time and hard work these past nine months. It has been a difficult year and I appreciate each and every one of you. This is my seventh year volunteering on this Board, my third as President, and I can say without any reservation that this is the best group of people I have had the pleasure to work with. We don't always agree; but we are always willing to have thoughtful, respectful debate and

discussion. I thank each and every one of you for checking ego at the door and putting in the hard work necessary to run this organization.

I also want to welcome our three new Directors: Christine Hixon, Tori Tilley, and Martin Wright. Your 2022 Officers and Directors are:

Officers:

Melanie Benware, President

Jeff Scarpino, Vice President

Jack Clark, Treasurer

Bonnie Boger, Secretary

Directors:

Rick Alto, Director Oversight Service Dog Committee

Tracy Atkins, Director Oversight Therapy Dog Committee and Member Support Committee

Glenn Cooke, Director Oversight Protection Sport Committee

Jack Clark, Director Oversight Financials

Adam Gibson, Director Oversight Complaint Procedures

Christine Hixon, Director Oversight Legislative Committee

John Imler, Director Oversight European Members Committee

Petra Sheeley, Director Oversight Certification Committee and Education Committee

Tori Tilley, Director Oversight Marketing Committee

Martin Wright, Director Oversight Sponsorship

I look forward to serving with all of you as we make giant strides into the future!

Respectfully,

Melanie Benware

Melanie Benware, CDT/CDTA/PDTI, President
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Culture and Core Values

by John Imler

Recently we presented a set of Core Values that would help define the “Culture” of the International Association of Canine Professionals. These values include Inclusion, Attitude, Curiosity, Play and Standards.

In an industry where the common phrase is “the only thing 2 dog trainers can agree on is the 3rd one is wrong,” maybe we can start to chip away at that assumption.

How do we do that?

By embracing and following the new set of Core Values and being a “Canine Professional” through and through.

The values were selected based on the role they play in our everyday lives with our colleagues, clients, the general public, and the dogs we interact with.

The goal is for the members to embrace these and allow the IACP to become a place where agreement and disagreement can be done in an environment of support amongst the members. There is no need for belittling of others and general unprofessional conduct in an organization made up of professionals spanning the globe.

In addition to the above, the creation of a single IACP “culture” that can be duplicated and followed regardless of your location on the planet allows for members from various countries to come together and interact in an environment where the goal is to train dogs and not get into petty squabbles.

INCLUSION

We have made it clear that as an organization we are inclusive of individuals regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, age, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, national origin, or current country of citizenship. As an organization we are also inclusive of methodology and the use of tools based on the IACP Position Statement on the Use of Training Tools.

“The desired result of any training program is to produce a dog which performs its tasks not only reliably, but with enthusiasm and joy. An experienced, professional trainer is knowledgeable about the tools of their trade, and has been schooled in how best to use them to effectively and humanely communicate with a dog. Training tools, when properly utilized, are safe and humane.”¹

We are the only professional organization that truly welcomes all methodologies as long as the dog is “In Safe Hands.” It can be a truly amazing thing to watch colleagues with different perspectives come together and discuss different methodologies while respecting each other and how they train.

ATTITUDE

We are professionals and our attitude should demonstrate that. We provide a respectful place where questions can be asked and differences of opinion are respected as long as the dog is “in Safe Hands.” We represent the organization in our daily interactions. This should be no surprise, as it is part of the Code of Conduct we all agree to as members.

“Members shall conduct themselves in a businesslike and professional manner while maintaining empathy and understanding for the needs of the client, customer and dog.”²

We act professionally, and by doing so we can elevate our organization and our industry to a level on par with other professional organizations in other fields.

CURIOSITY

Be curious and never stop learning or trying to see other perspectives to problems. This was evident at Virtual Conference, where we had a number of professionals representing different approaches from other dog training organizations speaking during the same conference. We provide our members with various approaches because while

some of our members can use tools, a portion of our members live in areas where certain tools are illegal. It is our duty to provide them alternatives, and as professionals, our curiosity should motivate us to look to alternatives we may not have previously thought of.

Ultimately, we should seek out answers and spend time finding solutions.

This “curiosity” should drive us to raise the bar in our respective areas of interest, whether obedience, sport, behavior or specialized tasks.

PLAY

We often hear “our clients just want us to solve problems.” Unfortunately, there’s more to it, and we have to build relationships. Most people who hire dog trainers expect to work with their dogs to learn to hold a “sit” or a “down” and while obedience plays a large role in training, it’s not the whole relationship.

Play is part of a happy, healthy existence. That goes for us and for our dogs. Watch a healthy pack of dogs and you will see good “play.” We can learn a lesson or two from them.

Embracing “play” helps show the public and our clients that we are human and can “goof off” with our dogs. We let them see it’s not all robotic commands and movements, and that the dogs are enjoying the process as much as we are.

We all know that our industry can be full of disagreements and discontent, especially online. Let’s seek joy in the simple things that bring us together, like letting our dog sniff a spot, chase a toy, or run “off leash” in a field.

This is true balance--a dog and a human that can be serious and focus on a task but also play and have fun.

STANDARDS

Martin Deeley presented a set of standards for pet dog training many years

back and it provides a blueprint for us to use to agree on what a “trained dog” looks like.

Why is this important?

It is important because, without standards, methodology is irrelevant.

If there are no standards, a “purely positive” approach where all stress is removed and the dog is simply managed forever is just as effective as an approach that uses all quadrants and accomplishes amazing tasks.

Establishing a set of standards that we hold ourselves accountable to will give us an advantage as our industry comes under fire for tools and

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methods. If we do not define what the standards of a “Professional Dog Trainer” are, another organization will.

“The burden of regulation and supervision by government can be reduced by improving the standards of practice of professionals and the regulatory capacity of professional communities. It has been argued that professionalism represents a distinct form of regulation in itself.”³

By defining and establishing a high standard, we set the bar for others to follow.

In summary, as we continue to grow, the establishment and development of an IACP Culture based on the above Core Values will play a role into taking the International Association of Canine Professionals into the next decade.

References

1 IACP Position Statement on Training Tools <https://www.canineprofessionals.com/position-statements>

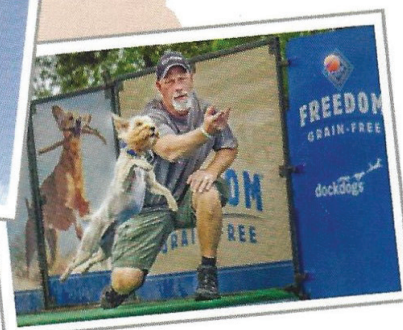
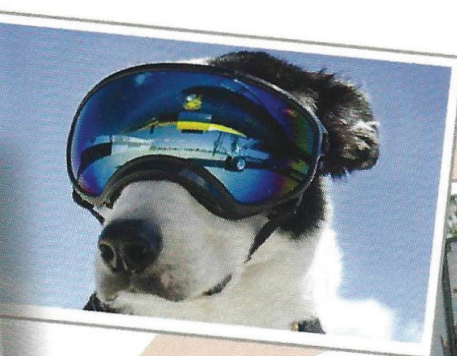
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John Imler walked away from a successful position at a Fortune 500 company and turned a lifelong passion of working with animals into a career. John has attended National K9 School for Dog Trainers and over the years has pursued advanced studies in Applied Ethology and Behaviorism in dog training under leading experts in the industry, both academically in the classroom, and practically in the field. He also volunteers his time working with horses at a local stable that offers riding lessons and equine therapy. He has served on the Legislative Committee as a member, Chair of the Legislative Committee and currently serves as it's Director Oversight. He is passionate about standards in dog training, incorporating our dogs in our everyday lives, and protecting a dog's ability to do the things humans have genetically wired them to do, whether through dogsports or active working roles. He is a veteran and graduate of the University of Louisville. He lives outside of Louisville, KY with his family, his 3 dogs (Ava, a rescued large breed mix, Scout, a Rhodesian Ridgeback, Margot, a Belgian Malinois) and 8 chickens.

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Marketing for Dog Trainers: How to Save Money and Time

by Tori Leigh Tilley

Part 1

Marketing for small businesses can sometimes feel like walking 20 untrained dogs at once. With core social media platforms dominating user time and new apps popping up each year, it can be challenging to know where you should spend your time, energy, and resources. The solution is likely more simple than you think. As canine professionals, we connect with our clients on a deeply personal level. Some of us travel into client homes, some of us welcome strangers into our own. Some of us own personal dogs known far and wide, and some of us think of clients' dogs as members of our own family. We are working with owners on changing their routines and relationships. We go well beyond the title of "dog trainer." For these reasons, and many more, we have the ability to utilize organic marketing tools that allow us to spend less money on marketing than most other industries. In the next few issues of the Canine Professional Journal, we will break down five steps that your company can take to create a better marketing system that is inexpensive and will build itself with a little consistency.

Build a Community that is Eager to Share YOU with the World

In recent years, the most undervalued, yet powerful, tool in the dog world has become word of mouth. It was the foundation that the older generation of breeders and trainers relied upon, before the internet, and all of its complexities, existed. It was based on relationships between the business owner and the client. There was a time where word of mouth was not a numbers game based on how many hits each post could get. This is not to say that having a viral TikTok video isn't cool, nor that 10,000 followers on Instagram isn't a milestone in need of celebrating. As entrepreneurs, the

question that needs to be addressed is, are those followers and shares converting into customers? Of the hundreds of people who may watch and like your content, how many will actually come to see you? How many will spend their money for your knowledge? Are you spending time creating content for an audience who will never meet you? Your time allotted for marketing is likely miniscule compared to the rest of your responsibilities. Your resources must go where they will make the most impact. Being realistic about whether or not you'll be the next famous online dog trainer is critical. If followers aren't converting to customers, it may be time to readjust your mindset.

Rather than thinking about turning followers into clients, turn your clients into followers. Your clients can then operate as your marketing team. One person can refer thousands of dollars worth of revenue to you. The people who know you, use you, trust you, and develop relationships with you are much more likely to use your services again and spread the word. In fact, statistics show that repeat clients are the backbone of revenue. According to FiveStars, "61% of small businesses report that more than half of their business comes from repeat customers." The National Law Review claims that, "It can cost 5x more to acquire new customers than to keep current ones." Nielsen's study shows that, "92% of consumers say they trust word of mouth or recommendations from family and friends." Data doesn't lie. Whether someone is using your services on repeat or sending you dozens of new clients, holding onto and cultivating existing clients is better for your company in the long run. Based on a review of my company's evaluation and intake forms, 89% of my customers find me through a referral of a current client, of a former client, or through someone in my personal network. My clients do receive points in our referral program for this, which we will discuss another time. Many trainers in the IACP

have businesses that look and operate similar to mine, and if you are also tracking how people find you, you are probably seeing the same trends. Why spend your precious time working to earn that 11% when your clients could be sending you 89%?

Word of mouth looks different today than it did even ten years ago. Today, it may be a tag on an Instagram post, a share to a user's story or feed, or a video link sent to a friend. It has expanded beyond a well-trained dog catching a neighbor's eye. So how do you capture that? How do you become a company with a loyal following? How do you get comments, likes, tags, and shares that can easily convert to customers? How do we activate our current clients and network?

It starts with building a community and blending the old way of marketing with the new.

I would like to share with you how I have managed to build a loyal following and community with my customers. I am a pet dog trainer who focuses on obedience and some behavior modification. My company is not doing anything earth shattering in

the world of dog training. I keep my head down, and I train dogs and their people. Somehow, I always manage to stay booked 3-5 months out, and almost 90% of those clients are finding me through organic channels. While this marketing method has worked for me and for my ideal customer, your marketing plan can (and should) be modified to fit your customer base. Knowing your customer, and what applications you'll find them on, is the first step. The customer base that I seek based on my price point, the driving distance to get to me, and the amount of time and work my training programs take, helped me decide that my company would have a strong presence on FaceBook (FB) and Instagram (IG). FB has over 290 million users in the United States. That means that the chances are exceptionally high that clients are already utilizing the app, making it convenient to access us through it. There are 115 million IG users in the United States. While not nearly as many as FB, one of my main target markets (young professionals without children) make up a significant portion of those users. I'm going to focus this column's advice on how



I leverage FaceBook and Instagram to get my clients involved in marketing. There are dozens of other apps and platforms that may work better for you. Figure out who your target audience is and what apps they are on, then build from there.

The day my clients start their programs, they are asked to “like” us on FaceBook and Instagram. I can justify this, because their dog will be posted on both pages, and I know they do not want to miss it! Posts consist of a clear and cute picture of the dog with the dog’s name, a quick blurb about what we’re working on and why, and 2 consistent hashtags. These posts usually take 2-3 minutes to produce from start to finish. I shoot a text to the owner, so they know their dog is up, and I remind them that they’re welcome to share their rockstar! Each dog who stays with me for boarding or residency programs also gets a highlight bubble on our Instagram page that is updated 2-3 times per day with a 5-10 second video or photo, and a blurb of what they’re working on. I usually record these in the last moments of our training session and post it before putting them in their kennel to grab the next dog. If I know that dog has their own Instagram account, I tag them in it! This gives owners the chance to follow their dog’s progress during their stay and is a safe space for me to document it. That collection is always fun to play back at the end of their stay or months later when I need to remember what we have previously done. The inherent nature of this kind of sharing is that it will naturally foster engagement with multiple posts for owners to brag and share. Owners want their network to know where their dog is, what their dog is learning, and how proud they are of their dog. Now when Buddy’s grandma, groomer, and dog walker see and share that post as well, you are hitting multiple audiences with your post, most of those audiences well outside of your network. Not only is your hard work being shared with the world, but you did not have to pay a dime. At my company’s busiest time of year, I post 2-3 dogs a day. Between the residency dogs, boarding dogs, private lesson dogs, weekly classes, and monthly events, the content is there. I have heard many people say, “I’m too busy training dogs to take photos.” I’ve never been too busy in all my years,

through my longest days, to not have a moment to snap a photo of someone’s dog doing something fun, interesting, or just plain cute. I have never once found an owner who was upset over it. Just by focusing your energy into one or two spaces and consistently posting dog content, you can create a method where proud owners hit that share button every single time (even if you need to schedule the posts out all in one day).

Clients are also given access to our private FaceBook group the day they start their programs. Brand building, marketing, and commitment to training in today’s day and age requires you to *stay relevant*. To do that, I created a space where my clients communicate with one another. The primary daily function of the group is to operate as a space where owners are encouraged to post their questions, so members can learn from each other. This gives me the ability to not only stay connected to my clients and their struggles, but also create more pride in their training, and, in turn, more commitment to their training and loyalty to me. In the group, there are hundreds of training

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videos that I have recorded over the years. It is where owners of dogs enrolled in a residency program find their daily homework. I “Go Live” 2-3 times a week on topics from how to teach your dog the difference between kids toys and dog toys to how to teach Paper Plate Recall off of a fence line. If a common theme is getting discussed in multiple lessons or if we have a breakthrough moment in a group class each week, I make a video on it. Having pre-recorded videos allows me the ease of directing clients to answers without having to type them out. When asked a question, I am able to say, “Hop on the group page, and look up ‘How to stop barking,’ then let me know if you have any questions” or just tag the post and close the comments. Talk about a time saver! The videos also keep me relevant with the “free” training advice clients have access to for dozens of topics that they didn’t even know they wanted! In this group, we post the sign ups for our weekly group classes, event notices for our Pack Walks and community get togethers, etc. So if clients want access to continued education through my company, they need to stay involved on the page. Thanks to COVID-19, we got really creative in the group over the past 18 months. With monthly challenges, like the “March Meltdown” and “February Box Feeding Challenge,” owners were tasked with uploading their dog’s progress for everyone to see to earn points and prizes. Winners were voted on at the end of the month by the group! Clients can share their success for the week on our “Tell Me Something Good” post each Thursday, and I can’t tell you how hard we celebrate each other’s wins and support each other’s losses. Whether they met at a community event or just chat in the group, my community is always there for a high five or a commiserating sigh. Clients will see each other wearing our leashes, t-shirts, fanny packs, etc. out at parks and find each other through the group to reconnect later. It truly is a community for my clients to get to know one another, support one another, and continue to learn, and forming this group changed my company for the better.

One person also has the power to rally the wrath of hundreds of keyboard warriors writing 1 star

reviews. One person has the power to help you reach thousands of people in your area. You can spend your time creating content that *may* go viral or you can foster relationships with people who are thankful for your work and want to help you succeed. Word of mouth is a powerful tool. Used correctly, you can create a marketing team who will share your content far and wide for you, free of charge.

Resources:

27 Statistics that Prove Repeat Business is Where it’s At

<https://blog.fivestars.com/26-statistics-that-prove-repeat-business-is-where-its-at/>

Global Trust in Advertising and Brand Messages
<https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/report/2012/global-trust-in-advertising-and-brand-messages-2/>

How to Gain and Retain Clients

<https://www.natlawreview.com/article/how-to-gain-and-retain-clients-establishing-ltr-differentiators>

Tori Tilley owns Pawlished Dog Training in Mentor, KY (Greater Cincinnati, OH). Her company focuses on pet dog training from puppy pre-school to behavior modification. Tori is in the process of co-founding a Service Dog non-profit, which has been her dream for 20 years. Tori prioritizes education inside and outside of the dog training world, always taking courses, reading books, and consuming as much information through as many mediums as possible. She is a Certified Professional Trainer through National K9. Tori earned a BBA in Marketing, a BBA in Entrepreneurship, and a Certificate in Deaf Studies from the University of Cincinnati. She currently serves on the International Association of Canine Professionals's Legislative Committee and will join the Board of Directors next term.

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Therapy Dog Committee Update

by Tracy Atkins

As the Director Oversight to the Therapy Dog Committee, I am honored to share a little bit about who we are and what we are hoping to accomplish.

The main objective for the Committee is to assist and educate canine professionals in the training and use of therapy dog teams.

The creation and implementation of a completely new and premier Therapy Dog Program has taken many years for the IACP to develop. A goal of the IACP Therapy Dog Program will be to provide our members with the opportunity to utilize the highest standards in the Therapy Dog industry to create a contemporary, growing, efficient, fun, and rewarding Therapy Dog Program.

The committee takes this commitment seriously and knows that implementation will likely take several years to reach its full potential. To that end, the committee has broken down the tasks into phases to help them navigate the tremendous project.

Phase 1 – Documentations and Process – Current Phase

Documentation -

The creation of a Therapy Dog Evaluator manual and exam, as well as a Therapy Dog Team (handler) manual and exam are in the final stages of updating and copywriting.

Program Process -

In the spring of 2022, the committee anticipates the release of our Evaluator exam. This will allow IACP Certified Dog Trainers, CDT's and higher to study the manual then take the exam, and, once passed, to become a Certified Therapy Dog Evaluator.

Evaluators may use their certification to enroll, instruct, and evaluate their clients to study the TEAM Manual and if the client and their dog pass the exam, they will become a registered IACP Therapy Dog TEAM.

The Evaluator may choose to create TEAMS to establish visitations at libraries, hospitals, assisted living centers, prisons, courtrooms, hospice, homeschool networks, disaster/trauma response, etc.

Phase 2 – Evaluator Study, Testing and Certification

Evaluator Study and Testing -

The Evaluator manual and test are in the final phase of development and analysis. Once the committee has completed their process, the documents will return to the copywriter for final editing. The committee anticipates Evaluator Manuals will be available for downloading late winter/early spring 2022. Evaluator testing is scheduled to begin early spring, 2022.

Evaluators who successfully complete the Evaluator Exam will become Certified Therapy Dog Evaluators.

Phase 3 – TEAM (Owner) Training, Testing and Registration

TEAM Training

Owners who wish to study, test and register their dogs with their IACP Therapy Dog Evaluators may begin the process as early as spring, 2022.

Evaluators may use the TEAM Training Manual to instruct their clients on the IACP program which will include, but not be limited to: terminology, dog handling, safety, parts of a visit, problem prevention and problem solving, dog temperament and candidacy, working within facility limitations, and

training as a constant component of successful outings.

TEAM Testing and Registration

TEAM applicants may test under the Evaluator on components such as obedience control, noise/motion controls, equipment tolerance, stability/interaction, physical examination of the dog, simulated interaction, etc.

If the TEAM successfully passes the TEAM Exam, they will have the opportunity to register with the IACP as an IACP Therapy Dog TEAM.

Phase 4 – Visitations

Visitations-

Evaluators will, with the help of the IACP Therapy Dog Committee, work to develop relationships with new and existing facilities and organizations who may seek TEAM visitations. This will include brochures and IACP web links to inform who we are and how we can help the facility/organization.

Phase 5 – Evaluator and TEAM Handler Support

Short term goals (1-2 years) may include:

Create additional educational and study opportunities including study groups, webinars, and support pods (communities of evaluators).

Create an assortment of videos to educate facilities and the public on who, what, when, where and how's of IACP TEAMS.

Phase 6 – Evaluation of the Evaluator and TEAM Process

This will allow the committee to scrutinize itself and the entirety of the program as part of the ongoing process of creating the world's most premier Therapy Dog Evaluator and handler program.

Evaluator and TEAM Manuals and exams will be reevaluated for

accuracy, applicability, and functionality based on the needs of the community.

While we are only in Phase 1 of our implementation, this has been a major undertaking of both the founding members and the 2021 members who



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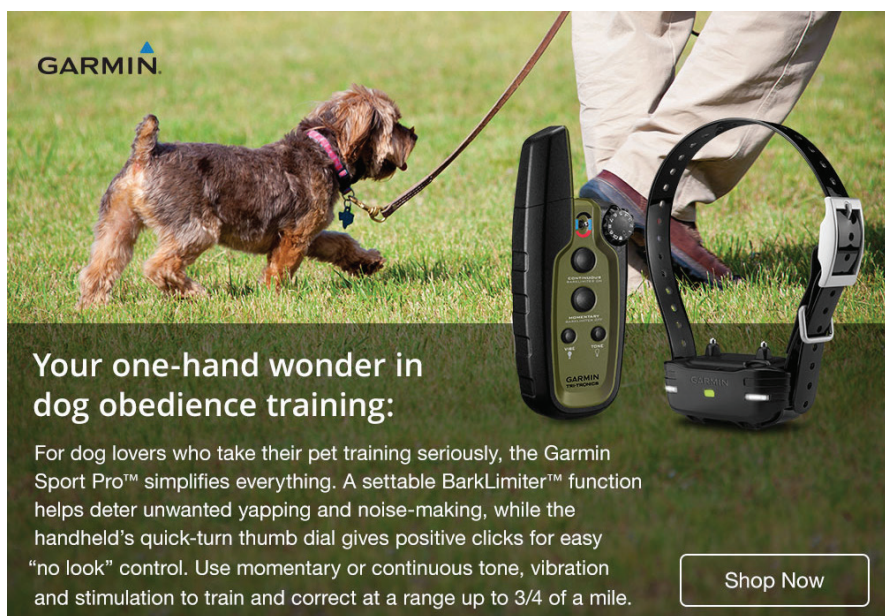
Course 3-Puppy Development & Human Psychology
Blue Ridge, Texas
February 14-21, 2021

Course 2-Trainer Instruction
Blue Ridge, TX
March 6-16, 2021

Course 1 Relationship Based Behavior Modification
Blue Ridge, TX
March 19-21, 2021

Fearful/Feral Dog Workshop
Las Vegas, NM
March 30/31, 2021

So sad this weekend is over. Everything I knew about dogs as I knew them was blown out of the water...but now I know how to get into their world and see/relate from their perspective.--Alison C. RBBM, Hutto, TX



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have worked tirelessly to create a program with definitive goals reflective of IACP's high standards for training.

The Therapy Dog Committee Evaluator and TEAM are major programs which may take several more years to see their full potential. The committee believes IACP Therapy Dog Evaluators and TEAMS will be at the forefront of the industry, providing handlers and dogs with standards to visit those who would benefit from the gift of the attention, touch, and tolerance of well-trained, engaged dogs.

A therapy dog handler herself, Tracy Atkins has served on the committee since November 2019 and as the Director Oversight for the Committee since October 2020. In May 2021, under the direction of Laura King, Committee Chair, the committee has been energized with committed, knowledgeable members and therapy

dog handlers and trainers. The committee has two seats open for interested, committed members.

Please direct any questions to: tdcmte@canineprofessionals.com

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Service Dog Committee Update

The IACP Service Dog committee has been working hard on several initiatives this year. We recently completed a collaborative effort with the TSA Disability Coalition to write a document for TSA agents on working with customers traveling with a Service Dog. This document is now being used in the TSA training program.

The Service Dog committee has also developed and rolled out the Public Access Test Authorized Administrator program. We are currently working with both US as well as international members of the IACP in promoting this outstanding program. We hope in the near future more IACP members with their CDT certification will take part in this new initiative.

Currently, the Service Dog committee is working on an educational workshop program for IACP members as well as non-IACP members. We had an overwhelming positive response to our Survey Monkey that we had sent out and are in the process of collating the information we received on program topics. We hope to continue to move forward with this new program and present it to the members of IACP in the near future.



The members of the SD International project are currently working on a project on the use and possible future requirement for SD's & SDIT's to wear/don a muzzle while utilizing air and ground public transportation. They have also been spearheading working on an international PAT (Public Access Test) demo video for IACP members looking to complete the PAT Authorized Administrator program.

We are currently looking for individuals who may be interested in joining the Service Dog committee to further our mission and program offerings. Anyone interested please contact us at SDcmte@canineprofessionals.com

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An advertisement for EZYDOG training products. It features a woman in a red cap and black jacket standing next to a German Shepherd dog. The dog is wearing a red collar. The background is a green field. Text on the ad includes: 'EZYDOG', '50% OFF TRAINING PRODUCTS', 'USE CODE: IACP50', 'REDEEM AT: STORE.EZYDOG.COM', 'command CLICKER', 'HANDS FREE ergonomic design', 'EFFECTIVE training tool', 'POSITIVE reinforcement', and contact information '208.263.3181 | info@ezydog.com'. There is also a red EZYDOG training device shown in the bottom right corner.

One Team, One Goal

by Patrick and Alishia Lockett

I am passionate about Dog Sports.

I am a results-driven person. I thrive on competition, routine and excellence. But excellence at the highest level, the goal every sport competitor and their dog strive to reach, requires day-to-day struggle. Training becomes harder than trials, and the intensity of work forcefully pushes you and your dog to be a team. You must be able to read one another. A bonded team work like ballroom dancers, because rhythm and execution are essential.

There have been many days where I have questioned my abilities in the industry. Do I know how to pull the best out of my dog? Am I being fair to my dog? Do I know when to push, when to give the dog rest? Obedience is not only the dog's performance; it's ours, as well. But how do I know if I am the problem?

In dog sport, you have a certified judge to evaluate every aspect of the discipline. You and your dog can lose points for simple and nuanced mistakes. Every point is given or taken under the judge's eye. To be a competitor, you cannot settle for mundane basic obedience commands. Every command must be performed on cue with speed and elegance every time to achieve success in sport.

A trial is not just the chance to show what your dog can do under pressure. It's also an evaluation of what you and the dog can do as a team and how you perform together. I witness trainers blaming failure on the dog, when often the problem lies in the trainer's lack of communication with the dog. It is their ineffectiveness in teaching the dog proper form and positioning.

A sit is not merely a sit in the sport world. The dog must be at the position of attention. It must be in the exact position as the rule book describes, with millimeter precision. There is a perfection required

at the top level that demands uncompromising discipline. Regardless of which sport you compete in, excellence is the end state.

The advantage of competing in a sport is having a trained eye evaluating both you and the dog. A trial doesn't end at sundown with your scores; deducted points become a question as you figure out how to improve. In the hundreds of events I have participated in, more points have been lost through my handler mistakes than dog mistakes. Teamwork is essential, and it starts with preparation and planning.

Even though my preparation is a routine, I never let what I train become routine. Varied training creates resilience in the dog's performance. I do everything I can to create conflict in my training plan for my dog.

Every morning when the alarm clock rings, I prepare my morning routine and write down my training goals for the day. The porch light turns on, and my dog knows it's time to go to work. I attempt to make the training three times more demanding than the actual trial. It is important to make sure I write clear goals for the day in training, as I often get distracted by the dog's behavior that session. Writing clear, concise goals will allow you to remain on track and have a productive training session.

The equipment is loaded. My dog and I head out for a morning of precise tracking, obedience, and protection. Whether the goal is laying a track or walking a heel, perfection and accuracy are a must.

After serving twenty years in the military in special reconnaissance units, I have become a person of structure and routine. I can tell you exactly what I'll be doing next week at any time, and most likely it will be training dogs. Similarly, dogs are creatures of routine. However, routine in training, practicing

the same set of commands session after session, can become your worst enemy in dog sports.

When accustomed to a specific routine, the dog will act on its knowledge of what's next in the routine instead of focusing on listening to you. For example, in International Gebrauchshund Prufung (IGP), the dog may start to anticipate the "here" command and stand up to come before you verbally give the command. This anticipatory behavior can be a negative in trial. A handler should always teach the dog to follow the command no matter the situation. Thus, I never let what I'm training become a routine.

There is an ongoing discussion if modern dog sports really do test the true capability of a dog. My answer is that it depends on what one sees as the capability of a dog. I want to be evaluated on our capability to execute a track, perform obedience, and engage in protection. I want to ensure that my dog can find ground disturbance, molecules in a track, and be able to do every obedience command with heart and soul. They must bite a decoy wearing protective gear, defend me and my family in case of an emergency, or bite and let go of a live person on command. They are obedient to the command and not the routine. That is true dog training.

No matter what type of dog training you're involved in, you should always want to be the best at what you do. If you feel like you have reached your maximum potential, you should find something more challenging. Complacency is one of the biggest hinderances in a dog trainer. Many think that they have reached the top level, but none of us will ever be at the top point of the pyramid. You should always look for ways to challenge yourself, as well as your dog, to be the best team possible.

Patrick Lockett has been in the German shepherd community for over 25 years. Johann "Hans" Eiban, Patrick's grandfather, started breeding German shepherds in 1969 under the kennel name, vom Krumbachertal, out of Amberg, Germany. Hans was a well-respected breeder, judge and the vice president in the Amberg community for years. Growing up in Europe allowed Patrick to surround himself with an abundance of knowledge about the dog training community. Patrick's love for the breed and for the sport of Schutzhund/ IGP continued throughout his development into the well-rounded trainer he is today.

His discipline for dog training has grown over the course of his studies as he has been mentored and coached by the best in the industry. In 2019, Patrick retired from his 20 year career as a Military service as a Reconnaissance and Security specialist to dedicate his time to his true passion, breeding and training. Patrick's expertise expanded once he discovered the world of modern dog training and NePoPo® system created by Bart Bellon. In the past decade, Patrick has refined his love of dogs by exploring both sides as a German certified helper and IGP competitor in Germany. He has advanced his experience as a helper and handler by participating in numerous trials throughout Germany. Patrick has recently been selected by the International Association of Canine Professionals to serve as the chairman of the Legislative Committee.

He currently lives in Germany with his wife, Alishia, where they have a family-owned kennel and training program that caters to families, K9 Units, Sport, and personal protection to name a few. He also holds private training, as well as group classes for those interested in obedience, tracking or protection work.

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"Luppa" Sheeley photo by Megan Lundberg

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Critical Thinking

by Mailey McLaughlin, M.Ed., CDTA/PDTI, Editor

Myths That Need to Die, Part 1

Our industry is peppered with myth. I'd like to address a few of these myths in this space over the next few issues.

Myth 1: *Puppies are easy and always worth it, and if you can't raise one into a well-behaved, friendly dog, there is something wrong with you.*

A few months ago, I encountered a post in a FB group that asked for assistance with "a client in tears during her session because she's so overwhelmed with her new puppy. I know she loves this dog and wants to give her the best life, but I don't think she realized how much work it is. It would break my heart if the owner gave up...."

The author asked for help and got several lovely answers with tips for dealing with the puppy overwhelm.

So far, so good. Then one answer basically said, "Maybe she is someone who shouldn't have a puppy because they are a lot of work..." and went on to talk about rehoming. That answer got me to thinking because it isn't technically untrue, but it veered the conversation into a different direction and I wanted to address something I have noticed.

The culture in which we live sets lots of parameters, or norms, for our behavior. This is normal, and (mostly) allows us to function well as a collective to get along, make progress, and care for ourselves and others.

It's what cultures do.

But some of the "rules" we are subject to in our Western culture have become arbitrary, and can actually cause people unnecessary distress because they have been so readily absorbed by the populace that those of us who bump up against them and even defy them appear to be "looking for attention" or "causing trouble" because others expect us to act a certain way.

More simply put, not everyone conforms to all the cultural rules, and for many of those rules, this nonconformity is fairly benign*, though people will take umbrage at it anyway because, well, taking umbrage seems to be a favorite pastime these days.

Let me give you an example. Before COVID, it was culturally appropriate in America to shake someone's hand when you met them for the first time, especially in a business setting. It wasn't *demand*ed outside of a professional atmosphere, usually, but it was seen as a gesture of good faith** and proper manners to shake hands—especially when the other person had already proffered a hand. If one refused an outstretched hand? Well, awkwardness ensued. You could sometimes get away with ignoring the gesture by claiming you were "getting over a cold," but it didn't always go over well.

Handshakes were a cultural expectation that, when deviated from, could create awkwardness in social and business settings.

Well, handshakes as a cultural norm may have been banished forever due to the pandemic. Fist, elbow, and ankle bumps just don't have the same gravitas, and the norm nowadays is just to keep your hands to yourself, smile, nod, and verbally acknowledge.

A cultural norm has quietly disappeared and its disappearance is benign.

So what does this have to do with the crying woman and her puppy?

Our very dog-centric culture[†] is rife with tons of free messaging to help puppy buyers, adopters, dog owners. It vastly focuses on how to make living with your new puppy easier (and better for both human and dog). The tone of most of this information is cheerful and optimistic and assumes, largely, that anyone struggling with a new puppy is just unprepared, uneducated, or lazy. Rarely does it give prospective dog owners the unvarnished truth about how aggravating and frustrating puppies can be.

Sometimes owners struggle because they actually are unprepared, or uneducated, or lazy. Sometimes they struggle because they make terrible choices.

But sometimes, puppies are really, really tough because of crap genetics, crap breeding practices, lack of socialization, unpleasant drives, or actual defects. Serious aggression can exist in young pups, and we know that serious working drive, while not always aggression, can cause scary issues for people who are unprepared.

Truly aggressive pups are rare, but even non-aggressive puppies can be a struggle for many people.

When you research raising puppies, you really won't find reams and reams of articles truly outlining why millions of people should never get a puppy. I've never read an article^{††} written to prospective (or brand-new) puppy owners that tells them, "you know what? You probably shouldn't have a dog. It's going to be a lot of work. Take it back and get a stuffed animal instead."

That means John Q. Public doesn't really ever, even with diligent research, get the full picture, do they? And even if they do, one positive interaction with a sweet puppy completely obliterates all the warnings, and their minds are made up.

The culture tells us that quitters are losers. Articles may touch on how difficult raising a puppy will be, but they lean overwhelmingly towards positivity and "you can do this" mentality. The overall message is: *Dogs are great and no matter how hard it gets, you need to suck it up, Buttercup, because they are worth the hassle and you made a commitment!* There is a cultural bias **against** giving up on puppies and dogs and there is a bias **towards** shaming those who do. (I worked more than two decades at a large Humane Society and I have seen this hundreds of times.)

So when people end up with an aggressive puppy, or a puppy who is overly pushy, has a lot of drive and uses its teeth a lot, or a puppy that is making their lives miserable for whatever reason, they rarely want to give up. "It's just a puppy; I should be able to handle this!" If they have kids, they may rationalize this by saying, "well, my kids were no picnic to raise, either, but I did what I had to do, so I'm going to do the same with this puppy." Of course, the culture really punishes parents for giving up on kids, so that's not really an option anyway. And some people in this industry believe that giving up on a dog (even one who blatantly isn't a good fit) is just as terrible as abandoning a child. Hint: IT ISN'T. As professionals, we need to push back against these automatic messages that convince owners "you can do this!" *Maybe they can't, or shouldn't.* We have to be able to look at the larger picture when they are unable, or unwilling, to see that picture because they are attached to the dog, or, more commonly, to the *idea of having a dog.*

Our job is to figure out what the owner's real needs and wants are, and if the relationship can work for all parties involved, then we help that happen to the best of our abilities—but we must stay open to the reality that it may not be salvageable, and this knowledge can

end up being a giant relief to those owners.

Some of my best lessons were when I took control of the dog's leash and gave the exasperated client a break. As I worked the dog, I talked about needs and expectations, and I was able to clarify and reduce her stress. Sometimes, helping clients to feel less stressed means telling them that this *won't* be easy, it *will* be aggravating and frustrating and even painful at times, but I will help you do it if you will commit. And other times, I may want to tell them "oh, this will pass, and you can do it!" but instead I tell them the sad truth: this relationship has a low chance of success.

We are Fixers, and our clients often want fixes, but sometimes they just want to vent to Someone Who Understands (because their friends and family don't). And their friends and family and society at large will probably not be supportive if they decide that puppy isn't going to work out for them. We need to do as right as we can by the dogs, but also the human clients, too.

* Meaning, it only hurts other people's delicate sensibilities but does no actual emotional or physical damage; an example is people choosing their preferred pronouns.

** Literally: the handshake was a symbol of peace and a way to show that your hand was not holding a weapon.

† People, by and large, adore their dogs; the culture is definitely dog-centric in that dogs are very common and dog ownership is seen as a positive. We dog pros could argue that since many people put their own wants above their dogs' true needs, it really isn't dog-centric, but I think you get my point.

†† Namely, an article or post written to a *large audience* in a *mainstream publication* that is more likely to be found in an internet search; I have read numerous treatises from my fellow pros on blogs and social media that discourage puppy acquisition but do not get widespread attention.

Mailey, The Pooch Professor, has been Editor of The Canine Professional Journal since 2010. She joined IACP in 2003 and served on the Board of Directors from 2014 through 2020. She is a longtime member of the Education and Certification Committee and was in charge of creating the Dog Trainer Foundation Exam. An Atlanta, GA native, Mailey has worked professionally with dogs and their people for 38+ years, holds a Masters in Education, is a CDTA and PDTI, and was Behavior and Training Manager for the Atlanta Humane Society for 21 years. Read more at www.poochprofessor.com and www.carpek9.blogspot.com.

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