



Susquehanna Trail Dog Training Club

February 2007

Old Friends

by Connie Cuff



In obedience training the dog's motivation is the interaction and attention it receives from its owner, as well as the sheer pleasure of doing something that is fun and exciting.

If you want a dog that is happy it must be more than a 15-minute-a-day training session. It is a 24 hr.-a-day relationship. Everything we do with or to our dogs affects their attitude and behavior from the way we let them out in the morning to where they sleep at night.

Don't merely take your dog for a walk, but interact with playing games with the dog, be it retrieving, frisbee or hide and seek. The source of the fun is playing with you.

The greatest motivator is the handler's voice. Food and toys are merely an extension or extra perk in training. If you don't get the dog tuned into you, and excited and happy about being with you, the toys and food will do nothing for you.

If you talk to your dog in a normal tone of voice they are happy and attentive and wag their tails. If our voice is higher pitched, they get more excited. Change your tone the tiniest bit and their heads droop and their tails go down. Try taping your voice. If you were a dog would you be motivated or bored by what you heard?

The bottom line for producing a happy, motivated dog is (1) the dog must have a thorough understanding of what is expected, and (2) there must be a reciprocal trust and respect between dog and handler.

Praise is an important element of any behavior training. You'll need to find the level that works best for your dog, so that it is neither overstimulated (loses focus) nor under appreciated (loses interest). If you can anticipate the dog's behavior and praise while manipulating and guiding it, rather than overcorrecting, you'll build a positive foundation for appropriate behavior and a strong bond.

Remember some dogs respond to training more quickly and easily than others. Training should be in bits and pieces rather than huge leaps - a factor that often leads to impatience and frustration.

Whether we look upon dogs as children, entertainers, equals, or heroes, dogs expect and ardently desire for us to become their kindly leaders. Tapping into a dog's potential can payoff in a long and rewarding relationship. But there's an extra benefit, too. Making an effort to understand the dog will make you into the kind of person your dog already believes you to be.

Till next time,

Connie

Minutes

submitted by Virginia Pentz

Meeting was called to order with 22 members present, with Connie Cuff presiding.

(Treasurer's Reports are Not Available in the Online Edition of the STDTC Newsletter.)

Members were reminded about dues and shot records. Also discussed was the upcoming PawsAbilities, held at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg PA, on March 10 & 11, 8:00AM -4:00PM. There are many contests, show, competitions, and vendors at this event. For more information you can call 717-671-7813 or visit the website at www.keystonehumanservices.org/ssd.

Cal (club member and TDI evaluator) is feeling much better..

Shiela's Shepherd mix rescue is very sick and currently at Cornell University, please keep them in your prayers.

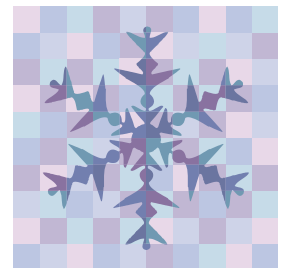
Marjean Krech told us of an animal behaviorist, Ramos, who is in the area and will come to your house.

Meeting adjourned.

Weathering The Seasons

submitted by Connie Cuff

Groom your dog regularly. Your dog needs a well-groomed coat to keep properly insulated. Short, or coarse-haired dogs may get extra cold, so consider a sweater or coat. Long-haired dogs should have their paw-hair clipped to ease snow removal and the cleaning of their feet. Rock salt used to melt ice on sidewalks may irritate footpads. Be sure to rinse and dry your dog's feet after a walk.



Feed your dog additional calories if he spends a lot of time outdoors or is a working animal. It takes more energy in the winter to keep body temperature regulated, so additional calories are necessary. Provide plenty of fresh water. Your dog is just as likely to get dehydrated in the winter as in the summer. Snow is not a satisfactory substitute for water.

Frostbite is your dog's winter hazard. Common frostbite sites are the tips of their earflaps, toes and scrotum. Signs of frostbite include pale white skin that turns red and swollen and painful as circulation returns to the area.

Don't leave your dog alone in a car. The temperature inside the car drops quickly when the engine is turned off; if the engine is left idling, dangerous carbon monoxide can build up. Inside the house be careful of fireplaces and portable heaters.

Also be careful of partially frozen ponds and streams.

Breed of the Month

German Shepherd

submitted by Connie Cuff



The German Shepherd dates back several centuries to early Europe and its rootstock was the mountain sheepdog of Germany. Around 1880 the German army modified this breed for work as a military dog to carry medicine and ammunition. Later the military modified the breed to act as a guard dog for hostages during the two world wars.

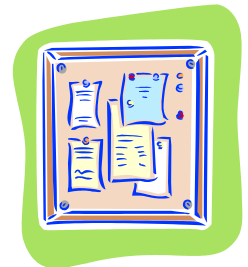
Its popularity rose greatly in the United States after World War I when many soldiers brought dogs back from Germany. A significant rise in the breed came about because of its work with the Red Cross, and canine silent film star Rin Tin Tin.

The GSD is both strong and agile. Its extreme intelligence and its independence and decision-making ability make it popular to be trained to handle multiple tasks. It is devoted to its master and family.

In his relation to man he does not give affection lightly; he has plenty of dignity and some suspicion of strangers, but his friendship, once given, is given for life.



Notes and Notices



Our sympathies to Mary Lou and Bob Walsh with the loss of Mary Lou's mother, Kathryn Goff.

2007 renewal memberships are due. To be covered by club insurance you must be up-to-date in membership. We are compiling a new list and want up-dated addresses and e-mails.

We welcome new members:

**Jamie Wagner from Vicksburg with Titus, a Basenji mix
Lindsay Buntman from Lewisburg, with Bucky, a Labrador retriever**

Anyone interested in a pet sitter in the Lewisburg area can contact Debby Kirk, 570-522-0710, references are available.

We will be ordering club shirts. There will be a sign up sheet at class or you can call Connie for information.

Our Sympathies go out to Marjean and Don Krech who recently had to euthanize their Beagle.

Special Note: Molly's Husband, Kevin Bittenbender, (dog Marco) is now serving in Afghanistan. If you want to email him, his e-mail address is: kevin.bittenbender@us.army.mil .

MP helps teach Iraqi K-9 trainers in Baghdad

by Sgt. Mark S. Rickert, 372nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq-The once dirty and cramped cells of a former Iraqi prison are now clean and lively, and today they house puppies instead of prisoners.

The U.S. army military police have converted the prison into a dog kennel, which now also serves as home base for the Iraqi K-9 unit.

Sergeant Emily Frasca, a police academy instructor with the 382nd Military Police Battalion, an Army Reserve unit out of San Diego, helped kick-start the new Iraqi K-9 unit. The 382nd Brigade in Iraq and is part of Task Force 1st Armored Division.

Along with other soldiers in her unit, Frasca teaches classes at the newly restructured police academy in Baghdad, and when someone asked her to help with the previously existing K-9 unit, she jumped at the opportunity.

"I love working with dogs," says Frasca. "And when they offered me the opportunity to be the liaison for the trainers and coordinate with 18th MP Brigade to get equipment for these guys, I saw an opportunity to share what I know and what I've learned-to help out."

The Baghdad K-9 unit is quickly progressing. The Iraqi handlers are learning new methods of training, and the dogs are multiplying: One of the German Shepherd Dogs has already given birth to five pups.

But the unit has not always received this kind of support. Before the war, the K-9's were moved to a facility outside of Baghdad. Here, the Iraqi trainers received very little financial support and were unable to buy equipment, vaccinations, and training manuals.

Frasca said that the unit became so out of touch with the other Iraqi police officers that they eventually became ineffective.

"The trainers were cut off from money and other dogs to breed theirs with," said Frasca. "They ended up inbreeding the dogs and working the older training styles. They started training dogs that weren't fully capable of being police dogs."

After the coalition forces became involved with the Baghdad police force, they decided to bring the K-9 unit back into Baghdad. They cleaned out one of the old prison facilities and transformed it into a kennel.

"When I saw the old torture camp, I looked into the cells and saw the potential," said Frasca. "We turned the prison into a 13-room kennel, with an office in the back and a room for trainers to stay in overnight, so they could protect the dogs."

Aside from coaching on new methods of training, Frasca also helps assess the animals for strong and weak points. The dogs are then chosen for specific job training, such as bomb detection, protection, or narcotics. If, for example, a dog has a favorite toy as a puppy, it is easier to train that dog for bomb detection.

"We look for the love of a toy," said Frasca. "This makes it easier for us to instill sniffing behaviors. We can test the dog to find the ball in a bush or in rubble. If they have a good sniffing behavior, it is easier for us to carry that behavior into searching patterns later on."

Frasca says the dogs are also learning a new language. Because Frasca teaches in English, the Iraqi trainers bark English commands to their canine partners. In a way, this provides the trainers and their dogs with a coded language.

"This allows police officers to communicate with their dogs without the [Iraqi] locals understanding," said Frasca. "Arid in some situations, this can give us the upper hand."...

February 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
			Reading Program (White Deer Elem.) 9am			
			Riverwoods (Lewisburg) 10am			
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Bucknell University (Lewisburg) 6pm		Riverwoods (E-Wing) V-Day Party (Lewisburg) 10am	Sunbury Community Hospital 1pm-1:30pm		
				Mansion Nursing Home (Sunbury) 1:45pm		
				Sunshine Corner (Market St., Sunbury) 2:15pm		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			Reading Program (White Deer Elem.) 9am		Geisinger Rehab (Health South) 2pm-3pm	
			Riverwoods (Lewisburg) 10am			
25	26	27	28			
			Riverwoods (Lewisburg) 10am			