

VOLUME 13
NUMBER 9

The Whole



Dog Journal™

A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

September 2010

\$5.95

FEATURES

3 When the Shark Bites

Five things to do when your dog grabs treats too roughly.

4 Warning About Estrogen

Topical hormone replacement products for women can cause health problems in dogs.

5 Really Obsessed

Many owners joke about their dogs' "obsessions," but true obsessive compulsive behaviors are anything but cute, and may be quite self-destructive.

9 The Trainer Name Game

How to decode the alphabet soup of trainer certifications and find the best training professional for your dog.

13 Practice Maintains Perfect

When your dog's behavior slips, it's time to schedule regular practice!

15 Hunt for Adventure

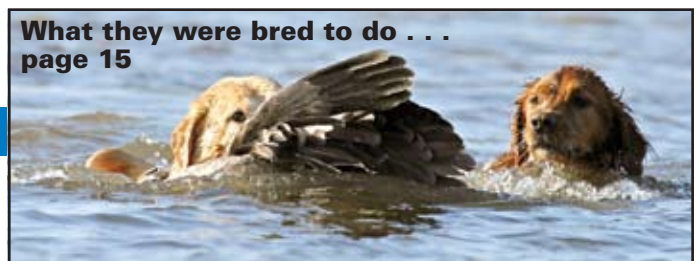
There are countless activities to do with dogs who hunt – and fortunately, positive training for these events is becoming more popular.



Seeing things?
... page 5



Rock-solid,
rock-star
recalls ...
page 13



What they were bred to do ...
page 15

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Editor's Note
- 21 Letters From Readers
- 24 Product and Expert Resources

Volunteer

It might seem scary, but it's so worth it.

BY NANCY KERNS

I volunteer for my local animal shelter. I serve on the Board of Directors. I help the shelter staff with their newsletter. I'm in the process of putting together a volunteer's manual, so we can get all the dog-walkers on the same page in terms of handling the dogs. But they recently tossed me a hot potato: Leading a two-hour tour of the shelter for kids from the local YMCA.

I thought to myself, "Kids, dogs? What's the problem?" Sure, I said. I'll do it. I had only a slight misgiving when the woman who last ran the tour did a little tap dance of joy upon hearing she didn't have to do it this time.

As it turned out, it *was* a joy, for me, anyway. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to try to indoctrinate kids with some pointed messages about pet care.

I started out with some positive training. I had equipped myself with about 1,000 little individually wrapped candies (Smarties and Tootsie Rolls). As the kids filed into the reception area, I walked among them and started clicking and treating the ones who were being quiet. Of course, some of them started begging. "Hey! I want one!" When this happened, I did what you'd do to any puppy who did the same: I turned my back and walked away. It took about two minutes for whole group to catch onto the game, and another minute or two for a few kids to "offer a sit." I poured treats down on those kids, and within another minute, the whole group was seated quietly on the floor, paying rapt attention. Positive training works on any animal species!

That exercise really was all about getting them settled in and paying attention, but I also used it as an example of how we train the dogs at the shelter to sit quietly in front of their doors. I asked them, "How did I get you to sit down and be quiet? Did I yell at you? Did I push you onto the floor? No! All I did was reward the kids who were doing what I wanted them to do. Anyone who was doing the right thing got treats, but



the ones who were doing something I didn't want them to do got ignored. That's how we train the dogs here to behave well enough that someone will want to adopt them." How likely is it, I asked them, that mom or dad will want to adopt a dog who barks and leaps all over the door? We have to help the dogs learn to be calm and quiet, I said, so you have to be quiet and calm, too.

I told them about the "four on the floor rule," and explained that they could give treats to any dog who had all four feet on the floor, but if a dog jumped up, the kid should step away from the kennel. And then step back quickly with a treat when the dog had four on the floor again.

But before we went out into the kennels, I asked them what they knew about the animal shelter. How did animals end up there? Even the smallest kids knew that some animals were there because they were lost or ran away from home, and that other ones were there because their owners didn't want them anymore. Heartbreaking.

So I talked to them about the fact that the shelter takes care of the animals that are lost or unwanted. I let them know that although the animals had been through a lot, they were lucky to have ended up at *this* shelter, because now they got food, medicine, love, and training, and with luck, they'd find a home, too. I talked to them about spay and neuter surgery, and how all the dogs and cats had this surgery before they left the shelter, so they could never have babies that no one wanted and weren't cared for. I also wanted them to make sure their pets had identification on their collars,

and we talked about ways they could accomplish this even if their parents didn't buy an ID tag.

Finally I gave each kid a handful of hot dog slivers and we went out into the kennels. And it was quiet – vibrantly, electrically quiet.

NK

The Whole Dog Journal™

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – Nancy Kerns
 TRAINING EDITOR – Pat Miller
 PUBLISHER – Timothy H. Cole
 CIRCULATION DIRECTOR – Greg King

EDITORIAL OFFICE

E-MAIL: WDJEditor@gmail.com
 ADDRESS: 1655 Robinson Street
 Oroville, CA 95965

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

PHONE: (800) 829-9165
 INTERNET: whole-dog-journal.com/cs
 U.S. MAIL: PO Box 420235
 Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235
 CANADA: Box 7820 STN Main
 London, Ontario N5Y 5W1

BACK ISSUES, WEBSITE INQUIRIES

PHONE: (800) 424-7887
 E-MAIL: customer_service@belvoir.com
 INTERNET: whole-dog-journal.com
 U.S. MAIL: PO Box 5656
 Norwalk, CT 06856-5656

REPRINTS

For price quote, contact Jennifer Jimolka at
 (203) 857-3144
 Minimum order 1,000

NEWSSTAND

Jocelyn Donnellon, (203) 857-3100

WHOLE DOG JOURNAL DOES NOT ACCEPT COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING



THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL (ISSN #1097-5322) is published monthly by Belvoir Media Group, LLC, 800 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06854-1631. Robert Englander, Chairman and CEO; Timothy H. Cole, Executive Vice President, Editorial Director; Philip L. Penny, Chief Operating Officer; Greg King, Executive Vice President, Marketing Director; Ron Goldberg, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Canfield, Vice President, Circulation. Periodicals postage paid at Norwalk, CT and at additional mailing offices. Copyright ©2010, Belvoir Media Group, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly prohibited. Printed in U.S.A. Revenue Canada GST Account #128044658. Canada Publishing Agreement Number #40016479.

THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL makes every effort to provide information on dog health, care, and treatment that is authoritative, reliable, and practical. It is not intended, however, to replace diagnosis or treatment from a veterinarian or other qualified dog professional. THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL does not assume any legal responsibility. Readers should always consult qualified healthcare providers for specific diagnosis and treatment.

Subscriptions: \$39 annually (12 issues). Bulk rate subscriptions for organizations and educational institutions available upon request.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL, PO Box 420234, Palm Coast, FL 32142

THE WHOLE DOG JOURNAL, PO Box 39, Norwich, ON, N0J 1P0

When the Shark Bites

Five things to do when your dog grabs treats too roughly.

BY PAT MILLER, CPDT-KA, CDBC

Many of us have dogs who bite down too hard when taking treats – the behavior sometimes known as “hard mouth.” Some dogs take treats forcefully all the time; others get hard mouths only when stressed or excited. One theory is that a hard mouth is a function of bite inhibition – or lack thereof. If a dog doesn’t learn to use his mouth softly during puppyhood, he’s likely to resort to using too much pressure with his mouth throughout his life. But some dogs with acceptably soft mouths take treats hard when stressed or excited. Here are five things you can do when facing a “hard mouth” challenge:

1 Teach remedial bite inhibition (see “Light Bite,” WDJ June 2010). Even though this may not get you through the higher arousal situations with your fingers intact, it will help a lot with everyday treat-feeding.

2 Use lower-value treats. Wait, what? I often exhort you to use high-value treats for effective training. But the chances are good that an “alligator dog” is very motivated to work for food; he may work just as hard for pieces of kibble as he does for chunks of chicken – and it may tone down his enthusiasm enough to save your digits. Try training *after* meals instead of before. This goes against our standard advice to train when you know your dog is hungry – which logically means *before* he eats his dinner. The exception is the dog who strains your hand through his teeth as he forcibly removes the treat from your grasp. Taking the edge off his appetite may help him remember to be gentle.

3 Feed him like a horse. Equestrians feed treats on the flat of the hand; horses can have trouble distinguishing fingers from carrots. You can do the same with your dog. It’s a little trickier because we’re often luring with treats, which can

make fingers a prime target, but you can lure to get your dog to do the behavior, then click and quickly feed a treat from the flat palm of your other hand.

4 Toss or spit treats to your dog. Treats don’t always have to be delivered to your dog’s mouth from your hand; you can often toss them on the ground for your dog to eat. This isn’t a good choice when you want to reinforce a non-moving behavior (such as wait, stay, or down) by giving your dog a treat while he’s in the correct position, because a tossed treat may pull your dog out of position. But tossing works just fine for many other behaviors such as targeting and “leave it.” An old obedience competition trick is to teach your dog to catch treats that you spit to him from your mouth. That reinforces him for the behavior you asked for as well as for looking adoringly at you – when actually he’s staring intently at your mouth waiting for the next treat to fly out. (Of course, you have to use treats you’re *willing* to put in your own mouth, such as slices of hot dog.)

5 Use a treat-feeding tool. My favorite is a camping tube, designed for holding moist foods on camping



The ingredients list suggests that this is not the healthiest treat, but it’s very handy – and protects your fingers from being unintentionally chomped.

trips in secure, easy-to-carry containers (available at camping supply stores). These require that you use treats that are in a gel or paste form, such as peanut butter, cream cheese or other soft cheese, or canned dog food. The back end of the tube opens wide so that you can load the food in and then close it up, and a cap screws off the other end so you can squeeze out a little when desired. (You may need to experiment to get your treats to be the proper consistency to ooze out the end of the tube at the desired rate.) Other treat-feeding tools that you can use to protect your hands include:

- **Gloves:** My least favorite, as gloves can be awkward and interfere with dexterity, and are hot in the summer!

- **Finger splints:** These are small foam-padded metal finger covers that Velcro onto your fingers. Many dogs don’t like to bite on metal, and if it doesn’t slow your dog down, the metal splint still protects your finger. Using a finger splint, you can still deliver treats in the normal fashion, rather from the flat of your hand.

- **Spoons:** A metal spoon, like the finger splint, can convince many dogs to bite softly because it doesn’t feel good to bite on metal. You will need to use a soft treat that will stick to the spoon.

- **Easy Cheese** (made by Kraft Foods) or similar “squeeze cheese” spread: These are not the healthiest snacks, but used in moderation as training treats, they can be very helpful. You bend the nozzle at its base with your finger to release a few drops or globs and your dog licks the cheese-like substance off the end of the nozzle. No teeth needed at all! 🐾

Pat Miller, CPDT-KA, CDBC, of Fairplay, Maryland, is WDJ’s Training Editor. See page 24 for contact info for Pat or her Peaceable Paws training center.

Your Estrogen Can Hurt Your Dog

Topical hormone replacement products for women can cause health problems in dogs

Many women use topical estrogen creams, lotions, gels, or sprays to help relieve symptoms associated with menopause, such as hot flashes, mood swings, and bone loss. These preparations contain progesterone, estradiol, or similar hormones and are available both over-the-counter and by prescription.

According to the Veterinary Information Network (VIN) News Service, veterinarians have recently become aware that symptoms of hyperestrogenism in dogs can be linked to their owners' use of topical hormone preparations. These products are often applied to the inner arms, and the hormones are then transferred from the hands or arms when the owner pets or holds the dog. Hormones can also be ingested if the dog licks the ointment from the skin or swallows a transdermal patch.

Signs of hyperestrogenism

Exogenous estrogen can cause swollen vulvas in spayed female dogs or young female puppies, often with even more swelling than if they were in heat. Females may be attractive to males and even allow mating.

Affected male dogs can develop enlarged mammary glands, and male pups may have an underdeveloped penis and testes. Prostate infection, particularly in young dogs, may also be linked to exposure to hormones.

These excess hormones can also cause hair loss in both sexes. Often referred to as endocrine alopecia, Alopecia X, or Adrenal Hyperplasia-Like Syndrome, the hair loss (alopecia) is described as bilaterally symmetric, meaning it affects both sides of the body similarly.

Veterinarians are often at a loss to explain such signs, and may try treatment with antibiotics or corticosteroids such as prednisone. Ovarian remnant syndrome, where part of the ovary is accidentally left behind during a spay, is often suspected, particularly if the dog was spayed during the prior year, and some dogs have been subjected to a second surgery to search for the ovarian tissue thought to be causing the symptoms.

Special endocrinology tests may re-

veal elevated levels of estradiol, called hyperestrogenism or hyperestrinism, but will not indicate the cause of the excess hormones. Adrenal disorders such as atypical Cushing's disease (Canine Atypical Hyperadrenocorticism, or CAH) may be suspected, with treatments ranging from melatonin and high-lignan flaxseed oil to Lysodren or other drugs used to treat Cushing's disease. None will have any effect on symptoms caused by exogenous hormones.

Cats may also be affected, often behaving as though continually in heat.

Treatment and prevention

If you use topical hormone preparations, apply them to areas that are covered by clothing, such as your inner thighs. It's best to use gloves to apply the ointments, or at least wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.

Signs in affected dogs often resolve within a couple of months once exposure ceases, though it may take longer, particularly if exposure has been prolonged. In some cases, it may be necessary for the dog owner to switch to a transdermal patch rather than using topical ointments before signs in the affected dog improve.

Awareness

Veterinarians need to be aware of the possibility of secondary estrogen exposure when confronted with patients exhibiting signs of hormone imbalance, and should ask their clients whether anyone in the household is using topical hormone preparations. Even young women may be using these products in certain cases, such as following a hysterectomy.

Comparable problems have also been seen in children exposed to hormones in a similar way. The FDA issued a warning in 2009 regarding the adverse effects that testosterone gel, used by both men and women, can have on young children who are inadvertently exposed through secondary contact.

According to VIN, the FDA said it "has received reports of inadvertent exposure to topical estrogen products in children and pets through contact with another person



Prevent your dog from licking your skin if you use topical hormone replacement products. Keep hormone "patches" out of reach of your dog, too.

being treated with the products (secondary exposure). The Center for Drug Evaluation and Research and the Center for Veterinary Medicine are evaluating these reports."

While problems relating to topical estrogen preparations appear to be on the rise, particularly as baby boomers reach the age of menopause, they don't account for all cases of elevated hormones. One internal medicine specialist who is well versed in this issue estimates that ovarian remnant syndrome still outnumbers secondary hormone exposure by a ratio of ten to one.

Reporting

The Veterinary Information Network is considering conducting a survey to determine the prevalence of secondary exposure to pets of topical hormone products. If your dog or cat (or, if you are a veterinarian, your client's pet) has exhibited signs associated with such exposure and you would like to participate in the survey, please send your name and contact information to news@vin.com.

To report a suspected case to the FDA, call (888) FDA-VETS and request form 1932a; fill it out and return. Or go to www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth and select "Veterinary Adverse Event Voluntary Reporting." — *Mary Straus*

Really Obsessed

True obsessive compulsive behavior disorders are anything but cute.

BY PAT MILLER, CPDT-KA, CDBC

Owners of herding and sporting breeds – Border Collies, Aussies, Kelpies, Labradors, Golden Retrievers, and others – often cheerfully talk about their dogs’ “obsession” with tennis balls. What they really mean is that their dogs are very reinforced by the opportunity to chase a ball.

That kind of intense interest in a ball or toy can be useful for training and management purposes, and it’s definitely not what we’re talking about when we use the term “obsessive compulsive disorder” or OCD. An OCD can be a difficult and debilitating behavior for you and your dog to live with; it’s not a cause for cheerful discussion.

What’s OCD?

Also called canine compulsive disorder (CCD) and compulsive behavior disorder (CBD), OCDs have been defined by behavior researchers Drs. Andrew Luescher and Caroline Hewson as, “Behaviors that are

usually brought on by conflict, but that are subsequently shown outside of the original context . . . Compulsive behaviors seem abnormal because they are displayed out of context and are often repetitive, exaggerated, or sustained.” Dr. Luescher, a veterinary behaviorist and director of Purdue University’s Animal Behavior Clinic, estimates that about 1 dog out of 50 suffers from canine compulsive disorder. Luescher and Hewson suggest that examples of environmental stressors that can trigger compulsive behaviors include:

- Physical restraints such as close confinement and chaining.
- Social conflicts that arise from competition for status, changes in social group, or separation.
- An unpredictable or uncontrollable environment.



Blanket-sucking and repetitive licking are common OCD behaviors in dogs.

What you can do . . .

- Manage your dog’s world to maximize structure and consistency and minimize stress and the likelihood she will develop compulsive behaviors.
- Be on the lookout for any signs your dog is developing a compulsive disorder and address them immediately if they appear.
- Avoid engaging in behaviors with your dog that are likely to elicit compulsive disorder such as chasing a flashlight or laser beam, or reinforcing tail chasing.
- If your dog has an established obsessive compulsive disorder, seek the help of a qualified behavior professional, and realize that effective treatment will probably include the use of behavior modification drugs.



- A lack of target object for normal behavior. For example, a dog kept isolated has no normal outlet for its instinct to interact within a group, whether animal or human.

Common OCDs include behaviors such as spinning, tail chasing, fly snapping, shadow chasing, air licking, flank sucking, pica, persistent barking, and “hallucinating.” Despite the intriguing names for these behaviors, they are not fun for a dog or for his humans. In fact, they can make life pretty miserable, and are evidence that

A Menu of OCDs

The following are some of the more common canine obsessive compulsive disorders.

LOCOMOTIVE

Spinning: Dog turns in place in rapid circles.

Tail chasing: The dog turns in place in rapid circles, but appears to be focused on his tail.

Shadow or light chasing: Chases light reflections with extreme intensity; fixates on possible light sources.

Pacing: Repetitive movement back and forth in a straight line – can be walking or running. Often seen in zoo animals, and dogs in kennels, or along fence lines.

ORAL

Fly snapping: Dog snaps randomly in air, apparently at invisible objects. Seeing a flying insect may spark the behavior, but it persists when insects are not present.

Pica: Ingesting inappropriate objects (far beyond normal/expected chewing) – sometimes to the point that emergency surgery is needed to remove objects, such as stones, acorns, or socks.

Chewing or licking self: Dog licks and/or chews feet, legs, or anywhere on body; can cause the development of “lick granulomas,” sores, or dermatitis.

Air or nose licking: The dog licks at the air in front of his face.

Licking others or objects: Dog persistently licks humans, other dogs, blankets, toys, or other objects.

Polyphagia or polydipsia: Dog eats or drinks excessively, resulting in excessive defecation and/or urination. There is sometimes a medical cause for these behaviors, but sometimes it is OCD.

Flank sucking or object sucking: Dog sucks on his own flank or on toys, blankets, or other objects.

VOCALIZATION

Persistent howling or rhythmic barking for no discernible reason.

AGGRESSION

Inexplicable self-directed aggression – attacking hindquarters, legs, tail; attacking food bowl and other inanimate objects.

the dog is living in an environment that is stressful for him.

Much of the underpinnings of OCDs are still a mystery to the veterinary medical and behavior world. There is evidence that suggests while they are all neurologically based, they are not all caused by the same physiological phenomenon; there may be several different classes of OCDs. Results of studies suggest that locomotive disorders such as spinning, and oral disorders such as licking, are controlled by different parts of the brain. Still, all of the different classes appear to be related to conflict resulting from stress or arousal, and all seem to respond to similar treatment.

According to Steve Lindsay in his *Handbook of Applied Dog Behavior and Training, Volume Three: Procedures and Protocols*, “Dogs most prone to develop compulsive behavior problems are frequently high-strung and impulsive . . . Highly motivated and high-strung dogs who are intolerant of conflict and frustration seem to be particularly at risk for developing compulsive habits.” It would stand to reason that dog breeds whose propensity for intense motivation has been enhanced by selective breeding – such as the herding and sporting breeds – would be more prone to compulsive behaviors.

Indeed, there is a genetic component to the propensity to develop OCDs, and

certain breeds do have a predisposition for certain compulsive behaviors. It has been suggested that seizure activity may play a role in triggering canine compulsive behaviors, but there is no scientific evidence to support that theory, and most behaviorists agree the primary culprit is stress. Dr. Andrew Luescher was quoted in a January 7, 2010, *ScienceDaily* article saying, “You could probably make every dog have compulsive disorder if you provide enough threats or conflict.”

What to do

As with any undesirable behavior, you’re better off not letting an OCD become established in the first place. Whether you have a breed that is prone to OCD or not, you can dodge the bullet by keeping your dog in a well-structured environment with a regular routine, and avoiding introducing obvious stressors such as yelling at, hitting, or alpha-rolling your dog. If, despite your best efforts you do see the glimmerings of OCD behavior, you’ll have greatest success in extinguishing it if you address it immediately rather than waiting until it’s full-blown.

Your attention can reinforce an OCD behavior. Tail-chasing is often perceived as cute by owners who laugh and praise the dog and encourage the behavior. OCD tail-chasing is *not* cute. Fortunately, it can

sometimes be extinguished in early stages by removing all attention.

I had clients whose four-month-old Golden Retriever pup had OCD pica and had already had one emergency surgery to remove pebbles and acorns from his stomach. When Corky showed interest in chasing his tail, I counseled his owners to immediately leave the room as soon as he started the behavior. (Dogs with one OCD often easily adopt another.) Within a few weeks the tail-chasing had stopped.

There are a number of things you can do to reduce general stress levels for your dog. Prophylactic stress reduction can prevent OCD, and reducing the dog’s stress in the early stages may extinguish it. But reducing the dog’s stress (as part of a complete behavior modification program) can reduce even well-established OCD behaviors. Stress-reducing tactics include:

- Explore, rule out, or treat medical conditions that might contribute to stress, including thyroid. (See “Help for Dogs With Hypothyroidism,” June 2005.)

- Increase exercise on a consistent schedule. This is an important one. Not only does exercise use up energy that might otherwise feed OCD behaviors, but aerobic exercise promotes endorphin release, which has a calming effect.

■ Train your dog. Training helps your dog understand what's expected of him, and what you are communicating to him. His world makes more sense, so it's less stressful to him. If your dog is trained and responds to your requests for behavior, it's less stressful for you as well, and you're less likely to be tempted to punish him, which is, in turn, less stressful for him.

■ Use plug-in, spray, and collar-infused Dog Appeasing Pheromones (DAP/Comfort Zone). DAP is a synthetic substance that mimics the pheromones emitted by a mother dog when she's nursing her pups. It has a calming effect on a significant number of adult dogs.

■ Play "Through a Dog's Ear." These bio-acoustically engineered CDs feature soothing classical music, and have been clinically demonstrated to reduce canine heart rates. (They calm people, too!)

■ Make sure your dog is on a high-quality (or at least *good*-quality) diet.

■ Utilize products such as Doggles (canine sunglasses) to reduce visual stress (doggles.com or 530-344-1645), the Thundershirt (thundershirt.com or 866-892-2078) and the Anxiety Wrap (anxietywrap.com or 877-652-1266) to reduce environmental stress.

■ Apply calming massage or T-Touch, in conjunction with aromatherapy. If your dog associates calming touch with the scent of lavender, that scent can be used at other times to help evoke calmness.

The stress connection

With any stress-induced behaviors, including OCDs, your first assignment is to identify and reduce as many of your dog's stressors as possible. Of primary importance is identification and removal, if possible, or at least management, of the proximate cause of the dog's stress or conflict.

Following that, you want to address *all* stressors, not just the one(s) that seem to trigger the OCD behavior. Most households can identify a list of 10 to 20 stressors for their dogs. A short list might look like this:

1. Being crated
2. Small children

3. People and/or dogs walking past the front windows

4. Nail trimming

5. Riding in the car

6. Threats to his resources

7. Thunder

8. Prong collar

9. Verbal and/or physical punishment

10. Owner stress

Decide which of the following strategies you can effectively apply to each stressor on the list to reduce its effect on your dog's overall stress level:

A. Use counter-conditioning to change the dog's opinion of (that is, his association with) the stressor.

B. Teach the dog a new, incompatible behavior using operant conditioning.

C. Manage the dog's environment to reduce his exposure to the stressor.

D. Get rid of the stressor.

E. Live with it.

You could get rid of crating stress simply by not crating the dog anymore. Or you could change his opinion by giving him a new, positive association with the crate. You could use counter-conditioning to help him like children, or, if there aren't children in the home, you could simply manage them as a stressor by removing him when children are around. You can manage your dog's arousal at passers-by simply by blocking his access to the window, and you can also counter-condition his response so he no longer becomes aroused. You could also teach him a new behavior, so that someone walking by the window is his cue to go lie down on his rug in the kitchen.

Stressors 4 through 7 are also good candidates for counter-conditioning. You could manage thunder stress with the use of anti-anxiety medication and a Thundershirt.

Stressors 8 and 9 fall into the "get rid of it" group. Stop using a collar that causes pain and stop doing bad things to your dog and his stress is guaranteed to decrease. By themselves those two stressors could be the proximate cause for a compulsive disorder.

Stressor 10 is a "live with it." Just be aware that when *you* are stressed (any stress; it doesn't have to be dog-related) that you add to your dog's stress load, and it is likely that you will trigger one of your dog's OCD incidents.



When flies or other flying insects are around, it's almost impossible to get this German Shepherd's attention. But even when no insects are present, he can get distracted by and obsessed with chasing imaginary dust motes.

Breeds Predisposed to OCDs

Here are *some* of the dog breeds that are known to have genetic predispositions to specific OCDs:

Doberman Pinscher: Flank sucking, licking

Bull Terrier: Spinning, freezing

German Shepherd: Tail chasing

Miniature Schnauzer: Checking hind end

Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and Bernese Mountain Dog: Fly-snapping

Retrievers: Pica, licking feet and legs

Border Collie, Corgi, other herding breeds: Spinning, tail chasing, light and/or shadow chasing

Pomeranian: Licking, object sucking

The perfect time for a veterinary behaviorist

Of course, removing stressors alone is not likely to “fix” most well-established OCDs. Chances are quite high that all the above steps to reduce stress and promote calm won’t be enough to extinguish your dog’s OCD behavior.

You can try removing reinforcement for the behavior, and you can try positively reinforcing an alternative behavior that’s incompatible with the OCD (sit, instead of spin, for example). However, it’s well-accepted in the behavior field that a serious compulsive behavior almost always requires intervention with behavior modification drugs.

For this, you need a veterinary behaviorist, or at least your own veterinarian needs to work in close consultation with a veterinary behaviorist. The use of psychotropic drugs is complex and requires a thorough education in the field – it’s not acceptable for a veterinarian to reach for the first behavior drug that the last pharmaceutical company salesman talked him into buying.

Also, I cannot stress strongly enough the critical importance of working with a board-certified veterinary behaviorist when it comes to selecting, administering, and monitoring the use of drugs for your dog’s compulsive disorder. Virtually every veterinary behaviorist will do free phone consultations with other veterinarians, so there’s no excuse not to. There are fewer than 50 of them in the United States, and you can find them here: dacvb.org/about-us/diplomates/diplomate-directory.

How common is this?

So what are the chances, really, that you’ll need all this information about OCDs? I think Dr. Luescher’s estimate of 2 percent of the canine population might be quite conservative. In our pack of five dogs, only Dubhy, the Scottie, shows a total lack of OCD tendencies. That’s a whopping 80 percent in our household!



■ Bonnie, our Scorgidoodle, likes to lick others incessantly. Exercise goes a long way toward minimizing her annoying licking behavior, as does reinforcing

an incompatible behavior. (Here, Bonnie, chew on this orange. She loves oranges.)

■ Scooter the Pomeranian will lick objects, especially blankets or sheets. This behavior has decreased significantly since we adopted him over a year ago. A lot of his stress, I’m sure, had to do with all the upheaval and uncertainty in his tiny world. (He was left to fend for himself on the streets, then spent weeks in a noisy shelter. And even though he has a nice home with us, it’s been stressful for him to have to adapt to living with four dogs who are two to four times his size!)

■ Lucy, the Cardigan Corgi, will engage in spinning if she doesn’t get enough exercise. She spun during her shelter assessment after being confined to the shelter kennel for several days, and started spinning here on two separate occasions when she was on “restricted activity” for medical reasons. Usually, normal farm activity and occasional hikes are enough to keep the spinning demon at bay.

■ Missy, the Aussie, licks her feet and does air and nose licks. Her stress is probably a combination of multiple rehoming prior to coming to live with us, status conflicts with Lucy, and separation distress; we’re still working on those.

Please note: Our dogs all came to us from the shelter with these behaviors, so I’m not taking credit – or blame – for their compulsive behaviors! 🐾

Pat Miller, CPDT-KA, CDBC, is WDJ’s Training Editor. Miller lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center. Pat is also author of several books on positive training, including her latest: Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance for a First Class Life. See page 24 for more information.

Canine OCD Study

The Animal Behavior Clinic at Tufts University, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, is currently enrolling Terriers (except bull breeds), German Shepherd Dogs, and Border Collies into a study regarding the genetic underpinnings of **compulsive behavior**.

Dogs that are affected *and* unaffected are needed. You will be required to fill out a survey about your dog’s behavior and a blood sample will be taken. A visit to Tufts is not required. If you are interested in learning more about this study, please contact Nicole Cottam at (508) 887-4802 or nicole.cottam@tufts.edu.

The Trainer Name Game

How to decode the alphabet soup of trainer certifications to find the best training professional for you and your dog.

BY STEPHANIE M. COLMAN

People have many questions when it comes to dog training: Lure-reward training or clicker training? Group classes or private lessons? Basic obedience or beyond? What type of trainer is best for dealing with your dog's behavior challenges?

Finding the right trainer is an important piece of the training puzzle. Dog training is an unregulated industry; anyone can hang up a sign and instantly become a dog trainer. If you mix some decent Web-authoring skills with a college-level book on public relations, even yesterday's Fed-Ex clerk can have the Web presence of a seasoned dog training professional. Adding to the confusion is the complicated assortment of titles used to describe dog trainers: trainer, behavior consultant, behaviorist, dog psychologist, human-canine relationship counselor, and many others. How does one make sense of the dog trainer name game?

The reality is that anyone who studies

the field of behavior can call themselves a behaviorist. But not all behaviorists are created equal. I like to ride my bike. Does that make me a cyclist? Does it make me a cyclist in a Lance Armstrong way?

In the professional dog world, the term "behaviorist" is somewhat controversial. Some trainers call themselves "behaviorists" because they help clients modify their dogs' behavior. This can range from annoying behaviors such as stealing food or jumping up, to more severe problems such as fear and aggression. Other trainers refrain from calling themselves behaviorists out of respect for "applied animal behaviorists" and "veterinary behaviorists" – two types of professionals who have met certain educational and certification requirements.

Leading the letters contest

Let's take a look at the credentialed training professionals who are available for consultation.

What you can do . . .

- If you can, look for a positive, dog-friendly trainer before you adopt your new dog or puppy, so you can thoroughly research candidates in your area.
- Watch the candidates in action, preferably while they teach several different classes.
- If your dog has serious behavior challenges, look for an animal behavior professional with the education and experience needed to properly assess your dog and recommend appropriate treatment.



Dog training professionals may have widely varying amounts and types of experience and education. The perfect puppy class instructor may not be the best consultant for dealing with your dog's fear-based or aggression problem.

■ **Applied Animal Behaviorists** are certified by the Animal Behavior Society (ABS), a professional organization dedicated to the study of animal behavior. In order to apply for ABS certification, the professional must possess a graduate-level education in ethology, learning theory, comparative psychology, psychology, biology, zoology, animal science, or experimental design. She must also have a minimum of three to five years of professional experience.

Candidates with a Master's degree in a related field may apply for certification at the Associate level (Associate Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist or ACAAB). Professionals with a PhD or veterinarians with at least five years of clinical experience may be certified at the Full level (Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist or CAAB).

When would an owner consult a

certified applied animal behaviorist? Perhaps in cases of extreme aggression – such as a dog who causes physical harm by biting humans or other dogs – or for a dog whose fear issues impact his quality of life. Often, local trainers will consult with an applied animal behaviorist on a specific case. This provides the benefit of the behaviorist’s additional educational and clinical expertise in a manner that is generally more cost-effective for the client.

■ **Veterinary behaviorists** have completed a minimum of a two-year residency under the guidance of a board-certified veterinarian and are professionally certified as Diplomates of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (ACVB). Veterinary behaviorists are knowledgeable in psychopharmacology and may incorporate pharmaceutical therapy into behavior modification protocols. DACVBs are a rare breed. As of this writing, only 48 were listed on the ACVB website.

In human terms, a veterinary behaviorist is comparable to a psychiatrist, whereas an applied animal behaviorist may be comparable to a psychologist. Veterinary behaviorists are often consulted when behavior modification alone does not affect change. In extreme cases (such as clinical separation anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorders, phobias, and idiopathic aggression), medication is often needed to help the dog achieve a mental state in which learning can occur.

When medicating dogs for behavioral problems, it’s extremely important that they are closely monitored by a professional with an educational and professional background in animal behavior. Subtle behavior changes, often easy for the family veterinarian alone to miss, can mean that a change in medication type or dosage is urgently needed.

If you cannot access a veterinary behaviorist, contact an applied animal behaviorist who can work with you and your veterinarian to determine if medication is appropriate. The standard vet school education does not include an in-depth study of animal behavior. We generally recommend against using your family veterinarian as the sole source of expertise when it comes to behavior problems.

Where to Learn More

Animal Behavior Society (ABS)

(812) 856-5541; animalbehaviorsociety.org

American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (ACVB)

(no phone number is available); veterinarybehaviorists.org

Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)

(800) 738-3647; apdt.com

Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT)

(212) 356-0682; ccpdt.org

International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC)

(no phone number is available); iaabc.org

Please note that all types of training professionals will potentially work with the same types of animal behavior problems. The difference is, while a *good* self-titled behaviorist will have years of experience and continuing education behind him, applied animal behaviorists and veterinary behaviorists *must* have a certain amount of education and experience under their belts in order to become certified, credentialed professionals. Any *good* self-titled behavior professional will also have a relationship with one or more certified behaviorists they can consult with and/or refer to when a client has needs beyond the scope of her own education and training.

What we’d call “trainers”

In the world of noncredentialed behaviorists, there are a variety of dog training professionals. Depending on the types of issues they feel comfortable working with (basic obedience training versus behavior problems) titles usually include dog trainer, behavior consultant, behavior specialist, or behavior therapist. Recently, and I suspect in response to the proliferation of the Cesar Millan brand, the term “dog psychologist” can even be found with greater frequency.

(It’s worth noting that there is no educational field of “dog psychology,” only mentions of it in the context of understanding canine social behavior and how dogs learn.)

Regardless of what they call themselves, people who teach human clients to teach new behaviors to the clients’ dogs or to change the dogs’ existing behaviors offer a variety of skill sets, educational backgrounds, and degrees of experience. There are lots of schools that offer educa-

tion in dog training, many of which provide students with a certification upon completion of a fee-based program. Such certifications are the program’s way of acknowledging that the student satisfactorily completed the requirements of the program. This differs from an independent assessment of the student’s general knowledge and ability as a trainer.

One popular independent trainer certification is offered by the Certification Council for Pet Dog Trainers. Those

who meet the requirements and pass the evaluation and testing can use the title, “Certified Pet Dog Trainer, Knowledge-Assessed” (CPDT-KA). Requirements for certification include:

- ❖ Trainer must have completed at least 300 hours of dog training experience within the past five years, most of which must be actual teaching time as the lead instructor in a class or private setting.
- ❖ Trainer must pass a 250-question examination covering instructor skills, animal husbandry, ethology, learning theory, and training equipment.
- ❖ CPDT trainers must undergo recertification every three years, either by re-taking the exam or earning a minimum of 36 continuing education units by attending approved educational seminars.

Another in-depth certification program is offered by the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC). This organization grants certified membership to professionals who have completed a minimum of three years and 1,500 hours in animal behavior consulting; 500 hours minimum of verifiable advanced instruction/education related to the core areas of competency (assessment, consulting skills, learning theory, general behavior knowledge, and species-specific knowledge); and the ability to communicate clearly through written work and case studies.

Professionals with a high school diploma, 300 hours in behavior consulting with their species of choice, a CPDT-KA or equivalent knowledge, and experience in two of five core areas of competency can apply for associate membership.

Prerequisites

It's important to note that many gifted and talented trainers hold no formal certification at all, yet they successfully change the lives of dogs and their owners for the better on a daily basis.

When choosing a trainer, it's critical to do a lot of research in order to avoid being misled by important-sounding terminology. Whatever the title, from "dog trainer" to "behavior specialist," a competent training professional will have a solid understanding of dog behavior and learning theory, combined with a thirst for knowledge and a commitment to continuing education.

A superior training professional should be well-versed in humane, dog-friendly training techniques. She should promote her clients' ability to get their dogs to comply because of a relationship based on mutual trust, understanding, and respect, not one based on fear, dominance, or submission.

When choosing a trainer, take your time and find someone you're comfortable with. Not all trainers are the same, and your dog is counting on you to help make learning a positive (in every sense of the word!) experience. Do some research before starting school – preferably even before you acquire your dog or puppy! Ask your friends, family members, local veterinarians, or even folks at your local dog park

for references. Ask the owners of the best-behaved and happiest-looking dogs you meet where they went for training and if they were happy with the experience.

Observe carefully! Do the dogs comply with their owners' requests slowly and with tucked tails, lowered heads and ears, and averted eyes? These *may* be signs that the dogs are being trained with force- or fear-based training methods. Note the name of the trainer – but don't go there unless you see ample proof that these dogs are exceptions to the typical canine graduates of that program.

If, in contrast, the dogs comply cheerfully, ears and tails up, eyes bright and interested, their owners may have been taught to train with truly positive methods. There *are* resilient force-trained dogs who fit this description, but generally, an eager countenance and eagerness to volunteer behavior is a hallmark of a dog who has been trained without punitive methods.

More questions

Once you've established your short list of trainer prospects, contact each of them and learn a bit about them. What is their background? If the trainer is going to help you train your dog for an activity such as therapy dog work, competitive obedience, or agility, do they have experience in (or sufficient knowledge of) the activity to successfully guide your training journey?

If you're seeking help with a complex behavioral issue such as fear, anxiety, or aggression, find out if the trainer has successfully worked with similar cases in the past. These issues may be beyond the ability of a novice trainer. Matters can quickly be made worse in even a single short session with someone who lacks the education and experience to succeed with an aggressive or deeply fearful or anxious dog. Ask for references from clients or fellow dog professionals who are familiar with the trainer's work.

Also, find out what specific training techniques a candidate would expect to employ. Ideally you'll have been referred to trainers who practice scientifically sound, modern, dog-friendly training techniques. If they describe themselves as "positive trainers," ask specifically what that means. Some trainers call themselves positive because they use treats for correct behavior, but they use physical corrections for unwanted behavior. (We suggest asking: "Do you ever use leash corrections?") Pay attention to any "weasel words" in the answer, such as, "No, but we sometimes use a quick 'pop' on the leash when the dog pulls." Pop goes the weasel!

Modern, educated professionals agree that when working with aggressive or fearful dogs, fear- and pain-based training methods make matters worse, not better.

Inquire about the equipment that is used

How to Handle a Training Class Gone Wrong

Even when you research a class or enroll on a strong recommendation, you still might encounter a training situation that makes you uncomfortable. Always remember that it's your dog and you have final say about how he's trained.

- If a trainer talks about a training technique that makes you uncomfortable and then wants to demonstrate with your dog, it's okay to say, "No." A simple, "I'd rather not use that technique on my dog," can politely convey your position without causing a scene. Later, ask if the instructor has an alternate method of teaching the behavior in question. By engaging the instructor after class, it shows that you're willing to learn but have set boundaries.

- If you find yourself in a class where other students' behavior toward their dogs makes you uncomfortable, take note of who they are and plan not to sit next to them or quietly move away. If the handling is extreme, approach the instructor after class and ask if that behavior is acceptable. She might not have observed it first-hand and should appreciate you bringing it up so that she can potentially suggest alternatives.

- If a trainer corrects your dog in a way that you find unacceptable, definitely speak up. If he is not being abusive and your dog is not in imminent danger, wait until class is finished. Politely explain that you avoid using such techniques and ask that he refrain from using them on your dog. A good trainer will respect this. If he challenges you, consider leaving the class. Maintaining a healthy relationship with your dog is worth far more than forfeiting class tuition.

- Rarely, there are reports of trainers who are downright abusive to dogs during training. If you encounter such handling, step in and gain control of your dog immediately. Yelling, hitting, alpha-rolling, etc., is never okay. Withdraw from the class and consider notifying any professional organizations in which the trainer is a member, as well as posting an honest review on consumer websites such as Yelp.com.

- Most importantly, always remember that it's *your* dog and that *you* have the final say over how he's treated. If something makes you uncomfortable, it's okay to – and you should – put an immediate stop to it.

in class. Reward-based trainers stay away from choke chains and pinch collars in favor of plain, flat collars, or head halters and no-pull body harnesses if needed.

Some trainers feel it's okay to employ dramatically different training techniques or equipment for different dogs; for example, switching from lure-reward training with one dog to corrections with a choke, pinch, or remote collar with another. It can be quite disconcerting to students practicing positive training methods to watch the student next to them employing such corrections, so be sure to find out in advance what the instructor's policy is.

A good reward-based instructor will be able to offer several positive alternatives for teaching the same behavior, recognizing that one size does not fit all when it comes to training dogs. To that end, find out if the trainers regularly participate in continuing education to stay abreast of the latest developments in positive training.

Come. Sit. Stay a while.

It's also important to take the time to watch the trainer in action. A good trainer will have no problem with you coming to observe a group class. Pay attention to both the human and canine students. Do they appear to be enjoying the experience? Is the class safely under control? Does it seem like there are too many dogs and people in the class? Does the instructor have an assistant to help keep an eye on things?

Find out what behavioral issues can be safely incorporated into the class. For example, many instructors can successfully

incorporate overly excited or even dog-aroused dogs (within reason) into the class by using strategically placed barriers that help block the aroused dog's visual access to his canine peers. If the instructor allows such dogs in a class setting, watch to make sure that they are handled in a way that makes the rest of the class feel safe.

Find out what procedures are in place to help students who might be struggling. Is there adequate time and personnel in class to help students who need it? Do the trainers and assistants make the rounds to each student during practice time, or do students appear to be on their own as the trainers chat amongst themselves?

Is the instructor available before or after class to answer questions? What about between class sessions? Are written handouts provided? Watch how the instructor interacts with the students. Is there a genuine interest in what they're doing and an overall feeling of support? Does she seem like someone you would be comfortable working with and learning from?

In a group class setting, the most significant teaching happens between the instructor and the dog's *owner*. It's the instructor's job to teach the owner how to effectively communicate with the dog so that successful training can take place throughout the week between classes. If you don't mesh well with the instructor, you won't get as much out of the class.

Take note of what's being taught in the class and make sure that those behaviors are aligned with your personal goals for you and your dog. Some classes may fo-

cus on exercises required for competition obedience events, while others focus on improving the behavior of the family pet.

For example, coming when called in a competition obedience class might focus on teaching the dog to wait as you walk away and come sit in front of you when called. A pet-friendly class might stress the need to teach your dog to turn away from high-level distractions and race to you upon hearing his recall word. Be sure to find a class that covers what will be most useful to you and your family.

Speaking of family, if you have kids, find out if the instructor has an age restriction or other special rules or requirements for children attending the training class.

Due diligence

Finding the right trainer and class can make all the difference. At a minimum, it helps ensure that you and your dog learn how to effectively communicate with each other, allowing you to create a well-mannered canine companion that you're proud of.

For some, finding the right class is what sparks a lifelong love of dog training and opens the door to the wide world of activities that can be enjoyed in the company of a dog. You may well find you learn as much – if not more – from your dog as he learns from you! 🐾

Stephanie Colman is a writer and dog trainer in Los Angeles. She shares her life with two dogs and competes in obedience and agility. See page 24 for contact information.

How to Be a Star Student When Attending a Dog Training Class

Your behavior is just as important as your dog's. The following tips will help you and your dog get the most out of your training experience:

- Do your best to come prepared. If the instructor sends pre-class information, be sure to read through it so you know what to bring.
- Communicate with the instructor. If you have a handicap that will prevent you from doing the exercises that the instructor suggests, let her know, so she can modify the exercises to your benefit. If you're struggling with something between classes, speak up! The instructor can't help you if she doesn't know you have a problem.
- Be patient. Your "bad habits" don't go away overnight. Your dog's won't either! Avoid being too quick to label a training

technique as "not working" just because you haven't seen results in a week. Keep at it. Think in terms of progress, not perfection. Persistence is key.

- Practice! Training your dog is like joining a gym. You have to spend time working out to see results. Be sure to do your homework between class sessions.
- Focus your attention on your dog during training. Try to set the kids up with an activity to keep them safely occupied and turn off mobile phones and other distractions.
- Come to class with an open mind. Be willing to experiment with techniques that might be different from what you're used to. At the same time, remember that you are your dog's best advocate. Never let a trainer talk you into doing something to your dog that makes you uncomfortable.

Practice Maintains Perfect

When your dog's behavior slips, it's time to schedule regular practice!

BY NANCY KERNS

It wasn't so bad, really, as behavior slips go. My dog Otto woofed at a kid at close range. The kid thought Otto was playing; I knew that Otto was scared, and I mentally smacked myself for being inattentive. I was taking pictures at a dog park, and Otto had been happily playing with the other dogs as I worked. I hadn't noticed that a small boy – perhaps five years old? – had entered the park and had started chasing the dogs around.

We can certainly debate the wisdom of having small children in dog parks (I hate to see them there; it's much too easy for them to get knocked over or even attacked in a moment of arousal). But the fact is, I wasn't paying enough attention to my dog – and frankly, it's because I sometimes take it for granted that he's generally so well-behaved. He's not perfect, though; no dog is. (No people are, either.) And so I should have been – should always be – more vigilant.

I've mentioned before that Otto is a little spooked by kids. He's also afraid

of cars, garbage trucks, and the gardeners who service some of the yards in our neighborhood. My husband and I joke about a scenario in which Otto was kidnapped as a puppy by a garbageman and then abused by gardeners and their kids before being tossed out of a moving car. It's a *joke* because I know that it's more likely that a young dog who is fearful of certain things is more likely to lack experience and exposure to these things than to have been abused by them. People always say, "Oh, he must have been abused by a man in a hat!" I say, "He probably never saw, and met, and was given treats from a man in a hat!"

Back to the kids, though. I take every opportunity possible to expose Otto to kids. I carry treats on *every* walk we take, and if we so much as *see* a kid at a distance, I practically make it rain hot dogs. "Oh, Otto! Look, kids! Good boy! We love kids, don't we?"

If the kids are interested and (most importantly) under control, I ask them if

What you can do . . .

- Maintain your dog's training throughout his lifetime. Sign up for a refresher class! Practice!
- Keep your dog socialized! The more your dog gets out into the public, in carefully controlled outings, the better.
- Carry treats (or your dog's favorite toy) with you when in public with your dog.
- Pay close attention to your dog at all times! Protect him from getting frightened or too closely exposed to things that scare him.



Otto's recall is a thing of beauty – fast, enthusiastic, and extremely reliable. But it's only because we practice daily, and we keep it fun.

they would like to give Otto some treats; I ask Otto to sit and offer a paw first, and then he takes the treats very gently. If the kids look impulsive or twitchy, however, I'm quick to keep Otto at a distance, and feed him some treats myself.

Unfortunately, my own son is 18 years old, and my closest niece (only one year old) is an hour away; I don't have the resources for practicing that I used to, in terms of kids I know and can trust to behave around a wary dog. It was so easy when my son was little, and his friends were always over, and we were always going to soccer and baseball games and practice! Kids galore! Now I need to hire some. Or something!

Never get complacent about training

The thing is, Otto has been doing so well for so long. He's got a rock-star, rock-solid recall: fast, enthusiastic, completely trust-

ing that coming to me *right away* is the most fun thing ever. It practically brings tears to my eyes, it's so pretty. I can (and have) called him away from a running feral cat, a skunk (eating a bowl of cat food left out for said feral cats), and even a loose dog that started chasing us. (Otto started to hold his ground, but the dog looked scary, and I thought we'd be better off farther from what appeared to be the dog's home. And sure enough, he stopped chasing us after half a block.)

Yes, in each of the cases where his recall was tested, I was walking with Otto off-leash. We can do that in our tiny town in the off-hours; we rarely see anyone else on the streets or trails before 7 a.m. and after about 8 p.m. It's quiet, there is no traffic, but mostly we can do this because we practiced, practiced, practiced that whole first year we were together. We practiced recalls in the yard, we added distractions (another person bouncing a ball, say), and then we moved to a neighborhood park on a long-line. When Otto's recall was solid on a long-line in the park (and no one was around) I'd take off the long-line and practice some more. Then we started the process on trails. We've built that recall brick by brick.

He failed – that is, *I* failed – only twice that I remember. In each case, I raised the criteria too soon; I expected him to resist temptations that he hadn't had much practice resisting, and I didn't have a long-line on him to prevent him from being rewarded by the fun of his misadventure. (Both times, he was off-leash and spotted a feral cat alongside the trail. The cats were safe; they dive into a blackberry bramble that only tiny animals can get in and out of.)

After each failure, we had to do a *lot* of remedial work on that section of trail. At first we worked on a short leash, and I gave him an "Off!" cue, to get him to look away from the cats (or the places where the cats usually hang out) and look at me. I marked (with a clicker or a verbal "Yes!") and gave him delicious treats each time he looked at me.

Soon, I no longer had to cue the "Off!" He would glance toward the cats, and then look at me, knowing he had earned a treat. He really liked chasing the cats the two times that he was able to, so he's never going to be a dog who will pass by the cats while staring at me fixedly, like a dog in an obedience show ring. But he just glances, and then looks at me for his treat. And I think that as long as it continues to be more

rewarding for him to pass the cats than it is to chase them, he'll resist.

We walk a lot – if not daily, then at least several times a week. So it's no wonder that his on-leash and off-leash walking skills are so good. But kids! We need more work with kids. I'm not sure what we're going to do about that. I do my best to take advantage of the chance meetings we have with kids in public, but I just don't have regular access to some reliable kid volunteers.



If you want your dog to reliably perform any particular behavior, you have to find ways to practice it regularly, and in a way that maintains your dog's enthusiasm for the task.

Whiffed the woof

Back to the woof. As I said, I wasn't looking at Otto when I heard him bark at something at the dog park; I turned around to see him trotting away from a young boy. His tail was wagging, but he looked a little alarmed. The boy, too, looked uncertain for about a second, and then he ran off in pursuit of another dog. Although Otto was already coming toward me, I called him and gave him a treat, then snapped his leash on and asked him to sit. Then I looked to see who was with the boy. It wasn't that hard; his dad was retrieving the boy from chasing another dog.

I approached them to a distance of about 10 feet, and said, "I'm sorry, I didn't see what happened when my dog barked at your son. Is he okay?" I could see that he was okay, but I was curious to get some information about what exactly had transpired. The dad said, "He's fine. He was just running up to your dog and it looked like your dog got scared."

I said, this time to the boy, "Yeah,

buddy, sometimes dogs are scared of kids! Next time, maybe you should hold still and let the dog come up to you! That way you won't scare him. You know, sometimes scared dogs bite!" And then, because I could see that the boy was already losing interest in this conversation, I said, "Do you want to see Otto do some tricks? And you can throw him some cookies when he does his tricks?"

I asked Otto to sit and stay, and approached the boy, handing him a few cookies. Then I stepped back over to Otto and told him, "Down." "Okay, throw him a cookie!" The cookie didn't land all that close, but Otto got it. Then I said, "Point your finger at him and say 'Bang!'" Otto really enjoys this "playing dead" trick. The only problem is getting the "dead" dog to stop wagging his tail and rolling his eyes mischievously. It still delighted the boy, though, and he was happy to toss a few more cookies before we took our leave.

I did what I could to salvage the situation, but really, it was another "fail" for me. I wasn't watching my dog closely enough to protect him from a situation that had the potential for leading up to a dog bite. I allowed my dog to be approached by something he is afraid of, in a scary way, and to actually become scared enough to give a warning woof. Talk about "past threshold!"

So, like I did after my off-leash training failures, I'm going to have to find some kids and that I can instruct so I can set up some remedial socialization sessions for Otto.

Does this sound like I'm taking all this too seriously? When I was a kid, nobody talked about "socializing" their dogs, and most of the dogs we knew were just fine with kids. What's the big deal? At risk of sounding old, when I was a kid, it was a different world. The only dogs I knew who weren't free to run around my rural neighborhood were either hunting dogs or watchdogs; kids knew not to fool around with any of those dogs. And all the ones running loose in the neighborhood (the ones that weren't hit by cars!) were extremely "good with kids." That's because they were constantly exposed to kids!

I want my dog to be as rock-solid with kids – and every other type of person – as he is at resisting the urge to chase cats. So we're going to have to practice. 🐾

Nancy Kerns is Editor of WDJ. She adopted Otto from a shelter on June 13, 2008.

Hunt for Adventure

There are countless activities to do with dogs who hunt – and positive training for these events is becoming more popular.

BY TERRY LONG, CPDT-KA

Retrievers, yes. Pointers, yes. Setters, yes. Spaniels, yes. Curs . . . wait. Curs? Wait a minute. Feists? Plott Hounds? Not so fast! What's going on here? I thought we were talking "hunting dogs."

Depending on who you talk to, "hunting dog" means very different things. The only thing in common may very well be that the human end of the leash historically toted a gun in pursuit of some type of "game." The game in question was not after-dinner parlor entertainment, but the entree on your dinner table. That might be pheasant, duck, or squirrel. Through hundreds of years, the real-life pursuit of food for one's family has morphed into a competitive sport for people who rely upon Safeway to meet their nutritional needs.

The diversity of breeds and types of competition is simply mind-boggling, with separate sanctioning organizations, each with its own standards of competition for retrievers, pointers, setters, etc., as well as

for coon hounds, curs, and feists. There are many different kinds of hunting (bird dogs, treeing dogs, scent hounds, etc.) and each type of hunting competition has its own unique rules and regulations – and owners who are hunting for ribbons for their walls and bragging rights among friends and competitors.

Hunting is also another sport in which, historically, dogs are usually trained with at least a certain amount of traditional, force-based training methods. It is common practice in all the hunting disciplines to use shock collars and other compulsive training techniques, even on very young puppies.

However, there are more and more people in the hunt and field sports who *are* breaking from tradition and using positive reinforcement in their hunting dog training. I found two Yahoo discussion lists dedicated to positive gun dog training, and met some wonderful proponents of this new approach. You are in for a treat. Meet

EDITOR'S NOTE

Many hunting sports take the lives of other animals; this may not be your cup of tea. But there are many people who don't like the idea of killing animals, yet own dogs whose genetics compel them to hunt. Keep in mind that many hunting organizations go to great lengths to protect game during competitions. And there are clubs and groups who simulate hunting conditions during training and even competition in which *no* game animals are harmed.

three pioneers from a small but growing band of people whose quest for ribbons has not trumped their love of their dogs nor their belief in the power of positive reinforcement training.



Loki, a yellow Labrador Retriever owned and trained positively by Mike and Inga From, demonstrates the intensity he brings to the hunt. Photo by Mike Lentz, courtesy of Mike and Inga From.

SNAPSHOT OF THE SPORT:



- **What is this sport?** A variety of types of hunting where the human uses a gun to shoot game and the dog participates by flushing, pointing, retrieving, treeing, etc.
- **Prior training required?** Moderate to high.
- **Physical demands?** On the dog: High. On the handler: Moderate to high.
- **Best-suited structure?** Varies widely depending on the type of hunting for which the dog was bred.
- **Best-suited temperament?** Energetic dogs who enjoy physical activity and using their genetic heritage to retrieve, tree, etc.
- **Cost?** Moderate to high.
- **Training complexity?** High.
- **Mental stimulation?** High.
- **Physical stimulation?** High.
- **Recreational opportunities?** Moderate.
- **Competition opportunities and venues?** High.

Inga From: Bringing clickers and gun dogs together

Inga From, CPDT-KA, is a professional trainer and the behavior and training coordinator for the Minnesota Valley Humane Society. In her day job she manages shelter volunteers, runs the shelter's dog training program, and offers pet education to the public and to shelter staff and volunteers. In 2008 she was the recipient of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers' Premier Shelter Staff Award.

In addition to her day job, she runs a private training business that offers a variety of services and classes, including gun dog training. She is an ex-game warden, and she and her husband hunt waterfowl and upland birds with their yellow Lab (Loki) and Springer Spaniel (Ammo).

From grew up with dogs. Her mother was a groomer and the family had Springers. From started 4-H in grade school and dog training became her favorite hobby. She showed in county, state, and regional fairs in obedience and conformation all through high school. Her father taught her hunting ethics: "I hunt only what I will eat and I will not be wasteful with game or disrespectful to habitat, land owners, or animals."

From learned how to work with gun dogs from friends during high school. Later, she joined a program called Women in the Outdoors, a division of the National Wild Turkey Federation. All the training was traditional. Then she met her husband Mike, who also had a hunting dog (Loki), but was not comfortable with some conventional, force-based training.



Mike From and Lokie share time in the field with friends. Mike's desire to train his hunting dog without force influenced his wife, Inga, to crusade for positive gun dog training. Photo by Mike Lentz.

"He listened to the dog and if Loki seemed unhappy, he would change things to fit the situation. He worked Loki in a non-traditional way and was not even aware of it. Loki has been working years in the field and is a very successful retriever without being taught a force fetch. Loki has hunted season after season without the use of an electronic collar. I figured if my husband can do this as a dog owner, why can't I, a professional dog trainer?"

From's crusade was about to begin.

She started by clicker training her dog, Ammo, for pet manners. "I knew that he was going to be trained with a clicker for manners so why would I switch training methods on him just because he was going to hunt? I stayed the course with him and his clicker, and he has never known any other way. Ammo has also enjoyed many seasons in the field hunting with Loki, my husband, and me, and he does just fine; we rarely lose any birds."

From attended a seminar on the East

A Hunting Dog Glossary

Many dogs originally bred for a single function have since been bred to perform other hunting skills. Here is a list of the basic hunting skills desired in sporting breeds.

Pointers: These dogs detect game by scent; they then indicate where the game is by freezing, staring intently in the direction of the game, and lifting a front leg in the classic "point." Game hunted with pointers includes pheasant, grouse, quail, and other birds that seek safety in ground cover rather than by flying away. Pointing breeds include German Shorthair, German Wirehair, and English Pointers; and Gordon, Irish, and English Setters.

Flushers: These dogs find the game and then drive it from its cover; many also retrieve the game after it has been shot. Breeds include a variety of spaniels such as the Clumber,

English Springer, Welsh Springer, Irish Water, and American Water Spaniels.

Retrievers: These dogs bring back game under the direction of the hunter. Breeds include Labrador, Golden, Curly Coat, Nova Scotia Duck Tolling, Chesapeake Bay, and many more Retrievers.

HPRs (hunt, point, and retrieve): The North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVDA) defines these dogs as those that are "bred and trained to dependably hunt and track game, to retrieve on both land and water, and to track wounded game on both land and water." These dogs find game, indicate where they are, and retrieve them. Breeds include a variety of pointers and setters, the Weimaraner, Hungarian Vizla, Brittany, and Spinone.

Coast by Jim Barry, and she looked into the United Kingdom Gundog Club, which she heard might fit her philosophy about training and hunting. “I teach positive training and I use clickers. I use the LIMA (least invasive, minimally aversive) principle in all my teaching. Because of the training methods I choose to use, the U.K. gun dog award fits the best for this type of training. All of the current U.S. organizations that test gun dogs are dominated by traditional force-based training.”

From’s clients are supportive. They have not felt welcome at many trials because they don’t use traditional methods. Some have even been told they can’t use clickers. But the U.K. Gundog Club puts a heavy emphasis on obedience training before training for a sport. Also, electronic shock collars are not embraced by British trainers generally, and it is believed that the use of shock collars will be outlawed in the U.K. With such an emphasis on basic training first, From feels that clicker training will have a much better chance in the U.K. program.

From sees a trend from the people who attend her seminars. Instead of being hunters themselves, they have a family dog that they are interested in training for what he or she was bred to do.

“I hope to pioneer this new field of family dog field training; it’s increasing in demand, especially in my state of Minnesota. I had people come to my last seminar from not only Minnesota, but also Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. I am a hunter myself, but train my dogs in a non-traditional method for the gun dog world. People like me are out there, and they want something more than what is now available in the gun dog world.

“It’s not that traditional training does not work with gun dogs; it does. It’s that there are other alternatives that will work just as well in the long run. Why not blaze a new trail and see if anyone will follow? I cannot wait for the day when this type of training is mainstream and there is an organization in the U.S. that supports and expands it. Maybe I’ll have to start my own club for positive-trained gun dogs! I am working on that now, slowly, step by step with Positive Gun Dogs of Minnesota.”

Jim Barry: Writing guides for others

Jim Barry, CPDT-KA, CDBC, is the author of *The Ethical Dog Trainer* and co-author of *Positive Gun Dogs: Clicker Training for*

Sporting Breeds. In addition to running a private dog training business (Reston Dog Training, in Reston, Virginia), Barry is a senior fellow at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management of the University of Maryland, where he conducts research on international issues and teaches programs in negotiation and crisis leadership.

Barry is one of only two people in the U.S. to have been authorized to give awards for field tests sponsored by the U.K. Gundog Club. His entry into the gun dog world came about after he got his black Labrador, Toby. Barry and his wife Vicki planned on doing therapy dog work with their new pup, purchased from a breeder of show/obedience lines. That quickly changed as Toby demonstrated his love of water and a strong retrieving instinct. “I started working on a formal retrieve and one thing led to another,” said Barry.

At the time, Barry was an intern with Carole Peeler, CDBC, CPDT-KA in Falls Church, Virginia. Barry completed all of Peeler’s clicker training classes, and then started looking for a trainer who used clicker training for field work. “I was disappointed to discover that no one in my area taught field work with positive methods,” he says. He joined the Positive Gun Dogs discussion list on Yahoo.com, started reading everything he could get his hands on, talked to experienced gun dog

trainers, and then tried applying clicker training to it all. As a result, Toby now has a Working Certificate from the Labrador Retriever Club of the United States. “In a sense, Toby and I were the ‘lab rats’ for this new method of gun dog training.”

Barry met his co-authors on the Yahoo list, and together, they decided the world needed a book about clicker training for gun dogs. Their resulting book was published in 2007. “It seemed like every time a new person joined the Yahoo list, he or she asked, ‘Where’s the book on positive field training?’ There were none at the time, although Helen Phillips in the U.K. later wrote *Clicker Gundogs*, so we decided to write one. Sue Smith took the lead on the learning theory and basic training chapters, I wrote the retrieving sections, and Mary Emmen did the upland hunting portions.”

The mere thought that dogs could be trained without shock collars, much less with a clicker, was to say the least, novel. And unproven. To have a book published on the subject gave a small, but growing, community of positive trainers the boost they needed. However, Barry is circumspect about the growth of positive training in the sport.

“All dog sports are challenging, but in gun dog training there are three specific issues that stand out. The first is that the tasks are inherently very demanding, both physically and mentally. They may involve



Frustrated by the lack of a guide to training gun dogs using positive methods, Jim Barry wrote one himself, with help from like-minded trainers. Barry finds the United Kingdom’s Gundog Club to be the most open to positive training.

working in difficult terrain and nasty weather for long periods of time, searching for game that is hidden in deep cover. Dogs may have to swim long distances, climb banks, and jump fences. And all of this must be done while being attentive to the handler and the goals.

“The second challenge is that much of the work is done at great distance. In higher-level retriever tests, for examples, multiple retrieves at distances of hundreds of yards are not uncommon. Finally, in field work, there are many opportunities for dogs to engage in inherently rewarding behaviors, such as chasing game or

following scents that do not coincide with the handler’s desires.

“Because of these complexities, we had to think creatively not only about basic training methods, but also how to organize training and the sequence in which various skills are introduced. We know that you can train a reliable hunting companion without using an electric collar. I’ve done it and so have many others. We also know that you can train pointing dogs to Master Hunter level and, with patience and dedication, retrievers to at least Senior Hunter level.

“Finally, thousands of high-performing gun dogs have been trained in the U.K. and

other European countries where e-collars are either banned or rarely used. What we don’t know, and may not know for some time, is whether dogs can be trained to the highest levels in U.S. retriever trials using positive reinforcement exclusively. As noted above, these trials are exceedingly difficult and require training dogs to do things that are in some ways counter-intuitive, such as holding straight lines rather than taking routes that require less energy. Several dedicated people are working on this goal, and time will tell.”

Barry agrees with Inga From that the U.K. Gundog Club is a good fit for training

Hunt and Field 101

BY INGA FROM

The following general information should help you appreciate the experiences of our three pioneers in the sport of hunting and field as it applies to the “sporting breeds” (retrievers, setters, points, spaniels, etc.). Inga From, of Positive Gun Dogs in Minnesota, compiled this synopsis for WDJ.

For the most part, the competition gun dog world is broken up into two groups:

Field trials: Field trials are events where dogs compete against each other. Dogs who enter these trials must be well trained, and the competition is intense. There are different categories for three of the four hunting dog groups: the flushers, pointers, and retrievers. The fourth is the versatile hunting dogs group, but most people with these dogs – sometimes called HPRs for hunt, point, and retrieve – compete in other organizations.

Field trials, the first competitions for gun dogs, started as bragging rights among gun dog owners but through the years have become much more than that. These trials require a dog to perform with almost machine-like perfection and they ask a lot from the dogs.

Hunt tests: Hunt tests were started for people who hunt with their dogs – people who did not have the time or money to train for the competitive field trials. That has now changed; many people now train for hunt tests, which are designed to resemble real-life hunting situations. Dogs do not compete with each other, but against a set standard at different levels of titling.

Organizations

Different gun dog clubs have different ideas regarding what a trial and hunt test should be. Some are sanctioned trials and others are not.

- **American Kennel Club (AKC)** offers both field trials and hunt tests. The AKC rules of competition are determined by the breed of the dog.

- **United Kennel Club (UKC)** has its own Hunting Retriever Club (HRC), which has hunt tests that simulate realistic hunting situations for retrieving dogs. The handlers even wear hunting attire and gear and must know safe gun handling.

The UKC also has a program for the pointing breeds, as well as its “Natural Ability Test” (NAT) certificate. This is a mix between a field trial and a hunt test for pointers, providing a test that resembles a real-hunting situation, but with the competition of the field trials. Birds are shot during this event in certain categories.

The UKC recently added the United Field Trialers Association (UFTA) by officially recognizing that organization’s events and titles for dogs who point and flush. Before the first of this year, the UFTA was not affiliated with any registry. The UFTA trials hunt in a field area and shoot birds to judge their dogs’ hunting ability.

- **North American Hunting Retriever Association (NAHRA)** offers hunt tests for retrievers, but some flushers and versatile dogs also compete. This organization’s hunt tests are set up for real-life hunting situations. Dogs can earn titles on both upland and waterfowl hunting.

- **North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA)** holds hunt tests for versatile hunting breeds. Until the mid 1970s, NAVHDA tests were called trials, but its competitions have always been for titles against a standard. This organization appeals to some people because it recognizes breeds that the AKC does not. The organization has a grass-roots history. Representatives have told Inga From that there is interest within the organization to start a group for gun dogs that are trained in a non-traditional way (clicker gun dogs).

- **The United Kingdom Gundog Club** is different from the available American field trials and tests. It gives awards based on a set standard, and dogs do not compete against each other. It has six levels, each with separate criteria. All types of gun dogs can earn awards, and mixed breed dogs are welcome. There are separate programs for retrievers, spaniels, and HPRs.

the family dog to be a gun dog. He, too, believes that the emphasis on steadiness and reliability before training hunting skills is a good fit for positive training. This is because training at a skill level that is too advanced for the dog (e.g., long-distance retrieves) often prompts trainers to use aversive methods such as the shock collar.

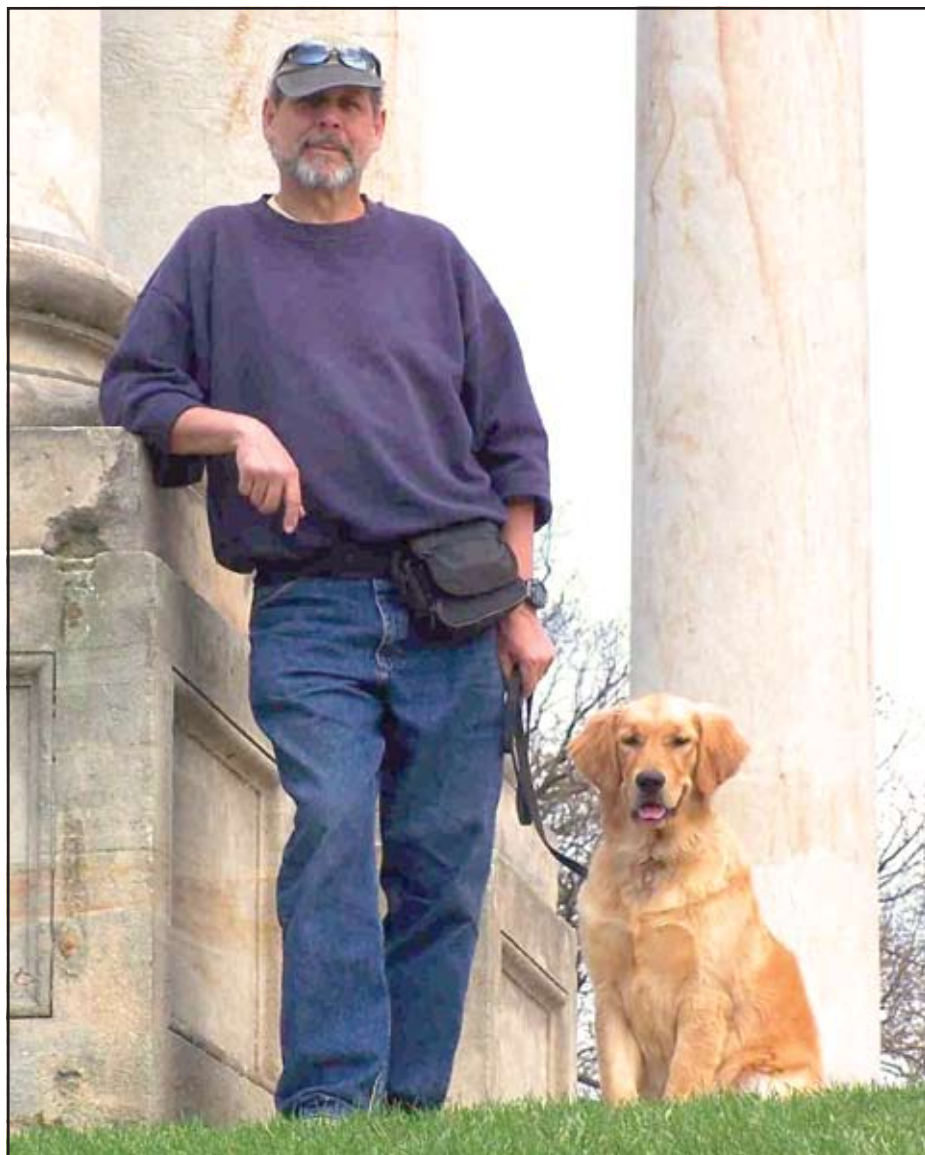
Barry is both hopeful and realistic about the trend in positive gun dog training. "I think it's largely a reflection of the general interest in more humane training. However, the growth is slow because there is little overlap between people who hunt and people who are interested in operant conditioning! But the Positive Gun Dogs (Yahoo) list now has some 800 members, up from 300 when I joined, so that's progress!"

That said, Barry is not overly optimistic about positive training becoming mainstream any time soon. "I believe this is beginning to occur for pointing and versatile breeds. In the U.S. retriever trial world, I believe it will take a very long time. This is both because of the demands of the sport and because there is currently a strongly held belief, fostered by professional field trainers and e-collar manufacturers, that existing training systems are highly effective. Having said that, I also believe that positive training has begun to catch on for recreational hunters and people who want enrichment activities for their family dogs. This is where I see the greatest opportunity for acceptance and growth."

Lindsay Ridgeway: Proving it can be done

Lindsay Ridgeway, of Laytonsville, Maryland, is a software designer by day, but some of his proudest moments have come from designing dog training plans and seeing his dogs blossom as a result. Ridgeway is an active proponent of positive gun dog training and is considered by some to be the poster child of the movement toward positive training in the sport. He and his Golden Retrievers, Lumi and Laddie, achieved AKC's Junior Hunter (JH) and Senior Hunter (SH) titles, with some first-place finishes along the way. They also have been awarded the highest field title (Working Certificate Excellent) from the Golden Retriever Club of America – all without using aversives in training.

It could be argued that Ridgeway's influence in the sport is a result of two of his hobbies. In the past, he participated in



Lindsay Ridgeway and his all-positively trained Golden Retriever, Lumiere. Ridgeway methodically plans and documents his training sessions (see "Online Resources," next page), building his dogs' skills and confidence as he goes.

endurance sports, running 14 marathons, and thus has a keen understanding of the mental and physical stamina required to go the distance. His other hobby, which he applies skillfully, is writing about dog training! More than likely, it will be the combination of stamina and writing that will help him pursue personal training goals as well as getting the word out about positive gun dog training.

In 2003, Ridgeway got his first Golden Retriever, Lumi. He discovered clicker training after trying puppy training techniques that he found scary for his pup and detrimental to his relationship with her. He started the DogTrek (Yahoo) list in 2005 to share his experiences.

He competed with Lumi in agility, but

retired her from that sport when arthritis made competing and training too difficult. It was then that he began the search for alternatives to conventional gun dog training techniques. In 2007 he brought home Laddie. Three years later he had JH, SH, and GRCA titles on both dogs. How did he do it?

"Like nearly all clicker trainers who come to the sport, I initially found books on traditional field training useless except for their interesting anecdotes, because the stated goal of every exercise seemed to be to teach the dog to accept force, and that was simply not my goal. I reached the same conclusion that clicker trainers attempting field work almost invariably reach: whole new training methods would be needed."

Ridgeway spent hours reading books and participating in online discussion groups and met two traditional trainers who were willing to share their methods and love of the sport.

“They took me under their wings. They helped me understand that those traditional drills were exactly what my dogs needed; I just needed to subtract the coercion element. As they helped me to understand the procedures, I saw that in most cases, in addition to training the dog to accept force, the drills also taught the dog vital concepts of field work.

“Generations of trainers had discovered not only what concepts the field dog needs to learn, but equally important, in what order those concepts need to be learned. I simply had to train those concepts in new ways, while allowing my dogs to go through the same crucial sequence of learning. The missteps my mentors helped me and my dogs to avoid became as crucial as finding the correct stepping stones to

follow,” says Ridgeway.

Key to his success, Ridgeway believes, was his ability to put aside philosophical differences and to learn from those experienced traditional trainers. “Several times a week, I’d watch expert trainers and their dogs perform the skills that Lumi and Laddie were also learning to perform. Yes, I was ‘different’ because of my strange refusal to use ‘corrections,’ and as in any group some of the relationships were smoother than others. But real friendships were forged and became the key to continued progress. Without them, my dogs’ field careers would have ended before they started.”

When asked how he responds to people who say that dogs in this sport simply can’t be trained without shock collars, Ridgeway’s response reflects both his pragmatism and optimism. “I think that it is far more difficult to train without aversive methods in sports that are closely bound to the dog’s breeding traits – sports such as

herding, police-dog work, and field work. For the trainers who first attempt such training, progress may be significantly slower than for traditional trainers following a well-established program, and it may even be that generations from now, such methods will still be slower than traditional methods.

“In addition, my dogs have only attained their Senior Hunter titles so far, and it remains to be seen whether more advanced titles are even possible for [dogs trained with positives]. So my answer is: Yes, training without an e-collar makes participation in the sport more challenging than training with one. But Lumi and Laddie, dogs with very different breeding and personalities, have shown that it is possible to train a retriever to advanced titles using [positive] methods.”

Ridgeway has every intention of continuing to train Laddie for other advanced titles. He has a list of training goals and is in the process of designing training plans to attain them. “Unless and until I, or someone else, shows that positive training can accomplish the same goals as traditional tools and methods without significantly more time and effort, I see little incentive for most serious amateurs or professionals

to switch to [positive] methods unless they have personal reasons for doing so. On the other hand, the *traditional* tools and methods for training a retriever have become dramati-

cally more humane over the years, and I suspect that trend may continue. Whether the efforts and achievements of positive trainers, who comprise an infinitesimal fraction of the sport, will have any effect on that trend, I consider doubtful. I think it’s just that as time goes by, traditional trainers discover new tools and methods that are more effective and also happen to be more humane.”

But that doesn’t mean that he isn’t going to do his best to prove that it *can* be done. 🐾

Terry Long, CPDT-KA, is a writer, agility instructor, and behavior counselor in Long Beach, CA. She lives with four dogs and a cat and is addicted to agility and animal behavior. See page 24 for contact info.

Further Information Resources

Many excellent websites do not provide phone numbers to contact them for more information, preferring to field inquiries by e-mail. We provided numbers when they were available.

SANCTIONING ORGANIZATIONS AND CLUBS

American Kennel Club (AKC). (919) 816-3904; akc.com/events

United Kennel Club (UKC). (269) 343-9020; ukcdogs.com

North American Hunting Retriever Association (NAHRA)
(540) 899-7620; nahra.org

North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA)
(847) 253-6488, navhda.org

United Kingdom Gundog Club. 01428 717529; thegundogclub.co.uk

BOOKS

There are a variety of books on the subject. Very few focus on positive training techniques. These are two that do:

Clicker Gundog Book, by Helen Phillips

Positive Gun Dogs: Clicker Training for Sporting Breeds, by Jim Barry, Mary Emmen, & Susan Smith (available in print and electronically)

ONLINE RESOURCES

PositiveGunDogs@yahoogroups.com

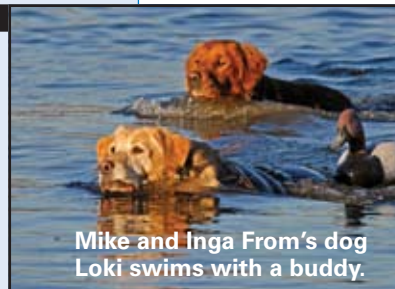
Clicker_Gundog@yahoogroups.com

Lindsay Ridgeway’s blogs and lists:

Training journal blog: lumi-laddie-test-series.blogspot.com

Reference blog: 2q-retriever.blogspot.com

General dog training: pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/DogTrek



Mike and Inga From's dog
Loki swims with a buddy.

Changing Times

Three months' worth of praise and constructive criticism.

STONE-FREE DALS

I wanted to comment on “Guaranteed Stone-Free Dalmatians? Yes!” (WDJ June 2010). I was there in the early 1980s with Dr. Bob Schaible, and the renowned veterinary geneticist, Dr. Donald Patterson, when we were asked by the AKC to come to a round table informal meeting about the latest in genetic diseases of dogs and associated diagnostics etc. The meeting resulted in a series of articles (“Pure Bred Dogs,” *AKC Gazette*, 1982, volume 99).

I wrote about the inherited bleeding diseases (Dodds, W J., “Detection of genetic defects by screening programs,” *AKC Gazette* 99:56-60, 1982). In the same issue, Don Patterson wrote about heritable cardiac disease, and Bob Schaible told his remarkable story about the Dalmatian x Pointer cross and the back crosses that were uric acid stone-free but still looked identical to Dalmatians phenotypically.

I was horrified to learn that subsequently the Dalmatian Club of America refused to acknowledge the registration of Bob’s

fourth generation back cross, thereby setting back the health of this breed for decades to come. This was pure ignorance on behalf of the Dalmatian Club’s membership – to even think that pure bred dogs were indeed “pure” and had not evolved over time by selective breeding by humans, rather than

randomly in nature! I remember that Bob was bitter over this folly at the time, and I don’t blame him one bit.

It is with great triumph at last that his will to save the breed from this condition has finally been accepted. Bravo!

W. Jean Dodds, DVM
Hemopet / Hemolife
Garden Grove, CA



A GIFT

Thank you so much for such a wonderful and informative publication! We have subscribed for many years and I have never before taken the time to say thanks. We share our home with three dogs; two adopted through Petfinder.com and one stray. Although all of your issues cover pertinent topics, your recent issues have been especially helpful.

After reading your article about canine rehabilitation (“Saying ‘No’ to Surgery,” WDJ February 2010), we took our oldest dog to University of Tennessee’s rehab department and this has been really beneficial. Of course, my favorite column is Pat Miller’s; she has shared so much great training advice over the years. Your articles on canine diets have also been very helpful. We follow Mary Straus’ recommendations and add supplements that you have suggested.

Also, I thought you might be interested to know that one of our dogs (a GSD mix, not a Dalmatian) had a urate stone and has been on the low-purine Billinghurst diet for the past three years. This diet has worked really well for her and she has had no recurrence of crystals/stones.

I always give WDJ as a gift whenever a friend adopts a dog. Many thanks for helping us keep our dogs healthy and happy!

Michelle Wolf
Via email

SHAVING SHAME

I must say I was shocked to see Whole Dog Journal sporting a shaved dog chained up on the cover of the July 2010 issue. Then the same picture on page two. This picture is by no means a pretty picture; a dog chained with a tie out stake, no shelter, food, or water plus the dog is shaved down to the bare skin, with no protection from the sun or heat. I

realize this is just a picture displaying a shaved dog, but please a little more humane example. This dog has been shaved down to the skin, no protection from the sun/rain/brush/stickers etc.

So despite the good will in the article, please advocate getting hair somewhere else besides dogs. Many dog grooming salons advocate clipping dogs in summer just for their own profit margin.

Patricia Bloom
Miami, Florida

*We received a couple dozen letters like Patricia’s regarding that photo. Allow me to apologize for failing to caption the photo with a warning that **dogs should never be shaved to the skin**, as that Golden was, even for a good cause! Dogs need their coats! The article suggested only that groomers should be encouraged to donate the hair from their regular work to oil cleanup nonprofit groups.*

But let me also say that it’s easy to take details in a photo out of context. I took that photo of the Golden on the sidelines of an evening sports practice. He was a sweet, older house dog, troubled by thyroid problems, who had a hard time regulating his temperature. During that hot summer, his owners decided to try to clip his excessively thick coat to help him cool down (he was hot even in their air-conditioned home). They tried to do it themselves, and botched the job badly enough that they felt their only recourse was to shave him all the way down. Of course they should have taken him to a groomer for a trace clip and coat thinning instead.

But his owners never took him out in the sun (we were in full shade), and only walked him outdoors in the evening after sunset. He was staked on the sidelines of our game so he could be close to his owners, he had water, and there was always at least one player on the sidelines petting him!

Letters continued on next page

THE GOOD, AND BAD

I just read your editor's note about vets and vaccines ("Something Is Not Right," August 2010). Apparently the clinic you go to is still in the dark ages. I've been going to my clinic since the early 1980s and (what you described) certainly was the attitude during the 80s and 90s. But I've been getting titers on my Gordon Setters for several years, and now that I work at the front desk of the very same clinic, I find that more people are savvy about over-vaccinating and asking questions about issues with their pets.

Our vets are not "vaccine happy" either, recommending "routine" vaccinations every three years. We haven't jumped on the canine influenza bandwagon although now most kennels in our area require it (maybe you should do an editorial on kennels who demand bordetella and influenza vaccines for all boarding there).

Because of the economy, more people are opting not to visit, even after the infamous post card is received. But we are also aware that more clients are noticing issues like lumps, hot spots, or their pets "not acting themselves." As a receptionist, I don't make the decision for the client, I only tell them what their pet is due to have, which includes heartworm testing and fecal exams. More and more clients are aware of what is needed and what is not necessary. We have very few clients who wander in clueless and we certainly don't automatically vaccinate a pet who is obviously ill or compromised in any way. Our vets and vet techs are much more observant and caring than that.

I thoroughly enjoy WDJ and follow it on Facebook too.

Jani Wolstenholme
Rhode Island

It was easy to live in the modern age of veterinary medicine when I lived in the San Francisco Bay Area, with a wealth of enlightened veterinarians all around me. But just 150 miles north, it's still the "Dark Ages" (though I did find a good practice with modern vets about 25 miles away). I'm not alone; I received many notes about similar situations, such as this one:

I work at a veterinary clinic, and have for the past 18 years. The short answer to your question about why vaccines are pushed aggressively but needed care is not? It is the profit margin. For

example, a dose of rabies vaccine for a dog costs about \$2. Clients are charged \$24, and it takes about two minutes of the vet's time (if that). Compare that to a blood test; in most cases, the profit to the vet is not even twice its cost, and the tests are very time consuming to run. Which is easier and more profitable?

Honestly, it makes me sick because I've seen the same exact thing that you mentioned in your editor's note about the old dog that clearly had health issues. Many of these older pets come back a few short weeks after being vaccinated with a dire health concern (in my opinion probably triggered by the vaccine).

Name withheld by request

A BETTER CONE

You just about always get it right – but not this time. Regarding "A Better Cone" (WDJ August 2010), I have to take great issue with one of your main points about the ProCollar.

I have absolutely no affiliation whatsoever with ProCollar; I am just a doggy mom to a huge harlequin Great Dane named Harley. I have done my homework, having gone through virtually every single product on the market to find the best cone-alternative for Harley's post-surgical use.

Unfortunately, you made a totally incorrect assumption based on Rickey's experience when you made the comment, "Truly large dogs would not be able to use this product." Absolutely untrue! Harley is a huge boy – 150 pounds. The XL size of ProCollar fit him perfectly, no problem. And, because I was so happy with this collar compared to cones (and all the other alternatives) I suggested it to my Dane friends, who also have been using it with great success with their Great Danes. I never took a pic of Harley when he was wearing his ProCollar, but here is a photo of him so that you can at least get an idea of his size.

Ricky, while only 25 pounds, appears to have a heavy, long-haired coat. Danes, of course, do not. Neither do many other giant breed dogs, on whom the XL ProCollar would, and does, fit just great.

Thanks for your terrific WDJ!

Cary Glassner Rauscher
Medway, MA



NEW CONSIDERATION

Thanks for the good info in this article! The one thing missing is noting that some dogs may need a rigid collar, like my dog, who just had both eyes removed.

Linda Wroth
Richmond, California

I never considered a condition that required a cone to provide eye protection, even though it's apparently common (see next letter). Thanks for your feedback!

There are some instances in which one of the alternative collars (other than the Kong E-Collar) mentioned in your article would *not* be appropriate. I have a dog that recently had delicate (and expensive) eye surgery to remove a luxated lens. It was absolutely critical that she not rub her eye afterwards, on *anything*. Not only was her vision at stake, but the eye itself.

While they do generally prevent a dog from licking or chewing anywhere on their body, any of the soft collars do *not* prevent a dog from rubbing their eyes or face on other objects, or scratching at their face with a hind foot. Unfortunately, a stiff cone is the only type I am aware of that protects a dog's eyes or face.

So while your statement that "Alternatives to classic 'Elizabethan' collars are more comfortable and just as effective for your dog" is technically true with the inclusion of the Kong E-Collar, your readers should be very aware that not *all* the alternatives are always as effective or appropriate, and there are definitely situations

where a stiff cone (whether a traditional one or the more comfortable Kong version) are the only kind that will do the job.

I would also like to suggest that any dogs who *do* wear a stiff E-Collar of any variety see a veterinary chiropractor, physical therapist, or massage therapist afterwards. There is no question that bumping into things and twisting their necks repeatedly while wearing the stiff collars can take a toll on their cervical spine and musculature.

Thank you so much for all you do to improve the lives of so many dogs! 🐾

Sidney Hoblit
West Grove, PA

Shouldn't you have the answers before the questions arise?

Take the confusion and hesitation out of your dog's care! Be fully ready for anything—and everything! Accept this risk-free invitation and discover...



- 🐾 Positive solutions to your most stubborn training challenges.
- 🐾 Smart decisions for safe, natural, and nutritious feeding.
- 🐾 Meaningful measures to strengthen good health and reinforce resistance to illness.
- 🐾 Essential fundamentals to starting your puppy off right.
- 🐾 Proven techniques to end problem behaviors.

YOU WANT THE BEST FOR YOUR DOG!

Five brand-new books from Whole Dog Journal will show you how to provide the vigilant care you want to give—and your dog deserves!

Because foresight is far better than hindsight when it comes to your dog's health and training, nothing beats having a solid game plan. **Whole Dog Journal's Guides are playbooks for winning and effective dog care.** It is a series everyone who has a dog should own!

Good Eats: Finding the Best Foods, Treats and Supplements

- Basic Food Selection • Canned Foods • Dry Foods • Weight Control • Treats
- Food Disasters • Diet and the Older Dog • Special Needs Diets • Home-Prepared Diets
- Pica and Coprophagia

All's Well: The Keys to Keeping Your Dog Healthy

- Exercise and Injury Prevention • Selecting a Holistic Vet • Old dogs • Anesthesia
- Dental Health • Creating a Healthy Home • Vaccinations • NSAIDs • First Aid
- Preventing Heat Stroke

Command Performance: Positive Training Techniques that Work

- Positive Training Basics • Leash Manners • Getting a Sit • Encouraging Self-Control
- The "Come" Command • Greeting • Tricks and Games • Park Behavior
- Teaching Wait and Stay

Puppy Primer: What To Do—And Not To Do—In The First Months

- Pre-Puppy Prep • Housetraining • Crate Training • Vaccinations • Grooming
- Bite Inhibition • New Dog Do's and Don'ts • Socialization • Building Good Manners

Mending His Ways: Saying Good-Bye To Bad Behaviors

- Dealing with Anxious Dogs • Remedial Housetraining • Crating Problems
- Destructive Chewing • Escape Artists • Reactive Behaviors • Growling • Barking
- Multi-Dog Households

30-Day Risk-Free Examination Privileges for Whole Dog Journal Readers when you order now, your satisfaction is assured with our 100% money-back guarantee. If you are not completely satisfied, you may return your Guides within 30 days for a full and unquestioned refund.

A WEALTH OF INFORMATION— AT MONEY SAVING PRICES!

- 🐾 **Save \$5.00 on each Guide!**
- 🐾 **Buy 4 and get the fifth guide free!**

Three convenient ways to order...

1. Call 1-800-571-1555
2. Online at www.whole-dog-journal.com/dogcare
3. Mail this coupon

Whole Dog Journal's GUIDES TO OPTIMUM DOG CARE

YES send me the following Guides

- Good Eats
- All's Well
- Command Performance
- Puppy Primer
- Mending His Ways

___ Guides @ \$14.95 = \$ _____
Add Postage & Handling \$ 2.95
TOTAL AMOUNT \$ _____

Check enclosed (payable to WDJ)

Postage & Handling \$2.95

Charge to: Amex VISA MC

Account No. _____ Exp Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: **Whole Dog Journal Books**
PO Box 221004, Beachwood OH 44122-2449

All 5 Guides for \$62.75
including p&h!

**Just \$14.95 each—
\$5 off the cover price!
Buy 4 Guides
and get the 5th Guide FREE!**

BEST VALUE

RESOURCES

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

Stephanie Colman, Caninestein Dog Training, Los Angeles, CA. Stephanie teaches private lessons and group classes, and provides twice-weekly training tips for the NBC affiliate's morning show, "Today in LA." (818) 989-7996; caninesteintraining.com

Terry Long, CPDT-KA, DogPACT, Long Beach, CA. Terry is a writer, agility instructor, and behavior counselor. She provides pre-adoption counseling, behavior modification, and group classes in pet manners and agility. (562) 423-0793; dogpact.com

Pat Miller, CPDT-KA, CDBC, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Fairplay, MD. Train with modern, dog-friendly positive methods. Group

and private training, rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. (301) 582-9420; peaceablepaws.com

HOLISTIC VETERINARIANS

American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association (AHVMA), 2214 Old Emmorton Road, Bel Air, MD 21015. (410) 569-0795. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a list of holistic veterinarians in your area, or search ahvma.org

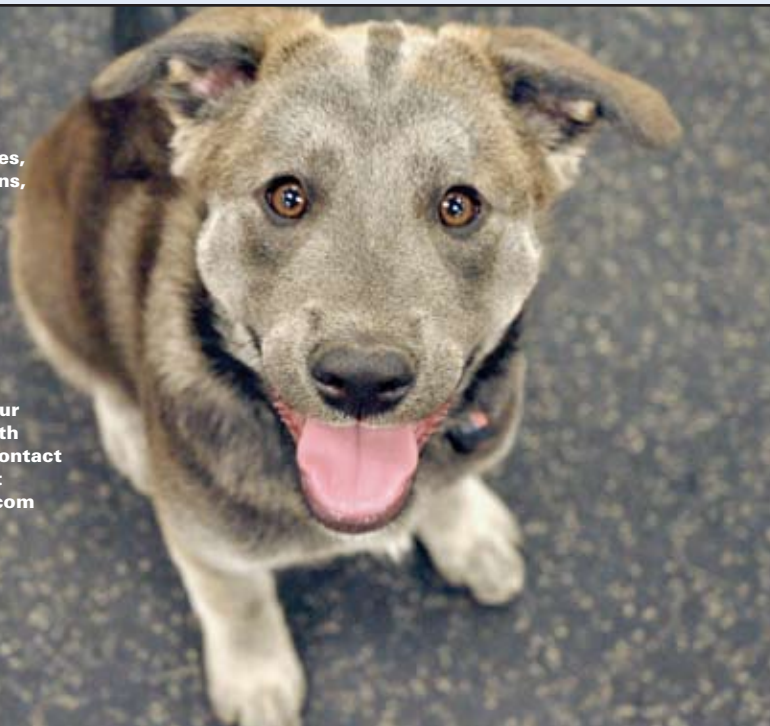
BOOKS

WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of many books on positive training. All available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com

We're here for you

Our publisher offers a program to enable dog-related businesses, including veterinarians, pet supply stores, groomers, and trainers, to buy copies of WDJ in bulk for reselling to their customers.

If you would be interested in buying copies of WDJ for your customers each month (at a special price), contact Jocelyn Donnellon at JDonnellon@belvoir.com or (203) 857-3100.



WHAT'S AHEAD

What? What?

Five things to do when your dog appears to be losing her hearing.

Puppy Kindergarten

How to get the most out of a puppy training class.

Grains v. Carbs

Everything you need to know about carbs in your dog's diet.

All About Aggression

What is (and is not) aggressive behavior; how to manage a dog with aggressive behavior; when management is not enough.

Lock Him Up!

Why it's a great idea to teach your dog to accept short-term confinement (in a crate or pen) – and the right way to do it.

Dinner on Ice

WDJ reviews frozen diets for dogs.

Spaying Soon?

In almost all spay surgeries in the U.S., today, vets remove the female's ovaries and uterus. In Europe, it's more common to leave the uterus intact. WDJ discusses the pros and cons of each surgery.