

Waggin' Tales

Fox Valley Dog Training Club



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Thank You!

I would like to thank all of the people who came out and helped wash mats for the upcoming trial: Dave Krantz, Sue & Holly MacPherson, Herman Hamburger, Kent Hildebrand, Bill Clarke, Peggy Sue Seehafer, Carolyn Pearson and a special thanks to Ed Herdes who made this all possible. If I missed anyone, please accept my apology, it was just a senior moment.

Dean Connolly
1st Vice President

More Thank You!

I want to Thank all of the Stewards & Table Stewards that volunteered to make our Trial a success. I am very grateful for all of your help. Thank You: Marian Lazzara, Mary Schipp, Paulette Zecca, Heidi Terlizzi, Nancy Pederson, Debby White, Kathy Polz, Vera Nyberg, Barb Barwis, Alson Rubendall, Denise Schiele, Kent Hildebrand, Marietta Huber, Virginia Sensenbrenner, Carol Williams, Francene Andresen, Ingrid Hamburger, Kathy Hubbard, Sylvia Schultz, Colleen Kent, Jane Newby, Maxine Brinker, & Becky Cembrowicz.

I appreciate all of your help.

Thank you all

Jan Schomer

Christmas Help Wanted!

Joe and Kathy Busch are looking for volunteers to help with the Gift Wrapping at Barnes & Noble in Geneva Commons. At least 2 people are needed for each 1 hour slot, so grab a friend and come out to help. Open slots are available on:

1. Saturday, December. 17th, 2-6 pm
2. Thursday, December. 22nd, 6-10 pm
3. Friday, December. 23rd, 6-10 pm
4. Saturday, December. 24th 9am-2pm

Kathy will be at training on December 8th or you can call her at 630-513-8351 or email at kathyb333@juno.com.

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**A
Well-Trained
Dog
is a Happy
Dog**

Letter to the Membership

I just wanted to take up a few lines to thank everyone who has come through for me over the years to help with demos, CGC Tests, open houses, and whatever other activity I've dreamt up. You've really made the role of Public Education Coordinator an exciting one. It was so good to know that no matter what, I could count on you. In January, you'll be selecting a new PEC. I hope that they'll be able to count on you as I have to be generous with your time, your ideas, your dogs, your tools and your knowledge. And, I hope that the individual voted in appreciates their role in trying to bridge the interests and needs of the community, with the goals of competitive dog owners, and the requirements of this club.

And while I'm at it, I'll suggest that everyone bear in mind that our differences should unite us. It provides for a fantastic well of knowledge and endless perspectives. That's pretty unique. While someone may not train, they may have another talent that is just as invaluable to the running of this organization as are the talents of the most respected competitors. And, simply because someone trains to compete, doesn't mean they're one-dimensional or unapproachable. Perhaps if we think about that a bit before we speak, we'll find the strength needed to advance. We can choose to use this diversity to make us stronger...or not. I'd say it's important to remember that if you can't accept anything, you just might be left with nothing at all.

Barb Misch

Letter to the Membership

To FVDTC,

As I reflect on the events leading up to my first obedience trial, I realize that the most important lesson that I learned, was taught to me way before I stepped into the ring, by an eclectic group of people who have extremely different views on training. The lesson was one of camaraderie and a common goal of success for our dogs and ourselves.

The Lazzara sisters, Sandy Davis, Nancy Pederson, both Will and Shirley Short, Carolyn Pearson, Nadine Conner, Brenda Rivera, Helen Castellano and Rick Cox all went considerably out of their way on our regular training nights to help me and my one year old Labrador, Abby, get ready for the CarDunAl and FVDTC trials. Always ready to help, never treating my inquiries as tho I should have known better, and displaying patience to no end with my constant badgering of questions.

After the trials, which were stressful but electrifying, tiring but exciting, I thought at length about these people and the individual help and hints they all gave me. I note to myself that there is, within the group of folks who were instrumental in helping me, a monumental difference in philosophies, opinions and ideals. However, when I took all of those points, and put them all together to form my own conclusions as to what worked best for me and Abby, I realize that, right there in front of me was the answer to the question of "what makes this club

special?". It's the people. This crazy, argumentative, dog loving, conflicting, goal oriented, opinionated and caring group of people with a common interest. Our dogs.

While I do not care for the self righteousness and cloak and dagger aura that sometimes seeps into our club issues, the fact remains that there would have been no opportunities for me to have learned all the things I have, without those differences of opinions.

Take the lesson I have experienced and dissect it as you wish; however as Sandi Stephenson wrote to me once, "Enjoy your journey". I've keep her words in the back of my head each night I head out to train at FVDTC, and as I make my rounds to speak with each trainer, whether I agree with all of their methods and ideals or not, they all have something to teach me. I will continue to agree with some more than others same as you will. But I keep in mind that, as a group, as a club, differences of opinions and all, they taught me the most important lesson, inadvertent as it was. What can you learn from such a varied team of dog lovers? I for one, am loving my "journey", and will do all I can to keep FVDTC an integral part of the road map included on this adventure.

Respectfully,

Terri Byerly

What's Wrong With This Picture?

Fellow Members -

I have been a member of this club for 15 years, and a member of the Board of Directors for 7. In that time I have seen vehement arguments over a variety of different subjects and conflicts between individuals, but I have never seen the level of divisiveness that pervades our club right now. I have talked to members who have been around much longer than I have, and they unanimously concur. What's wrong with this picture?

“The Board” has been accused of keeping secrets from the membership. “The Board” has been accused of condoning abuse. “The Board” has been accused of not supporting its own members. The Board of Directors for this club is not some anonymous or faceless entity. Accusations leveled at “the Board” are, in truth, being leveled at Dave, Dean, Vera, Carolyn, Amy, Sandi, Will, Taffy, Helen, Sue, Barb, Francene and Peggy Sue. “The Board” is a group of 16 individuals (now whittled to 10), fellow members of this club, who have volunteered extra time and effort to help lead the club, to improve the club, to ensure the club continues to provide the services and activities that we've come to expect and enjoy. Although the accusations are abundant, specific examples are exceedingly rare, to the point of being non-existent. What's wrong with this picture?

Over the last several months, a member of this club has publicly and repeatedly lied about the board, about specific instructors and about the club in general. Although each of us has the right to express his own opinion, and some of these stories may be attributed to ignorance of fact, others defy credulity. This person has potentially damaged the club – responses to her indicate that even the most incredulous stories are believed -- yet other members continue to defend her right to say what she likes without being held accountable. What's wrong with this picture?

It is my opinion that, as reasonable people with a common purpose – the welfare and training of our dogs – we can vehemently disagree on a variety of topics while

still being respectful to those around us, without making personal attacks, without being untruthful about those with whom we disagree. There is no reason that this club should have six board members resign because of the unwarranted abuse they have endured.

One of our club's greatest strengths is our diversity. If one training technique doesn't work for a particular dog and handler, there are at least a dozen other options available. That same diversity is also one of our greatest weaknesses. The passion with which some of us hold our beliefs makes it impossible to recognize the validity of other options.

Unfortunately, I do not have a panacea, some magic potion that will cure all the ills that confront us. I believe, however, that the first step includes abiding by the value statement that we all signed on our membership applications.

I shall endeavor to conduct myself at all times in a manner that reflects credit upon Fox Valley Dog Training Club, regardless of the location or circumstances. I will protect and advance the interests of the Club by encouraging sportsmanlike behavior at training nights, correction clinics, obedience trials, tracking tests and agility trials. I will uphold the Club's commitment to good sportsmanship, community support and the welfare of the dogs with which we work

The second step is to begin to treat each other as well or better than we treat our dogs.

I am, as always, open to your thoughts and counsel,

David Lewis
President

Board Resignations

It is with regret that I announce the resignations of three current board members: Dean Connolly (First Vice President), Vera Nyberg (Second Vice President), Barb Misch (Public Education Coordinator). Each of these individuals has been a credit to the club. As president and fellow board member, I will miss their insight and input.

David Lewis
President

To Prong or Not To Prong....

by Sandy Davis

As an Assistant Instructor in my third session of the Beginner's classes, I frequently hear the question "Do you think that my dog could use a prong collar?"

Although I have had formal education in animal behavior using the B.F. Skinner techniques (using operant as well as classical conditioning), I admit that my knowledge of collars is only based on my own experiences with my two Brittanys. Holly floats on both ends of the stick. Although she suffers from terrible separation anxiety and needs to be with me all of the time (literally) she is also a runner. Tucker is still in that puppy mode. So I need to make sure that I have secure collars for both and good training collars. I personally use a martingale collar with 2 D-rings for Holly and a buckle collar for Tucker. But, both also use prong collars, especially when we are training in a chaotic environment.

Several months ago, I was told by one of our members that using a prong collar on a dog is the wrong thing to do; that the use of prong collars is aversive corrections and that plain buckle collars or head halters should be used because they are not aversive to dogs. The club member indicated that Suzanne Clothier was one of the persons who opened this member's eyes to the aversiveness of the prong collar. Suzanne Clothier is a well-known author on dog training. So I sought more information about Suzanne to understand that point of view.

I found that Suzanne had written an article specifically on the prong collars entitled "*Training With The Prong Collar*". Within the article, Suzanne states that the prong collar "is a controversial piece of training equipment that is misunderstood." Additionally, she wrote, "A popular misconception is that the use of the collar creates poor attitude or unhappy workers." Suzanne points out that by using the prong collar, the dog is given the opportunity to make his own decision, therefore allowing the dog to determine what can or cannot be done (basically black and white). In essence, she states, "The prong collar, like any other training equipment properly applied, by clearly showing the dog his choices, will result in a happy dog who is willing to work."

Suzanne also states in her article that by banning the prong collar in clubs and training classes, one "... may be dooming some of their students to failure and some of the dogs to a one way trip to the pound by not recognizing the need for alternative



Sandy Davis' Holly and Tucker at the Sea Witch Festival. "Holly was getting bored with it all but Tucker proudly walked down the boardwalk with his tail wagging."

equipment." She adds that the prong collar "...offers considerably less problems and potential for injury than the increasingly popular head halters." and adds "...prong collars do not make dogs aggressive".

An example that Suzanne sites in her article is of a Golden Retriever named Andy. Andy went from a confused and unhappy dog who "...literally pulled his struggling owner into the training building" to not only a well behaved dog who graduated at the top of his class but went on to further training – all due to the proper use of his prong collar.

It is important to note that Suzanne stresses in her article that one should not assume that all dogs need a prong collar. There are many different factors that come into play when determining ones dog's needs which include training environment, the capability of the handler, the dog's willingness to please as well as any distractions that are present at that time. A prong collar would also be used when an "imbalance" between the owner's strength versus the dog's strength creates a problem. If at all possible, one should work towards not using the prong collar as the dog and handler continue with training. But, one should also be aware that there is a possibility that the dog will need the prong collar all the time.

After reading that information and hearing the club member, I contacted Suzanne directly to clarify my understanding. Suzanne told me that people often

Continued on p. 5

To Prong or Not to Prong

(cont'd from p. 4)

quote her but do not always do so accurately. "Prong collars AND head halters are often aversive, though they can be only mildly so, depending on the dog and how the equipment is used. I almost never recommend the use of a head halter unless the handler has some serious issues and cannot handle the dog in another way. My personal preference always is for no equipment at all wherever possible, and if necessary, a buckle or martingale (limited choke) type collar - that's it. Hard to remember when I've called for anything but a buckle or martingale collar for working a dog [she was referring to my Holly]. But many handlers need some crutches along the way till they master the skill of staying mentally connected to the dog and using equipment only as a safety net, not as a means of communication. Aim for teaching everything with you and the dog naked (no leash, no collar, no treat bags, no clickers, etc) and you'll end up not needing equipment."

So, should you prong or not prong your dog? It all comes down to the choice of the owner. The prong collar offers a chance to gain a "new relationship" between owner and dog. As long as the collar is properly applied and properly used, the prong collar is a good tool to use for training purposes.

I suggest reading the article by Suzanne Clothier entitled "Training With The Prong Collar" at <http://www.flyingdogpress.com/prong.html> as well as her article entitled "The Problem With Head Halters" at <http://www.flyingdogpress.com/headhalters.html>. In addition to those two articles, Suzanne has also printed other interesting articles on her web site touching on topics including "Aggression Basics", "Selecting Training Equipment" and "Rewards Lures and Bribes". These and others can be found on her web site at <http://www.flyingdogpress.com/articles.html>.

New Orleans Rescue

by Nadine Conner

We returned with 21 dogs on October 23. This may be the last group of dogs that we rescue from Hammond, Louisiana. The weather will be getting too cold and snowy to transport dogs in a horse trailer. Below is a list of dogs that are still available. Many were already adopted!! If you know of anyone interested, please have them contact me.

1. Three Louisiana mixed breeds – all females approximately 1 year old, not related. Short hair and leggy. About 20 pounds. House broken and crate trained. High energy, good for Frisbee, running around with kids, agility, etc. All are great with kids!! (Cassie, Katie, Tulip)
2. Collie/Shep mix – female, 1-2 years old. Golden and black collie length hair. House broken and crate trained. Wild about playing. Doesn't like cats at all. Loves kids (Sasha).
3. Hound mix – female, less than 1 year. House broken and crate trained. Brindle mix, leggy. Likes dogs and small animals (Holly)

4. Border mix – mail, 4 months. Mixes with beagle? Lab? Black/brown and white. Very friendly. House broken and crate trained. Loves playing and people and dogs.
5. Spaniel mix – female, 1 year. Mixed with catahoola? Lab? Soft, gentle, heals, etc. House broken and crate trained. Wonderful family dog. (Daisy May)
6. Two puppies – 10 weeks, brown leopard spots, catahoola and black leopard spot catahoola. Both females same litter. Looks like huge ears with puppies under them. Not house broken yet, but crate trained.

Yes, only 10 dogs left out of the 37 total that were rescued. Thanks to the wonderful fosters, these dogs are happy and being trained while waiting for their perfect adoptive families.

Membership Report

Sue MacPherson

Dave & Shannon Fermanich
516 Joy Ln.
Sleepy Hollow, IL 60118
(847) 428-9388
Reriever/ Border Collie mix
shanon@cunninghamcpa.com

Lydia Turgeon
312 Burke Ln
South Elgin, IL 60177
(847) 488-1993
Lab & Golden Mix
lturgeon@elginstatebank.com

Gary & Beth Pappas
122 Ashbury Ct
Geneva, IL 60134
(630) 262-1172
Mixed breed

Magie Leavey
808 Manchester Ct.
Geneva, IL 60134
Standard Poodle
budnick77@comcast.net

Steve & JoAnne Uitto
2448 Barkdoll Rd.
Naperville, IL 60565
(630) 983-0947
Australian Shepherds
sjuito@wowway.com

Note:
Bill Clarke has changed his email
address to
britneydoglovr@sbcglobal.net

December Correction Clinic

The final FVDTC match is Thursday, December 1st. Only a few Utility entries are left but there is plenty of room in Open and Novice.

we are in great need of help for the match on Dec. 1, 2005 - our last one for the year. Need at least 6 stewards, Nov.B, Open B (one in each of those) and Utility A and Utility B (two in each of them).

Without your help, members, we cannot have the match - the judges won't run the classes if nobody is there to help. So please, e-mail Ingrid Hamburger at: i.hamburger@comcast.net or call: (630) 365-3248.

Membership Meeting Minutes

Membership Meeting Highlights November 2, 2005

Meeting brought to order at 7:38 p.m.

Carolyn Pearson (Secretary). The October Meeting minutes were approved with the following change.

- As published: Individuals who participate in the random draw agree to work at the trial to guarantee an entry into the trial. Peggy Sue Seehafer volunteered to help Helen Castellano.
- As corrected: Individuals who participate in the random draw agree to work at the trial to guarantee an entry into the trial. Vera Nyberg volunteered to help Helen Castellano.

Several items of correspondence were read.

Dean Connolly (First Vice-President) reported that the mats are clean. He thanked Ed Herdes for spearheading for the effort. The names of the volunteers will be published in the Waggin' Tales.

Dave Lewis (Waggin' Tales Editor) reported that the deadline is Sunday, November 6th. Secretary's note: The deadline is actually 11/20

Will Short (Obedience Trial Chairperson) reported that Stewards should arrive no later than 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, November 13th. Susan Yee, Kitchen Chair, reported that she needs volunteers to prepare some food at home the night before and bring it to the kitchen the day of trial. Kitchen volunteers should arrive between 6:15 a.m. and 6:30 a.m. Carolyn Pearson, Hospitality Chair, announced that anyone who wished to attend the November 12th Judges Dinner should contact her for the details.

Taffy Wille (Obedience Trial Secretary) stated that the catalog is at the printers. Taffy reported that the entries

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are closed. Although she did not have the final numbers available at the meeting, she stated that with the exception of the Open B class, none of the classes filled.

Sue MacPherson (Membership Chairperson) read a list of two new applicants as published in the Waggin' Tales, but neither was present at the meeting. Ingrid made a motion to accept the list as published. Barb Misch seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all, without any opposition or abstentions. Welcome to our newest members!

Francene Andresen (Tracking Test Chairperson) reported that the September 2005 tracking event earned a profit of approximately \$80.00. She is awaiting confirmation from the judges she has contacted for the 2006 test. She announced that as a continuation to last month's story about the Chihuahua earning a Tracking Dog Excellent (TDX) title, the same Chihuahua passed its Variable Surface Tracking (VST) and is now a Champion Tracker (CT).

Barb Misch (Public Education Coordinator) stated that WOOOF-line is up-to-date. Barb also reported that thanks to Nancy Pederson, today FVDTC received mention on the US 99 radio station. Barb stated that in response to several requests she would like to offer a Conformation demonstration at the December 1st Correction Clinic. Barb also asked for a dog that might be the right size to model a jacket she made for the fundraising raffle, so she could take a picture for people to see.

Helen Castellano (Agility Trial Chairperson) stated that she had nothing new to report since the last meeting.

Peggy Sue Seehafer (Director at Large) reported that a letter was sent to the Chicago alderman regarding the 'anti-pit bull' law. In response to Terri Byerly's question about the possibility of having a form letter available for club members to send, it was stated that any individuals who wished to should send a letter, should do so. Although a form letter to use as a starting point would be drafted, it is always better to put your own words into the letter. A letter or an e-mail message is effective.

Peggy Sue announced that the new Campton Township Dog Park is now open. She stated that the organizers would like to do a demonstration very similar to the event held in the St. Charles Dog Park.

Carolyn Pearson (Annual Dinner Chairperson) announced that Saturday, March 18, 2006 is the

tentative date for the Annual Dinner. The event will be at either Fishermen's Inn or Lincoln Inn, depending on date availability. Carolyn asked whether the current committee members should continue the tradition of offering thank-you acknowledgements for the volunteers who work at club events. The club members present agreed that it is a good tradition to continue.

Kathy Busch (Fundraising Chairperson) reported that the Candlelight Bowling was a huge success and earned a profit of approximately \$175.00. She stated that she and Francene took a lot of pictures. She has signed a contract with Barnes & Noble for a gift wrapping event and will need at least two volunteers for each of the following dates and times.

Date	Starting At	Ending At
December 17	2:00pm	6:00pm
December 22	6:00pm	10:00pm
December 23	6:00pm	1:00pm
December 24	9:00am	2:00pm

Kathy also stated that she is in need of volunteers to assist her on the day of the trial for the fundraising raffle. In response to Kathy's question, Priscilla stated that last year, she sold 5 tickets for \$1.00 for most of the items. However she did offer a higher priced raffle for the more expensive items. Sue MacPherson stated that her daughter, Holly, would help Kathy and Joe on the day of the trial.

Penny Brcich (Match Co-Chairperson) stated that the next correction clinic is Thursday, December 1st and is the final correction clinic for 2005.

Ingrid Hamburger (Match Steward Chairperson) reported that she needs stewards for the next correction clinic on Thursday, December 1st. She also stated that had it not been for the individuals who volunteered at the October correction clinic; there would not have been enough stewards.

Penny Brcich (Sunshine) reported that cards were sent to Wally Pisarski, who had heart surgery, and to Jan Schomer who lost Camper, her 7-year old Golden Retriever. She asked that if anyone hears about an event that should be acknowledged to please send the information to her.

Monthly Dollar Bucket

...and the winner of \$7.00 is Rick Cox as drawn by Samantha Castellano. He donated the money to club.

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Old Business

Property Report - Helen stated that she had nothing new to report.

New Business

Membership Revocation

Dave Lewis read the following.

A serious and unfortunate matter is being submitted for your consideration tonight. I am referring to the motion for the termination of Kay Weber's training membership. This motion is based on several occurrences that have left no other options open to this Board.

In making this decision, we have asked ourselves the question "Is Kay Weber a constructive or destructive member of this club?" After much investigation, many hours of consideration and exhaustive discussion, we have concluded that her membership in our club has been a destructive force. Here are some of the main points we took into consideration:

- Kay cited FVDTC as an abusive club in an internet posting on April 29th, 2005. This set the precedent of using FVDTC, by default, as the club where subsequent acts of cruelty were performed. Kay accused instructors of hanging dogs, stepping on toes, etc. She said "One little girl was told her dog should die when it misbehaved. Another little girl had her dog kicked when it did not get up fast enough for a recall." These statements were attributed to instructors. Hanging dogs is a recurring theme in later postings.
- The most recent attacks on this club came in a posting on September 1, 2005. She said she witnessed two acts of abuse. In the first she stated "The instructor took the leash and hung the puppy off the ground by its neck and dragged it across the floor – its feet not touching." She went on to recount "This happened over and over for the better part of ½ an hour." Kay then suggested that our training staff bore a resemblance to wife beaters: To quote her "I'm sorry but this is crap. Isn't this what wife beaters do? Beat the crap out of a woman and then apologize?" In the other incident an instructor supposedly held a tunnel five feet off the ground and physically lifted dogs and threw them in the tunnel. Since one of the dogs in question was 90 lbs, this seems to be physically impossible. These are inflammatory accounts and would antagonize any dog lover.
- After being contacted about her allegations, Kay refused to make an official report on the alleged abuse incidents. She flatly stated "I don't particularly care about being effective at changing FV..." She also added "I am free to express my displeasure in any forum I choose."
- Despite Kay's refusal to make an official report, the Board still felt it was important to conduct an investigation to determine if there was any truth to the abuse allegations. There were some glaring inconsistencies between Kay's account and the account of the students in the class. **None** of the students or members that were training immediately within the training ring observed anything that they considered to be abusive.
- Kay's response to the investigation was "That's crap. There's nothing to understand. The puppy was being hung off the ground by its neck while being dragged. That is abuse. There is no excuse or reason for that. The only other conclusion that can be made is that all the witnesses are lying." She also stated "I have never had and still do not have any intention of making a (sic) 'official' report to the club. The focus of this investigation seems to be (1.) How to justify abuse and (2.) How to keep future incidents 'secret.'"

Kay Weber has refused to engage in any meaningful dialogue to resolve this conflict. She refused to follow club policies to address this problem. The Board members of this club feel that members DO have the right to respectfully disagree with other members regarding their personal choice of training methods, and even the quality of the leadership of the club. However, no member has the right to spread unsubstantiated and inflammatory rumors, or to make defamatory statements about other members in a public forum. Therefore, the Board members of this club feel that the only option left open to us is to revoke her membership.

It must be absolutely clear in the each and every person's mind that this is not because of a difference in opinion in training techniques, nor because Kay thinks the Board of Directors is incompetent. She is entitled to those opinions. This is because the Board considers Kay's

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statements to be a violation of the rules of this club, because she has stated that she has no desire to improve Fox Valley, and because of her arguably libelous comments in a public forum about the club, its instructors and its Board of Directors. She should have followed the established procedures and come to the Board initially.

Dave stated that as this motion is coming from a standing committee, the Board, it does not need a second. Dave then read the following letter which was sent to Kay Weber.

In accordance with the Fox Valley Dog Training Club's By-Laws (see 4.4.2 below), you are hereby notified that the Board of Directors is recommending to the membership that your Regular/Training Membership be cancelled for the following reasons.

- Your blatant disregard for the club's welfare and reputation as demonstrated by the internet posting of unproven allegations of dog abuse by the teaching staff.
- Your refusal to follow published procedures to address those allegations.
- Your libel of the current Board members for condoning the alleged dog abuse.
- Your lack of regard for the club's reputation and possibly the financial future of the club.

The Board Members discussed the situation at length and we feel that we cannot allow an individual who exhibits this behavior to continue their membership with FVDTC.

4.4.2 Any member may be dismissed and his/her rights cancelled for a good cause, after said cause having first been reviewed by the Board of Directors and, if necessary by the membership-at-large, by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting. However, no member shall be dismissed for any cause until he/she has been notified by the Secretary of the charges made and shall have an opportunity to reply in his/her defense, either in writing or in person, at the next regular meeting.

Should you wish to reply in your defense, you must do so either with a letter addressed to the Board at the address below, or at the November 2, 2005 Membership Meeting. The meeting is conducted at the Kane County Extension Center at 7:30 p.m. Please notify me by noon on October 29, 2005 at 630.231.5658 as to how you intend to respond.

Although Kay did not respond to the board's letter by the deadline, she did provide the following statement, which was read by Will Short at the meeting, per Kay's

request.

I have asked Will Short to read this aloud to the membership since I cannot attend the meeting due to a prior commitment.

To the FVDTC Board and Fellow Club Members:

On Oct. 27, 2005 I received a letter stating that the Board of Directors is recommending that my membership be revoked. I intend to respond to the charges they have made in this letter.

First of all, a few days notice for this type of action is inexcusable both in regards to the lack of preparation time as well the ability to notify any members that would like to be heard on this matter. The board had decided on this action several weeks ago and they had ample time to notify anyone who they felt would support them to attend this meeting.

I was not afforded this same courtesy. Because of the short notice and many other prior commitments, some members have submitted written opinions. It is important for each member to be heard, in his or her own words. Will Short has copies of the messages submitted and I have asked him to read each message in it's entirety and in the members own words. I have the right, per the bylaws, to respond to the charges made against me and part of my reply includes the letters, in their entirety, from the members who chose to respond to my request for comments. I asked each person to also copy the BOD on his or her letters, so that the BOD has a copy of each reply.

My response to each charge made by the BOD is after each of their charges:

"You (sic) blatant disregard for the club's welfare and reputation as demonstrated by the internet posting of unproven allegations of dog abuse by the teaching staff"

This charge does not give any specifics but I assume that this is referring to a post I made on a private training list owned by Will Short. In that post I did not mention any person, place or organization by name. I have given my permission for this post to be copied and I have provided copies for the members present who have not read it. I train at a number of places, so I could have been talking about any place in that post. In addition, I never identify myself as a FVDTC member – anywhere. No one reading the post could conclude any information about this post – unless they heard about the incident from someone else. When Lewis posted a public reply to the list, he was publicly identifying the location to other FVDTC by virtue of his association. Dave

Membership Meeting Minutes

Lewis copied this post and distributed it to other people. When Lewis passed this information out to the board members HE was the one who identified the people and location. Furthermore, he did NOT have my permission or the list owner's permission to copy this post. This is a clear violation of copyright, which is detailed in a letter written by Cris Mazza, which will be read. Will Short can attest to the fact that I have never identified any person or organization by name in any posts on his list.

While the board has concluded that the abuse was 'unproven', their conclusion might be questioned. Cindy Pakenas, who was the director of training at the time the incidents occurred, has made a written account in which she definitely states that this incident as well as other incidents by this same instructor are, in her opinion, abuse. Will Short who witnessed the incidents has also made a statement to the board that the incidents were abuse. Vera Nyberg, who witnessed one of the incidents, called Cindy that very night to report that she thought the incident was abuse. There were FOUR club members, three of which were board members, including the DOT who ALL stated that they witnessed abuse. In response, some (but not all) of the pet owners that were in the classes where these incidents occurred were 'interviewed'. The BOD's conclusion means one of two things: The four members were not found to be credible, or the incidents did happen as reported but the board found that the behavior witnessed by the members was not abuse. A board that consists mainly of people who do not train or do not show their dogs made this decision based on what some pet owners said. If you question my qualifications to discern what is and isn't abuse, I am providing a copy of my resume. If you don't think my assessment was valid, please consider that Will Short and Cindy Pakenas are unquestionably the most experienced trainers on the board and they BOTH agree that what they saw was abuse. Cindy has provided a copy of her report on this incident to be read at this meeting, which also states why she resigned.

"Your refusal to follow published procedures to address those allegations"

I was not supplied with any indication as to what this 'published procedure' is and could find nothing related to the reporting of abuse in the bylaws. There is no REQUIREMENT that a member report anything. I DID report the first incident to Cindy at the time it was occurring. She went into the ring and asked the instructor to stop. The instructor did not comply. I reported the second incident to Cindy later (she had left after the first incident). Vera also reported the incident to Cindy that night. The director of training is in charge at

training and members who have an issue with something at training would report it to the DOT, and that is EXACTLY what I did. It is up to the DOT to respond to complaints.

If this is referring to the grievance procedure, again, there is no requirement that anyone file a grievance for any reason. Previously a member reported an instance of abuse by another member. In response the accused member then filed a grievance against the member who reported the incident. Who would want to go through that process?

"Your libel of the current Board members for condoning the alleged dog abuse"

Again there was no specific information what this is referring to. I can only assume this refers to private email, addressed to Dave Lewis at his PRIVATE email address, NOT his email address as FVDTC president. He never stated he was contacting me in his role as the president. He did persist in trying to get me to say my emails to him were my 'official' account. I never responded to him. He also continued to email me to try and get me to respond even after I told him repeatedly that I did not wish to speak to him and the that (sic) I did not want him to contact me again. Lewis then copied these messages and distributed them, again without my permission.

Copying and distributing anything that is written without the permission of the author is a violation of copyright. Anyone who takes these copies and further distributes them is also in violation. I do NOT give permission for these emails to be distributed or read at this meeting – as a matter of principle. This violation is something that the board does on a regular basis and I will not support or condone this action.

The letter written by Cris Mazza clearly defines the requirements for libel and after hearing her letter you will see that NONE of the conditions to prove libel have been met. The legal advice I received on this matter concurs with what Cris has written and she makes it very clear, so I will let her letter stand as my response to this charge.

The members should also decide if they would support the BOD in pursuing this charge any further. I can guarantee there would be a lot of publicity surrounding this, including statements by experts on the topic of dog abuse and organizations such as the Humane Society. Public opinion on this topic may not be in favor of the BOD or FVDTC.

"Your lack of regard for the club's reputation and possibly the financial future"

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of the club”

I have not idea what this is about. I do not identify myself as a FVDTC member to anyone because of the training methods and the treatment of dogs that I witness at training. I also do not recommend FVDTC to anyone who is looking for a place to train their dogs. You will hear from other members tonight who also do not recommend FVDTC and in fact there are a number of members who do not put their own dogs in the puppy or beginner classes. There is a difference in failing to recommend a facility and saying you do not recommend a facility. In either case, whether to recommend or not is a personal opinion. There is no requirement that a member recommend FVDTC.

When I give recommendations, I recommend trainers only, not facilities, since I cannot be sure who the instructor might be at a given facility. I also tell people what methods to look for, what to look in terms of credentials of an instructor. I also tell people that there is NEVER a need for physical or emotion punishment in training a dog.

FVDTC already has a reputation for their training methods. This reputation is reinforced each and every time some pet owner leaves FVDTC and tells all their friends and neighbors that they will never go back there. The public has written letters to the board about incidents they have seen. Members have written letters about their friends who have had bad experiences at FVDTC and they have told their friends. The FVDTC board appears to care more about what is said than what is going on. They are more worried that someone will hear something negative about FVDTC than trying to prevent those very events that cause those negative comments in the first place.

In conclusion, I believe what I have presented along with the letters to be read by Will Short, prove that the allegations made by the BOD are completely without merit. I believe that the true charges are: 1.) We don't like you. 2.) You are not allowed to disagree with the BOD and 3.) We will do anything to shut you up.

Do you want the BOD to have this power? This whole action is an attempt to keep members from speaking their opinions, especially if those opinions are different from the BOD. This is an unspoken threat to each and every member that if they dare to speak out, they too will have their membership terminated. It could be any one of you at any time. It has happened before and it will happen again unless the members say

“Enough”.

(signed)
Kay Weber

(Note from Secretary: Although the e-mail messages which were read at the meeting are not physically incorporated within these minutes, a copy of each has been included within the official club files and is available to view as public club records.)

Dave stated that he had received interpretations of libel that perfectly matched the statements that Kay made, and interpretations of libel that absolve Kay. None of us, however, are lawyers, so the legal term “libel” should not have been used. The effect and intent of the letter would have been the same if it said “potentially libelous” or “arguably libelous.”

At this time, Will Short read a letter from Cindy Pakenas describing the events as she saw on September 2. Cris Mazza read the two e-mail messages, dated 10/31/2005 and 11/02/2005, which she had sent to Dave Lewis. Dave Lewis read Sandy Davis' message dated 11/01/2005. Penny Brcich read her e-mail message dated 10/31/2005.

Dave stated that in response to Kay's assertion that “I never identify myself as a FVDTC member – anywhere”, she does identify herself as a FVDTC club member in a posting made on April 29, 2005 on Will Short's Running Shadow Forum. However, at that time Will stated that he refused to give permission to Dave to read that posting at the meeting. Terri Bylerly asked Will Short, as the moderator, whether it would be permissible for Dave to paraphrase the April 29th posting. Will also refused to permit Dave to paraphrase the posting.

Helen Castellano stated that according to an E-mail Etiquette website she located, there is no such thing as a private e-mail message. She read the following: “Stop right where you are and set aside a couple of brain cells for the following statement: there is no such thing as a private e-mail. I don't care what anybody says, states, swears or whatever, there is just no such thing as private e-mail.”

Dean Connolly stated that the charges of abuse made by Kay Weber were started as early as April 29, 2005.

Dave read Julie Dorsey-Oskerka's e-mail message dated 10/31/2005 and Teresa Orman's e-mail message dated 10/29/2005. In response to Teresa's statement

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in her e-mail that "When I e-mailed my concern to Dave Lewis I never got a response, I guess this was disregarded." Dave stated that he did send a reply, however his reply message to her e-mail address "bounced."

Ed Herdes asked why he and Bill Clarke were unaware of these proceeding until the very last minutes and yet others were so well aware of it that they had been sending messages to Dave as early as 10/29/2005. Carolyn Pearson explained the process the Board followed.

- The decision was made in an Executive Session of the FVDTC Board of Directors on 10/25/2005.
- The letter to Kay Weber was composed and mailed via Certified Mail and received and signed for on 10/27/2005.
- A response was to be made to Carolyn Pearson by noon on Saturday, 10/29/2005.
- No response received by Sunday night, 10/30/2005.
- Carolyn requested that the labels be sent to her via e-mail. Although the labels were sent, the labels were never received by Carolyn.
- Note to membership, created and stuffed in envelopes on 10/30/2005.
- Carolyn personally picked up the printed labels on 10/31/2005.
- Envelopes to members mailed on 11/01/2005.

Will Short stated he personally had a grievance filed against him after he accused an instructor of abusing a dog. Will said that the allegations of abusive instructors is not a new development, and that Cindy Pakenas, as DOT, was aware of his concerns.

However, Dean Connolly stated that as a Board member he has not heard of any other allegations of abusive instructors either at the Board meetings or using any other method of communications. Barb Misch also confirmed Dean's statement that she was unaware of multiple incidents of abuse. Barb stated that other than a dog aggressive dog incident, Cindy did not address any other training related incidents at any of the Board meetings.

Dave explained the events that initiated the investigation of the alleged abuse. Over a period of a couple of weeks, he collected thirteen pages of information to investigate the incident. Francene added that Cindy was not the initiator of the investigation.

In response to Kay's statement "private email, addressed to Dave Lewis at this PRIVATE email address, NOT his email address as FVDTC president. He never stated he was contacting me in his role as

the president." Dave stated that he frequently performs his duties as the President of FVDTC, without using the President@fvdtc.org e-mail address, as do most of the other Board members. He stated that to assume he was not acting on behalf of the club just because of the e-mail address used was unrealistic. He felt that it was pretty evident in his electronic communications to Kay that he was acting as President of FVDTC, not Dave Lewis, a FVDTC club member.

In response to Kay Weber's accusation that the Board made a decision weeks ago, Barb Misch stated that it was not weeks as Carolyn previously described. Barb Misch read the message she and the other Board members received from Dave stating the he and the Board may be sued by Kay Weber for copyright infringement. According to a legal reference she had access to, suit can be filed only after a copyright work is registered with the federal government. To win a libel suit the following must be proved:

- The libel was published,
- Words were of and concerning the plaintiff,
- Material is defamatory,
- Material is false,
- Defendant was at fault.
- Specific names are not required to be mentioned, so long as the person being referenced is clear to at least one other person.

Barb Misch stated that training methods are like religion, you cannot tell me that your church is better than mine. People need to accept other ideas and methods. Barb stated that when she was a child her family belonged to a church which chose to spend \$4 million to redo the church rather than helping the homeless of the community. Rather than continuing to support that church, her family left the church. She asked why someone who feels so strongly that an organization is a bad, would spend the money to continue her membership?

Barb also asked why Kay Weber chose to make a public attack before making an internal report. Barb stated that she felt Kay was acting maliciously toward the club and its reputation. Cris Mazza stated that Kay makes her living as a dog trainer and could lose her livelihood if her reputation is damaged. Dave Lewis asked what would happen to the club if the reputation is damaged by this incident? Jim Communale stated that he does not feel that the club would be irreparably damaged by this incident. Cris Mazza said that you can speak against the church. Cindy resigned because she was not happy, and the Board supported her in that decision.

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Will Short stated that he continues training at the club because he likes members at the club and feels that over time he will be able to make a change. In response to Dave Lewis' question, Will stated that he was not at all implying that the Board was trying to stop his training methods.

Dave read Jan William's e-mail message dated 10/20/2005. Carolyn read Marietta's letter as presented by Will Short at the meeting. Although Lisa Humm was present, Will Short read her e-mail message dated 11/02/2005. Carolyn read Merry Lee Hritsuk's e-mail message dated 11/02/2005. Dave Lewis stated that he spoke to Judy Anderson on the phone just prior to the meeting and she expressed concern about the timing of the vote and whether it could be delayed until January 2006. Judy felt that there was not enough notification to the general membership.

Taffy Wille stated that Kay Weber could communicate her side at her discretion; however the Board felt that we did not have to right to communicate the information to the general membership until the deadline extended to Kay had passed. Once the deadline passed, without a return communication, the information was communicated to the general membership by a note via USPS mail.

Anne Stuessy asked that the abuse incident be explained. Dave stated that he initiated the investigation of the alleged abuse incident after he read a posting on Will Short's Running Shadow Forum pages written by Kay Weber and a brief conversation he had with Cindy Pakenas at training on September 1st. Dave stated that he also received an e-mail message from Will Short referencing the information in Kay's posting. Specifically, when Dave asked Will what had happened, Will instructed Dave to "see Kay's post." Dave asked Peggy Sue Seehafer to contact each and every student in both classes about the incidents that night. Contrary to Kay's assertion that only some of the students were interviewed, Peggy Sue gave questionnaires to all students in both classes and then followed up with phone calls where necessary. Peggy Sue reported that none of the students in the puppy or the beginner's class felt that they witnessed abuse.

Peggy Sue Seehafer stated that all of the students stated that they are enjoying the classes. Additionally, the owner of the 90 lb. dog that was allegedly lifted 5 feet and dropped in the tunnel said that his dog was not abused in any way. The other Board members also

present at training that night provided comments on the incidents.

Jim Communale stated that the club should probably define what abuse is. However, that is not the issue tonight. Will Short stated that between the three individuals who considered the incidents to be abuse, they have 75 years of dog training experience versus the total of 40 months of training experience of the students in the classes. Helen stated that the question on the questionnaire specifically said "Did you see the puppy get dragged across the floor?" All of the students responded to that question with a NO.

Carolyn also reminded the club members not to assume that just because a student is in a Puppy or Beginner's class that they do not have any prior experience training dogs. Cheryl Hettinger reminded the club member whether the meeting was staying on the point and she agreed with Jim that what constitutes abuse was not the issue.

Lisa Humm called for the question "asking whether we can end the discussion?" Cheryl Hettinger seconded the motion. The motion to end the discussion was approved by 2/3 of the club members' present. The written ballots were distributed and 49 total ballots were then counted by Bill Clarke and Ed Herdes. The following is the results.

25	Yes - I vote to revoke Kay Weber's membership
22	No - I vote not to revoke Kay Weber's membership
2	I abstain from this vote

A 2/3 majority of members present and voting is required to terminate a membership. The "Yes" votes did not reach the 2/3 majority, so Kay's membership will not be terminated. Dave asked Carolyn to notify Kay of the results of the vote.

Other New Business

Terri asked whether the Christmas party to be more of an open house. The consensus of the members present was to continue holding the Christmas party as a members and students event.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn the meeting at 9:59 p.m.

Fox Valley Dog Training Club

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November, 2005

2	Wednesday	Membership Meeting
3	Thursday	Regular Training
8	Tuesday	Regular Training
13	Sunday	Obedience Trial
17	Thursday	Regular Training
20	Sunday	Waggin' Tales Deadline
22	Tuesday	Regular Training

December, 2005

1	Thursday	Regular Training
7	Wednesday	Board Meeting
8	Thursday	Regular Training
11	Sunday	Waggin' Tales Deadline
15	Thursday	Regular Training
22	Thursday	Regular Training
29	Thursday	Christmas Party
		No Training