



Fox Valley Dog Training Club
www.fvdtc.org

WAGGIN' TALES

Volume XIII, Issue 12
December, 2004

From D.O.T.

Thanks so much to all who have shared their time & expertise to make the 2004 instructional season so successful. As I observe the classes, your dedication & enthusiasm for dogs & their people is continually in evidence. Your contribution to FVDTC & the world of dogs is very much appreciated.

All who have participated in this year's instructional staff or who are interested in so doing are invited to an instructors' meeting on Tues, 12/14/04 at 7:30 p.m. at the University of IL Extension office just south of the fairgrounds building. Please RSVP with Cindy Pakenas by 12/10/04. Topics for discussion are the PA system, the instructors' guidelines, spiral of classes, 2005 class assignments, & rally classes.

Four excellent seminars are being offered in the Chicago area Glenbard is bringing Dianne Bauman to DuPage County Fairgrounds on 1/29/05 & 1/30/05. Contact Candi Heideman at 630231-2540 or starstream200aussies@comcast.net. Stone City Kennel Club is hosting an Adele Yunch seminar on 5/14/05 & 5/15/05 in their building in New Lenox. Contact Rochelle Tonelli at tendertouchgoldens@hotmail.com. Superdogz in Sugar Grove is hosting a freestyle seminar a fantastic freestyler styler, Carolyn Scott, on 5/21/05 & 5/22/05 at their facility. Contact Cindi Morettin at www.superdogz.com. Paw Law Dog Training in Bartlett is bringing Patti Ruzzo 3/12/05 & 3/13/05 at their facility. Contact Jean Eremo at 708-453-5128 or jeaneremo@aol.com. The club will reimburse instructors fifty per cent up to \$100 annually for seminars attended. We in the Midwest are truly fortunate to have so many educational opportunities. I am sure that FVDTC will be well represented at these opportunities to enhance our training & teaching expertise.



Kathy Hubbard has been doing a wonderful job of working the front desk in Nov. & Dec. Her smile & eagerness to help have been appreciated. Volunteers to greet, direct people, collect fees, etc. are needed for Jan. & Feb. Anyone interested in participating in or helping with rally classes may contact Cindy Pakenas for further information, it would be great to see FVDTC represented at the upcoming rally trials.

Thanks & Happy Holidays!!
Cindy & the Pakenas Critters

Special points of interest:

- *FVDTC Christmas Party on December 30th at Kane Co. Fairgrounds*
- *Canine Good Citizen Test January 20th*
- *Correction Clinic January 20th*

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Remember to mark your calendars...FVDTC Christmas Party Thursday, December 30th
Adults, Kids and Pooches Are Invited!



THANKS

I would like to thank everyone who donated items for the raffle for the Obedience Trail, without your help we could not have been as successful as we were. Thank you again you came through as always. A special thank you to Holly MacPherson for all the help in going out into the crowd and selling raffle tickets also thank you to my daughter Melanie Roberts, this was her second year helping

Thanks again.
Priscilla Pisarski

Board Meeting Highlights, December 3, 2004

Meeting brought to order at 7:46 p.m. Carolyn Pearson (Secretary). The August 4th Board Meeting Minutes were accepted as amended.

Cheryl Hettinger (First Vice-President) reported that she has received the new base for a Utility bar jump. The original base is still in use, therefore the new base will be kept in the shed until the other base is impracticable to use. Cheryl reported that she did not hear any negative comments about the equipment at the trial. Cheryl also stated that she needs to contact J & J about the broad jump board that is loose. She will also verify with J & J the expiration date of the warranty of the jumps. Once the expiration date is reached, the broad jumps will be secured with screws. Cheryl also stated that she will not be seeking re-election as First Vice-President for 2005.

Cindy Pakenas (Director of Training) stated that the next instructors' meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 14. It will start at 7:30 p.m. at the Kane County Extension Center. The agenda will include: Feedback about the PA Systems, Instructor Guidelines, Rally, etc. Cindy stated that she would like to discuss how the club could offer Rally classes. As of this time, Cindy does not have an instructor lined up for a Rally class, or any other specifics. Cindy stated that in order to get through as much of the planned agenda as possible, there would be time limits set for the topics.

Cindy reported that Helen Castellano volunteered to temporarily be the conformation class instructor, from 8:00 until 8:30 p.m. on training nights. Cindy also reported that all of the classes are filling quickly for next session. Cindy stated that we still need someone to sit at the information table on training nights. Carolyn reported that Cindy should contact Kathy Hubbard regarding her December 2nd conversation with a club member regarding that position.

During the discussion about the parking lot lights, Carolyn stated that she would contact the fairgrounds about the main light not working.

Will Short (Trial Chairperson) stated that he had nothing more to add beside what was in the November Waggin' Tales.

Taffy Wille (Trial Secretary) reported that she has contacted the following judges for the 2005 Obedience Trial:

- * Doris Froman
- * Jim Ham (judging Open A for Car-Dun-AI)
- * Sharon Hodges-Wood (judging Utility B for Car-Dun-AI)
- * Dan Hudson (judging Utility A for Car-Dun-AI)
- * Dick Wood (judging Open B for Car-Dun-AI)

With the exception of Doris Froman, those judges would be shared with Car-Dun-AI. Car-Dun-AI has provided Taffy with their judging assignments, to aid her and Will Short in assigning their judging assignments for our trial. Once the assignments have been determined, the contracts will be sent. For informational purposes only, Sue Hemminger is judging the Novice classes for Car-Dun-AI.

Amy Ford (Treasurer) was not in attendance, but sent the following report. She asked that everyone to please submit all outstanding check requests and checks for deposit as soon as possible, so that they can be included in the year-end 2004 financial report. She is still waiting on Darryl regarding 501(c)3 procedures.

Sue MacPherson (Membership Chairperson) reported that the rosters not picked up at training were mailed. Lifetime members who did not re-submit applications were included in this roster, but this situation will need to be addressed prior to printing the next roster.

Barb Misch (Public Education Coordinator) reported that the WOOF Line was updated. She also stated the Barnes and Noble Gift Wrapping Fundraising event scheduled for Sunday, November 28th between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (although the store opened at 10:00 a.m.) earned \$54.00 in tips. Barb also reported that Cheryl Hettinger is managing the December 5th event due to the schedule of 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m., and that all volunteers are scheduled.

Barb reported that the next CGC test is scheduled for Thursday, January 20, 2005 with Penny Brcich as the evaluator. There will only be one test at 7:00 p.m. Sue MacPherson volunteered to assist Barb with the coordination

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FVDTC NOTICES

Canine Good Citizen

Our next Canine Good Citizen test will be offered on Thursday, January 20th at 7:00PM. This time, we're only doing one group, so if you're interested, sign up soon!

You can find an entry form in Waggin' Tales, or request one from Barb Misch at education@fvdtc.org or 630-761-0823.

Boner Awards!!

There are days when even some of us in FVDTC can take things a bit too seriously, so now and then it's a good to kick back and laugh at ourselves and with each other. Our Club's Boner Awards are handed out at the Annual Dinner, is a tribute to our slips, trips and foibles. Join in the fun; nominate yourself or someone else you really like!



Correction Clinic

The first 2005 Correction Clinic will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2005. Your 2005 match entries with the appropriate fees should be sent to: Penny Brcich, 22W002 Byron Avenue, Addison, IL 60101. No e-mail or phone entries will be taken. For match information, Penny can be reached at brcichp@diebold.com or 630-980-0881.

Two Heads Are Better Than One

I Have the Best Spot on the Board...Why? Because I get to do the fun stuff...the Public Education Coordinator gets the joy of working with average Joe's in the community and with fanatical dog lovers of all training levels to make dog ownership fun, rewarding, and positive for everyone. But, this year I've come to realize that unless I quit my job, I can't do it on my own. So, if there's someone out there who shares these goals and is interested in helping to execute them, I'd sure appreciate a hand. Activities include the CGC test (which we merely organize), Dog Safety Presentations, helping out with demonstrations, Responsible Dog Ownership Week events, and generally showing goodwill throughout the community where ever we go and looking for new opportunities to do so. There's much organizing to be done, so if you think you might be interested, please call me to discuss.

Barb Misch, 630-761-0823

Reinstatement

Julie Whitmore & Peter Wilson
443 S. Water St, Batavia, IL 60510
(630)406-6832
Border Collies





Board Meeting Highlights November 3, 2004

Dave Lewis asked the Board members present at the Membership Meeting to meet briefly. The special Board meeting was brought to order at 9:16 p.m. The following items were discussed.

Property on Ram Road, Lily Lake

Francene stated that she would like to expand her investigation either Thursday or Friday, as she had just received the property information just prior to the November 3rd Membership meeting. If the property does not seem suitable for our needs, we can continue pursuing the Property on Wenmoth, Batavia.

Area Limitation Regulations by AKC

Taffy Wille stated that she would check with AKC regarding whether there are any area limitations for the re-location of the club. This is to be done in response to some concerns addressed at the November 3rd Membership meeting.

Board Positions for 2005

Dave stated that any current Board member should let Carolyn Pearson or himself know whether they wish to continue doing it next year.

December Board Meeting Schedule

Dave asked whether we could reschedule the December 1st Board Meeting for a later date, as he still is teaching his Wednesday night class until December 15th. He asked everyone to check his or her schedule for a Friday, December 3rd meeting at 7:30 p.m. Peggy stated that if we cannot locate another meeting room, we could use her studio. Barb Misch stated that she would also check into the meeting room at the Elburn Library.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.



Remember to mark your calendars....FVDTC Christmas Party
Thursday, December 30th
Adults, Kids and Pooches Are Invited!



ELECTION INFORMATION

Board Member elections will take place on January 12th at the Extension Center at 7:30 p.m.

F.V.D.T.C. 2005 Officers and Board Members

President	Dave Lewis	
First Vice-President	Dean Connolly	
Second Vice-President	Vera Nyberg	
Secretary	Carolyn Pearson	
Treasurer	Amy Ford	
Director of Training	Cindy Pakenas	
Obedience Trial Chairperson	Peggy Sue Seehafer	Will Short
Obedience Trial Secretary	Taffy Wille	
Waggin' Tales Editor	Sandy Davis	
Agility Trial Chairperson	Helen Castellano	
Membership Chairperson	Sue MacPherson	
Public Education Coordinator	Barb Misch	
Tracking Test Chairperson	Francene Andresen	
Director at Large		

BRAGS.....

Terrifick Silber Saphir CD,NA,NAJ completed two agility titles & placing.
 NWOBC- 5-1-04 1st leg 1st place
 NWOBC-5-2-04 2nd leg 2nd place
 Smack Dab 5-29-04 3rd leg 2nd place NA
 Fox Valley DTC-9-12-04 2nd leg-NAJ
 Wi Il Agility Club 3rd leg,2nd place-NAJ
 Also earned 1 leg towards OAJ before taking maternity leave 10-27-04. Now proud Mamma of 9 Silver Standard Poodle pups.
 Breeder/Owner: Terri Sidell
 co-owner:Jan Mysliwicz

Litter Announcement

G'Day Terrifick Slvr Huntabt CD x Terrifick Silber Saphir CD,NA,NAJ= Silver Standard Poodle Pups born 10-27-04. Pups from generations of parents of genetic screening, raised in a conducive environment, Temperment Tested and well socialized.

Terri Sidell,



During the beginning of each session at FVDTC, Director of Training Cindy Pakenas discusses with our new trainees about the different types of collars that can be purchased for his/her dog. Waggin' Tales asked Cindy if she would provide this information for the newsletter to re-familiarize our readers with different types of collars available for our 4-legged friend/companion. Cindy is not promoting one type of collar over another. This is just an "information" to remind you what is out there should you feel you need to make a change—just "management tools" for your canine.

Management Tools

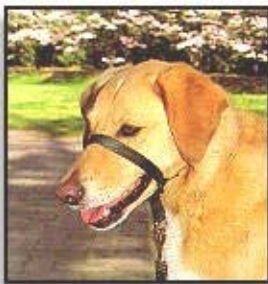
Cindy Pakenas, D.O.T.

In our crowded, fast-paced suburban world, the management and control of our canines is a predominant issue. In addition to the choke and prong collar, which have been used for decades, today's marketplace now offers many alternatives.



One alternative not as widely used today is the toggle choke chain. The toggle choke collar is for dogs with broad skulls. The collar end can be fastened around the dog's neck and thus the collar does not have to be pushed over the dog's head. This limits the amount of chain around the dog's neck and allows the collar to open and close more efficiently.

Another underused collar is the humane choke collar which is available in both nylon and chain link. The humane choke collar operates on the same principles as the prong collar but does not inflict the same degree of pain. They are a safer alternative to the choke collar as the pressure on the wind pipe is equally exerted. The collar does not close beyond a certain point.



Partially because more and more dog owners are training rather than just managing and controlling behavior, the Gentle Leader, Halti, and harnesses such as the Sens-ation Harness have become popular. These also present a positive image in public and won't evoke negative comments or looks from passersby. These work especially well with reactive dogs and those with strong opposition reflexes. Gentle Leaders are used extensively throughout the service dog industry as those who use them have very little upper body strength. Via a light, steady pull of the dog's head in toward the handler, even large dogs can be walked by children and the disabled people. Often just putting one on the dog results in a subdued demeanor. The Gentle Leader often requires a period of acclimation and a correctly adjusted fit. Manufactured by Premier, Gentle Leaders can be purchased online and at many pet supply stores.

One of my favorite collars to use is the Sens-ation Harness manufactured by Sof Touch Concepts. This is a nylon harness which has a close fit around the withers and right behind the elbows with another nylon strap crossing the chest of the dog. The leash attaches to the ring on the strap in the front of the dog's chest. Sens-ation harnesses come in 5 sizes and can be purchased at www.softouchconcepts.com or via mail. The harness truly results in control without pain and is easily accepted by dogs.



Many dogs each year die as a result of collars, including buckle collars catching on fences, plants,

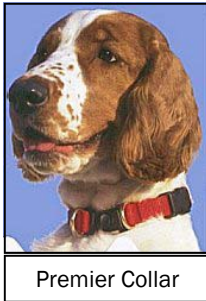
(Continued on page 7)



COLLARS

(Continued from page 6)

etc. which results in the strangulation of the dog. For many years I used a buckle collar with a roll ring when my pack was running and playing on our fenced acreage. The last several years I have used the nylon breakaway collar by Premier when the dogs are running on the fenced acreage, housed in kennel



Premier Collar

pens, and/or using the dog doors. This collar was created and developed by a person who came home to find that the dog's collar had strangled his beloved companion. When force is exerted on the collar, the collar falls apart. There is a ring for ID tags and a double ring to which the leash can be attached. Attaching the leash to the double ring prevents the collar from coming apart. These collars may be purchased at most pet supply stores and are especially recommended for canines who run and play with canine playmates.

None of these management tools

will train the dog. Many people make the mistake of allowing the collar to train the dog rather than the handler. Observation has convinced me that many dog owners equate controlling the dog with training the dog and at a point later in time are faced with disappointment and put the blame on the dog. It is my hope that utilizing some of the more recently developed management tools will result in a more satisfying, painfree relationship with your canine and that time and effort will be invested in training rather than controlling your canine companion.

POINSETTIAS, POISONING AND PETS- SHOULD YOU BELIEVE THE HYPE?

From the ASPCA News Alert Weekly newsletter

Have you heard that poinsettias are dangerously poisonous to dogs and cats? As the holidays descend upon us, we wanted to set the record straight on these showy wintertime favorites. As our experts at the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) explain it, the myth of the plant's toxicity began during the early part of the 20th century, when the two-year-old child of a U.S. Army officer was alleged to have died from consuming a poinsettia leaf. As a result, the poinsettia's toxic potential to living beings of all species has become greatly exaggerated. In reality, points out the APCC's Dana Farbman, CVT, poinsettia ingestions typically produce only mild to moderate gastrointestinal tract irritation, which may include drooling, vomiting and diarrhea. "Therefore," says Farbman, "while keeping the plant out of the reach of your pet to avoid stomach upset is still a good idea, pet owners need not fear the poinsettia and banish it from their homes for fear of a fatal exposure." For more on which plants are toxic to pets—and which ones are not—please visit the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at <http://www.asPCA.org>.





Speaking Positively by Will Short

I decided to become a crossover trainer. I gave up the aversive training that I learned several years ago, and I replaced it with training positively. For the last few years I had been gradually easing up on negative corrections, but I did not know how to bridge the gap between what I had been doing and being positive. I heard Suzanne Clothier speak a couple of years ago, and I read her book, Bones Would Fall from the Sky. That and conversations with others led me to several authors who have helped me through this process. And it's so simple once you get past the idea that there is life with dogs without using aversive behaviors. (In this I include popping, jerking, using pinch or slip collars, electronic collars, alpha rolls, yelling, grabbing, etc.) You can get your dog to do whatever you want simply by teaching him positively. You ignore what you don't want him to do, and you reward what you want him to do. For example, if your dog is jumping up on you, you can simply turn away, ask him to sit, mark that with a "yes," and reward him.

As a positive trainer I utilize the rules of operant conditioning and classical conditioning. In operant conditioning you can follow a number of steps to teach and reinforce behaviors you want your dog to display. First, you capture the behavior you want such as a sit. Since all dogs already know how to sit, you just wait until he does, then you mark it ("yes"), reward him with food, repeat it a lot. When you are certain that he will do the sit with 80-90% reliability you add the cue word, "sit." If you get impatient, you can lure him to a sit. He likes it, you are pleased that he did it, and you never once put your hands on him.

In classical conditioning your dog learns that things in his environment mean that something is going to happen. For example, when I sign off from AOL and the voice says "good-bye," my dogs know that I am coming into their area. They all react because this is usually a signal that something that they like will happen—go out, treat, petting, etc.

As a positive trainer I use positive reinforcement (rewarding my dog for doing what I want), and negative punishment (taking away something that he likes). I no longer use positive punishment (collar corrections) or negative reinforcement (zapping with an electronic collar until a behavior stops).

When I train I try very hard to use a Zen-like attitude. I do not train when I am upset or stressed. I know that my dogs do not choose to ever refuse to do something just to get even with me. If they don't perform, it is probably due to stress, confusion, or not knowing what I expect. Dogs know two things—things that are safe and things that are dangerous. Dogs do not get even with their persons. Revenge is not something that dogs do; with a dog, what you see is what you get.

To begin positive training you will need a few pieces of equipment: a 4-6 foot lead, a buckle collar or maybe a Gentle Leader, treats, and something to use as a marker (a clicker or your voice with the word "yes"). With these you are good to go.

I teach an advanced beginners' class at 7 PM on training nights. Since I started in January I have worked very hard to inspire class members to train positively. Most of them do, all of them are trying very hard, and some find the transition difficult as I did. They all feel really good about their training and how their dogs relate to them. I believe the more positively you train, the better the relationship you will have with your dog. The two of you will become equal partners in a positive relationship.

I will be happy to answer questions that you might ask either at training or at my email address wshort13@hotmail.com).

of the CGC evaluation.

Francene Andresen (Tracking Secretary) was not in attendance, but asked Barb Misch to request that the board approve the reimbursement of the expenses by Ingrid Hamburger for the supplies to make the new flags for tracking tests. Peggy Sue made a motion to reimburse Ingrid Hamburger for the flags supplies for the amount of \$252.17. The motion was seconded by Will Short and approved by all, with no opposed or abstentions. Dave stated that he would contact Amy regarding this check request.

Helen Castellano (Agility Chairperson) stated that she would be proceeding shortly with the online submission of the AKC applications for the September 16th and 17th, 2005 Agility trials, to be held at Creekwood Meadows in Plano. Cheryl Hettinger is currently investigating the rental of the Kane County Fairgrounds for the 2006 Agility Trials. Carolyn stated that she will forward the contact information that she received regarding rental of the soon-to-be opened DuPage Expo Center at Pheasant Run.

Helen also stated that currently there is no confirmed Agility Trial Secretary at this time. Helen will be contacting the current Agility Trial chairs to determine whether they will be continuing those responsibilities for the 2005 trial. Helen stated Cathy Green would like to get assistance as the Hospitality Chair and Trudi Kimm will handle the ribbons for 2005.

Peggy Sue Seehafer (Director at Large) gave Barb Misch the map she had for the Sweitzer property to give to Francene, to keep with the rest of the property search files.

Old Business

Grievance Process Review

The following recommendations were agreed on by the Board members present at the September 25, 2004 meeting and presented at this Board meeting for discussion.

Conflict Resolution Committee General Guidelines

The Grievance Committee should be renamed to the Conflict Resolution Committee (CRC). The Conflict Resolution process can be stopped at any time by the Grievant or the CRC members. Any conflict between two or more club members that cannot be resolved privately and falls under one or more of these guidelines may be addressed by the Conflict Resolution Committee:

- * must relate to the club
- * violation of the Bylaws
- * violation of the Values statement
- * action or statements detrimental to the club
- * Personality conflicts and legal issues are specifically not subject to the conflict resolution process.
- * Although it is recommended that the communication between the CRC members and the individuals involved in the conflict be done in person, it is not required. Regardless of the method, the communication must be as un-intimidating as possible.
- * Any method of communication between the CRC members deemed mutually acceptable may be used. Whether the method is e-mail messaging, phone conferences or face-to-face discussions, as long as all members agree, it is acceptable to use.
- * The Conflict Resolution Committee makes their recommendation to the Board. Once the Board has the recommendation, they can agree to follow the recommendation or modify the resolution recommendation. The Board makes the final decision. It was also agreed that there would not be an Appeal process. If the committee recommends a resolution to be the revocation of membership and the Board agrees, the process defined in the By-Laws must be followed.
- * Differences or conflicts should be aired privately to avoid the possibility of community members and/or students to being subjected to our difficulties.

Conflict Resolution Committee Timeline

The following timeline was discussed and adjusted by the Board members present.

- * The Conflict Resolution Committee will be formed within **3** days of receipt of the grievance. Once the board member is contacted, the process begins. As in the current process, a randomly-selected board member is responsible for contacting members who have volunteered to serve on the committee. IF immediate contact is not made, a message should be left saying that a grievance committee is being formed and a response from the volunteer must be received within 24 hours. The first two names are called at that time. If no response is received, within the 24-hour period, then the next person on the list is contacted. The Contact process will continue until two positive responses are received.
- * The Conflict Resolution Committee's initial communication and preliminary investigation should be done within **7** days. This allows the committee to "find out what happened". The communication/investigation may be done in person, or by phone or e-mail.
- * The Committee's thorough investigation occurs within the next **30** days. However if an extension is necessary, it **MUST** be communicated back to the board and the individuals involved in the conflict. The extension must be agreed upon by all. All questions and concerns **must** be brought to the committee prior to the end of the 30-day investigation, not afterwards.
- * The Committee is to present its findings to the Board at the next scheduled Board meeting after the conclusion of the investigation. However, IF the CRC determines that the situation resolution cannot wait until the next scheduled Board meeting, the CRC can convene a special meeting. The CRC is to communicate to the individuals involved in the conflict that the recommendation is being written and the schedule for the Board meeting. No other status need be provided.

Helen Castellano made a motion to accept the recommendations as amended, Vera Nyberg seconded the motion. The motion passed with eight approved, no opposed, and one abstention.

Property Purchase Update

Barb Misch presented the following reports for the property purchase committee

- * The price for the property on Wenmoth Road in Batavia, was reduced to \$330,000 from \$380,000.
- * The four-acre property on South Lorang Road, just east of Kaneville, does not include the cellular tower. Because we would not be able to generate any rental income from the tower, we will not pursue this property further.
- * There is another property on South Lorang Road, just east of Kaneville, which includes a 12-acre lot with a usable 5-bedroom house. The cost is \$500,000. Although the existing barn does not have high ceilings, it may be usable for puppy or novice classes. The fencing around the property provides almost 100% coverage. Although the lot is sub-dividable, the seller is not interested in doing that. There are some salable Black Walnut trees on the land, usable for gunstocks, which could possibly be used as a one-time income generator.

The Board members agreed that it would behoove us to physically view both the Wenmouth and South Lorang Road properties to see which one is more feasible. Barb stated that she would contact Francene regarding setting up an appointment for the Board members to view the properties with Dennis Halfpenny, possibly for Saturday afternoon at 3:00 p.m.

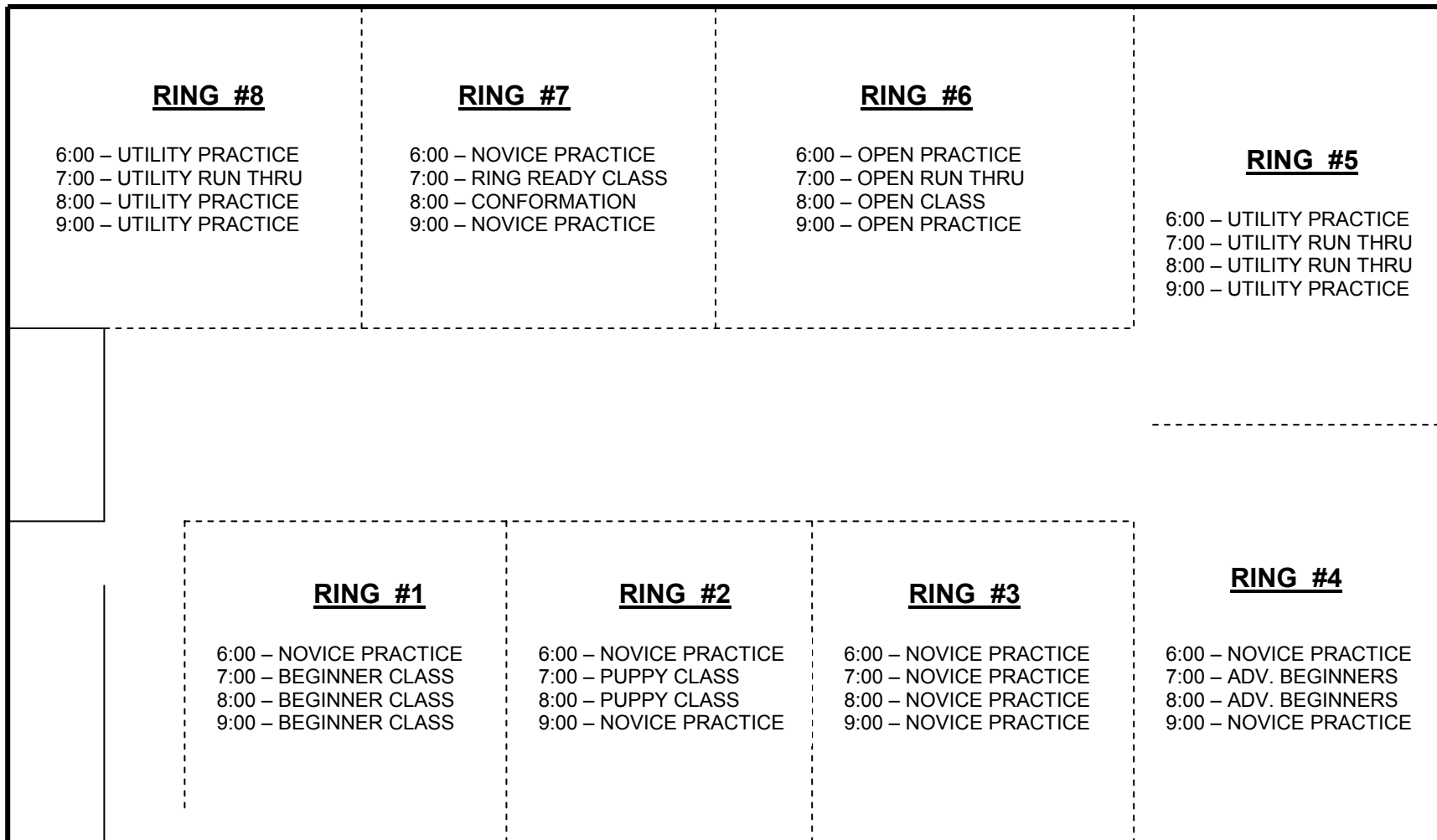
New Business

Barb Misch made a motion to add a committee position for the purpose of fundraising. Will Short seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all without any opposed, or abstentions. When asked, Barb stated that she did not have anyone specifically in mind to ask to fill the position, and asked the other Board members to suggest anyone that would be appropriate for the new Fundraising Committee position. Dave reviewed the election procedures that would occur at the January Membership meeting.

Dave announced that the Nominating Committee consisted of the following members: Ingrid Hamburger Peggy Sue Seehafer, and Carolyn Pearson.

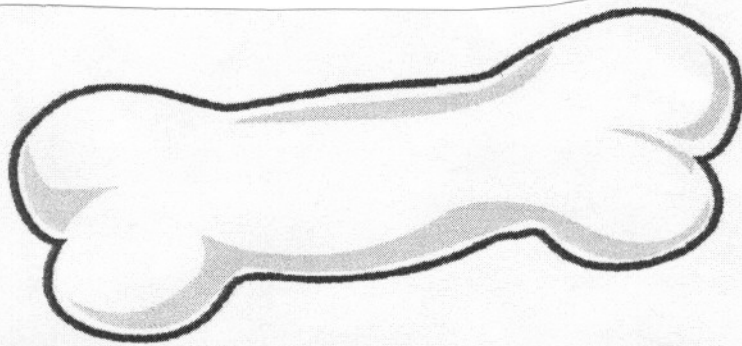
A motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn the meeting at 10:18p.m.

JANUARY THROUGH MARCH 2005 RING LAYOUT



**NOTE! ALL GUEST TRAINERS MUST REGISTER
AT THE INFORMATION DESK**

**FOX VALLEY DOG TRAINING CLUB
KANE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS**



**Do you know something silly or embarrassing
that would make one of your friends
eligible to win a boner award?**

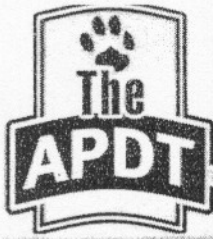
**If so, send your nomination via email to
dinner@fvdtc.com or drop in box.**

Nominee: _____

Reason: _____

This Article Was Submitted By Will Short

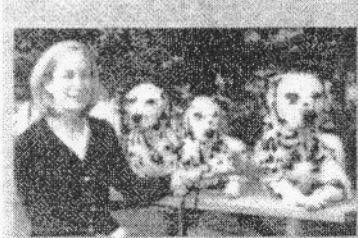
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Chronicle of the Dog

Building Better Trainers Through Education

Nov/Dec 2004, Vol. XI, No 6



Nanette Dittrick
Member Profile, p. 10

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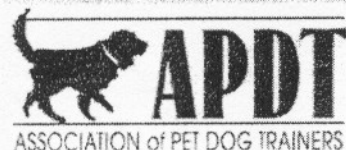
Mel Bussey, CPDT

TREASURER

Sue Pearson, CPDT

FOUNDER

Ian Dunbar, PhD, MRCVS, CPDT



Dog Parks: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

by Trish King, CPDT, CDBC with Terry Long, CPDT

They're called dog parks or dog runs. Sometimes they're official, sometimes they're formed by a group of people who want their dogs to play together. Some dog parks are large—acres or miles of paths—but most are less than an acre in size, and some are tiny. Some are flat gravel or dirt, while others have picnic tables, trees, and other objects.

What all dog parks have in common is the reason for their existence.

Dogs (and their owners) need a place where they can run free, sans leashes, and do “doggie” things. Many of their owners have no yards and the dogs

would otherwise spend their entire outdoor lives on leash.

The fact that we even need dog parks is a reflection on American society, which is fragmented, with many people living solitary lives. Dogs and other pets are sometimes

the only family an owner has. At the same time, municipal laws have been inexorably pushing dogs further and further away from acceptance in our culture. Thus, they're seen as nuisances by half the population, and as family by the other.

In a perfect world, dog parks would not have to exist. Well-behaved dogs would have the privilege of being off leash (and well mannered!) in many different areas. However, the world is not perfect, and so we must make the

best of what we have.

Advantages of Dog Parks

The advantages are simple and powerful. Dog parks provide a safe space in which people can exercise their

dogs, and watch them play (something I love to do!) Our culture is becoming less and less tolerant of our canine companions, and often they are not welcome elsewhere.

At their best, dog parks can facilitate socialization with a variety of breeds



Although many dog owners think all play is in good fun at dog parks, some dogs learn bullying play styles that can lead to other problems.

“A dog park is like a cocktail party, where you don't know anyone and everyone is drunk. You could have fun, but it could be a disaster.”

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and breed types. They can be a wonderful resource for adolescent dogs that have too much energy and no place to put it. Many also function as a social center—a place where people gather to chat, to exchange news, and to commiserate with one another's problems. For many, it replaces family conversation and for some, it is their only contact with fellow human beings. This is probably why, when I recommend that a client not visit dog parks, some cannot bring themselves to do it. They miss the camaraderie too much.

Disadvantages of Dog Parks

The disadvantages are not so simple, but can be even more powerful, depending on the dog and its owner. Some of these are exacerbated by the layout of parks (see sidebar, "Keys to Successful Dog Park Design"). The real problems, both short- and long-term, are behavioral. And often, owners unwittingly contribute to these problems because they don't recognize—or don't interpret correctly—what their dogs are actually doing and learning. Some of the problems cause difficulties only when dogs are meeting and interacting with other dogs. Others can cause future behavior to deteriorate. And still others directly impact dog/owner relationships.

Defensive Aggression

Dogs are social animals, but they—like us—tend to like familiar faces. Just as we do not routinely meet and chat with everyone we meet on the street, dogs do not

need to meet with all other dogs. It often takes some time for one dog to feel comfortable with another; and they need that time to decide how they should react. As we know, time is not always available in a dog park situation. Thus, even friendly dogs that feel uncomfortable can give people the impression that they are "aggressive," especially when they meet a dog for the first time. If an overly exuberant



These owners inadvertently communicate to their Chihuahua that he is on his own when he is at the dog park.

Labrador Retriever, for instance, approaches a herding mix, the latter dog may snarl or air bite to make the Labrador retreat. After that, as far as the herding dog is concerned, they can meet nicely. However, people are likely to label the herding dog "aggressive," and punish her (or at least ostracize the owner!). This is a bad learning experience all around. The Labrador hasn't learned to inhibit his greeting style—which he would have if he hadn't been interrupted by overreacting humans—and the herding dog has learned that a) normal warnings don't work; and b) her owner won't back her up.

Learned Disobedience

When owners are not careful, dog park play quickly teaches a dog that the owner has no control over him. I'm sure we've all seen an owner following her dog, calling vainly as the animal stays just out of range, looks at her from afar, or just totally ignores her. And this is after the dog has learned to bark hysterically in the car all the way to the dog park, followed by pulling the owner through the parking lot, and then bolting away from her as soon as the leash is off.

Owner Helplessness

Dogs learn that their owners cannot keep them safe from harm when owners stand by and allow other dogs to play overly roughly, and to body slam and roll them over. When discussing this point, it's important to understand that the dog's perception of safety matters even more than the human's. This can be difficult for owners, who may dismiss their dog's obvious fear as unwarranted, since they "know" the other dog(s) mean no harm. A dog that is chased or bullied by another dog is not only learning to avoid other dogs, he is also learning that his owner is completely ineffective. The Chihuahua in the photo above may very well be thinking he's destined to be a meal, but his owner doesn't seem concerned. This can have a serious impact on the human-dog relationship.

Problematic Play Styles

Dog play styles can be radically different, and sometimes they are

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not compatible with each other's. This can cause misunderstandings, or even fights, and it can also exacerbate certain play styles. Dogs that tend to be very physical in play often overwhelm other dogs. No one is inhibiting their play style. In fact, owners often laugh at concerns with "don't worry, he's only playing." Playing he may be, but he is also learning, and what he's learning is not necessarily what we want to be teaching. When bully type dogs play with similar dogs, the only unwanted outcome is that they don't learn how to be polite with other dogs. If they bully weaker dogs—which often happens—they learn that they can overpower other dogs, and they tend to repeat the behavior. The weaker dogs learn that cut-off or appeasement signals do not work, and they learn to be afraid of other dogs ... sometimes all other dogs, sometimes just dogs that look like the bullies.

Resource Guarding

Resource guarding can become very problematic in a park, where resources are often few and far between. Some dogs will guard their own toys, some will try to take items from other dogs. Some keep

the items, others just want to taunt the dog who "owns" the toy. Squabbles over resources, including humans sitting at a picnic table or on a bench, can easily erupt into nasty fights.

Frustration Aggression

Interestingly enough, leash frustration—a canine temper tantrum—is sometimes an offshoot of dog park experiences. There are a couple of reasons for this. Leash frustration often begins when a dog is so excited at the prospect of playing that he pulls his owner all the way to the park, lunging and barking—sometimes for blocks. His agitated owner pulls back and yells at the dog, thus increasing the arousal. By the time the dog gets to the park, he's all fired up for something very physical—like a fight.

Leash frustration also occurs because dogs that frequent parks mistakenly believe that they can meet any other dog they see. Once again, when thwarted, they tend to pull on the leash, and the owner yanks back. As the frustration builds, the dog appears to be aggressive, thus causing other owners to pull their dogs back in

fear. Eventually, leash frustration can lead to real aggression. Often, owners of these dogs will be very confused because their dogs are so good off leash, and holy terrors on leash.

Facilitated Aggression

Many dogs are very attached to their owners, and will hang around near them. Often these dogs are worried about, or afraid of, other dogs, and will growl or display their teeth when they're approached. The owners unwittingly "facilitate" this behavior by remaining next to their dog, who then counts on them to help if a fight ensues. If this behavior is repeated often enough—if they feel threatened by a variety of dogs—they may default to that behavior.

Another form of facilitated aggression occurs when two or more dogs in a family visit the dog park. The two may well gang up on a third dog, possibly frightening him or her—or worse.

Age

While many dogs enjoy playing with others throughout their life, a substantial number do not, once

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The entrance to a dog park is where a lot of problems occur. Too many dogs converge on the newcomer, who sometimes resorts to aggression when faced with the inappropriate greeting styles of the dogs at the gate.

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they have reached social maturity. These dogs will slowly lose interest in other dogs, and may signal them to go away. Some dogs become very reluctant to go into dog parks, which—as we have noted—can be out of control. Others will snarl or snap to indicate their displeasure.

Arousal

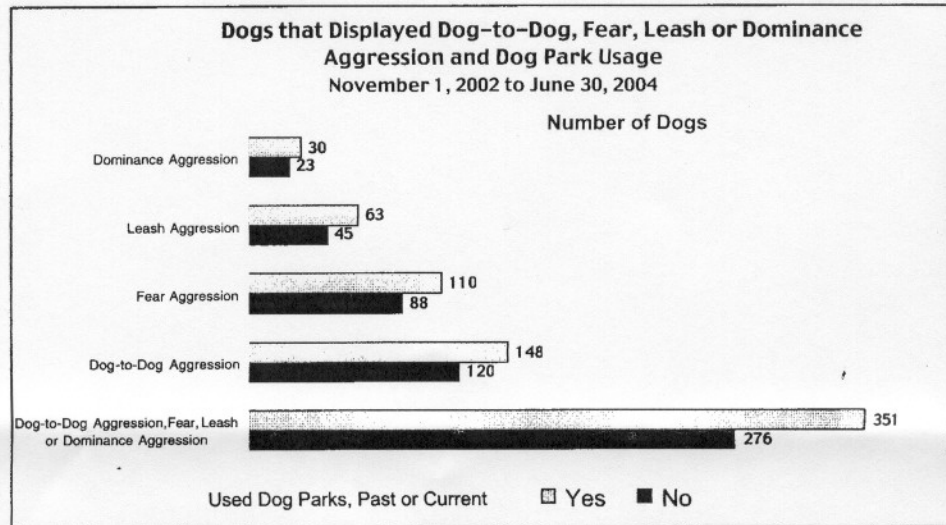
Dogs playing in parks sometimes are unable to calm down, and some can get into a state of sustained arousal that gets them into trouble. A dog that has been involved in an incident in which the excitement level is very high, might inappropriately and uncharacteristically start other incidents, often with unwanted outcomes.

Trauma

Finally, a traumatic experience can make an impact on a young dog that cannot be fully understood nor erased. A puppy or adolescent who is attacked may well show aggressive behaviors that begin after that incident. Sometimes a young dog can be traumatized by what the owners think are minor events. I liken that kind of trauma to that suffered by a child who is traumatized, perhaps by getting stuck in an elevator. After the first experience, all elevators are bad—even though she knows intellectually that all elevators are not bad. Pity the poor puppy, who doesn't have the reasoning to know that what occurred once does not always happen again.

The Power of Knowledge

Owners, of course, play an important role in dog parks, and



Author Trish King has collected from the Marin County Humane Society's clientele information regarding their dogs' behavior problems and those same clients' use of dog parks. This chart shows some interesting trends, suggesting that more study may be indicated to determine if dog parks are contributing to some dogs' aggression.

often don't accept the responsibility they should. Many don't pay attention to their dog, and many have no idea what constitutes proper behavior, or what a dog may be signaling to another dog. Some defend their dogs when the animal exhibits poor or inappropriate behavior. Some overreact to a normal interaction, in which one dog discourages the attention of another. Occasionally, some owners use parks as babysitters, even leaving their dogs unattended while they shop. And most owners have far less control over their dogs than they believe!

Educating owners is a tough job. Many believe firmly that they are socializing their dogs in the proper way, and don't like suggestions that they limit dog park time or monitor their dog and others. Teaching them what good play looks like is a first step, and empowering them to actually interrupt poor interactions is a necessary second step. Often,

people don't want to offend other dog owners, so they allow poor behavior to continue.

Trainers can help them learn by describing what appropriate interactions look like, possibly by narrating what the dogs are doing as two dogs play. I've found that owners really enjoy learning what good play manners are like—they appreciate the same kinds of descriptions that they hear from sports announcers during games.

Finally, some dogs should not go to dog parks. They can be too shy, too bold, too defensive, or have tendencies to guard toys and balls. Often, when consulting with clients, I ask them to consider giving parks a pass and concentrating on walks or runs, either alone or maybe with some special friends. I'm occasionally surprised by the relief these people feel when they find out dog park play is not mandatory! They thought they had to do it.

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A common mistake seen frequently at dog parks is owners who fail to supervise their dogs' play. Here, owners chat while the dog on the left is clearly not comfortable with the black dog's approach.

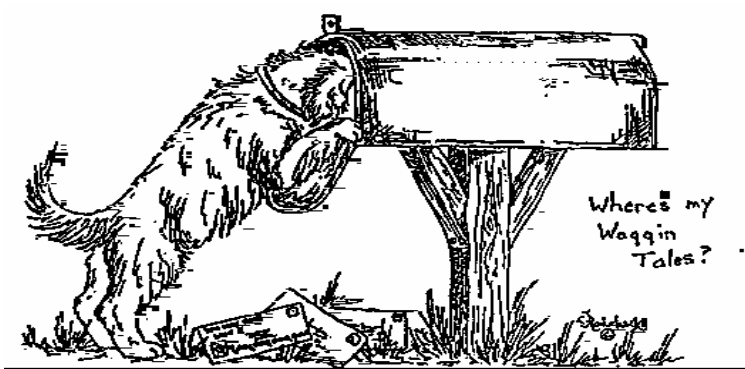
Keys to Successful Dog Park Design

-  **Entrance and/or exit:** Double gates for safety; visually shielded from dogs that are already in the park to avoid. Two or three entrances are preferable. Dogs tend to gather at entrances and exits, arousal goes up, and incidents can easily occur.
-  **Size:** As large as possible. At least an acre, preferably not a square piece of land, but one that is oddly shaped. Ponds or lakes are preferable (at least from the play point of view, if not from the owners'!)
-  **Contour/topography:** Hillocks or trees to block dogs from racing towards each other and body slamming or muzzle bumping each other.
-  **Structures:** Tough obstacle equipment, hiding places for frightened dogs, other view-blocking structures if hills and trees aren't available.

Behavioral Tips For Dog Park Attendees

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check out the entrance before entering to make sure dogs aren't congregating there. • Pay close attention to their dog's play style, interrupting play if necessary to calm their dog down. • Move around the park so that their dog needs to keep an eye on them. • Remove their dog if the dog appears afraid. • Remove their dog if it is bullying others. • Respect their dog's wish to leave. • Leave special toys at home to avoid resource guarding problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow your dog to enter the park if there is a "gang" right next to the entrance. • Believe that dogs can "work it out" if you just let them do so. • Congregate at a picnic table or other area and chat with dog owners without watching their own dog. • Let their frightened dog remain in the park and hope things get better. • Listen to other attendees in the park, who may not understand their dog's needs. • Assume a dog is aggressive when it is only trying to communicate its discomfort.

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December 2004

1	Wednesday	Board Meeting
5	Sunday	Waggin' Tales Deadline
9	Thursday	Regular Training
16	Thursday	Regular Training
23	Thursday	Regular Training End Session #5
30	Thursday	Christmas Party/Membership Meeting NO TRAINING

January 2005

6	Thursday	Regular Training Begin Session 1
11	Tuesday	Regular Training
12	Wednesday	Membership Meeting Election Night
16	Sunday	Waggin' Tales Deadline
20	Thursday	Correction Clinic & CGC Test
27	Thursday	Regular Training