

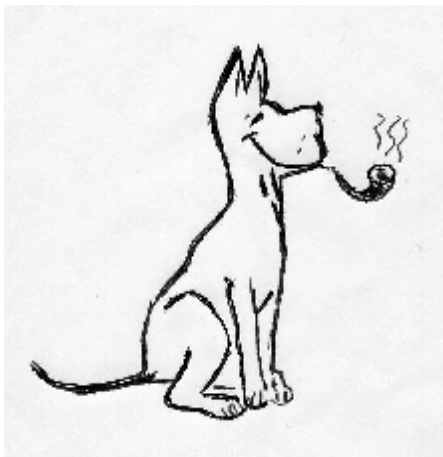


Susquehanna Trail Dog Training Club

August 2005

Old Friends

by Connie Cuff



Every dog needs a number. What rank does your dog have in your household? Be the leader of the pack! The ideal pack leader is able to give commands in a firm but quiet voice, not yelling or shouting and patient at all times. He also understands while training the dog the difference between deliberate disobedience and confusion due to faulty human-dog communication.

The dog that is placed under command consistently with proper incentives and motivation is healthier mentally and physically than the dog left to boredom, frustration and uncertainties of a life which imposes no demands.

A dog needs to respond to its leader not because he has a supply of goodies. It is an unnecessary distraction when used in the leadership program. Try the good old fashioned—"That a boy or girl."

Many dog owners do not understand when their dog challenges them or takes over as a pack leader. They will not pounce on the owner in the middle of the night. Instead, one day the handler will make a normal correction and hear a quiet, calm growl that say very clearly, "Hey, you knock it off, I do not acknowledge your authority." What he is actually doing is testing the owner's leadership. If the handler does not react properly, the dog will be encouraged to continue to press for leadership. A dog will only try for leadership with its owner once or twice in its lifetime. Make sure your dog does not win the challenge, and your dog will love you for making him number two for the rest of his life.

Many owners bring dogs to obedience class with the idea that the dog needs a little training. The truth is it's the owners who need the training along with a change in their attitude. Your leadership over your dog is a must if you want you dog to say, "What's next BOSS?"

An Educated Dog

Allows you to handle every part of his body, to check for injury or illness and to give him medication.

Has good manners, so he can spend most of his time indoors with his people, which means more supervision, less boredom, and fewer opportunities for mischief. The more time you spend with your dog, the more likely you will be to notice when something is wrong with him, such as a limp, a cough, a sensitive area, or loss of appetite. By recognizing such irregularities early, you can seek medical attention immediately and, hopefully, prevent more serious problems.

Wants to stay near you, listening for instructions (and praise). This

Old Friends (Continued)

means he will have less opportunity to get into trouble.

Will walk or run beside you on a leash without pulling, dragging, or strangling, so you and your dog can get more exercise and spend more time together.

Knows that "drop it" and "leave it alone" are phrases that mean business, so he will have fewer opportunities to swallow dangerous objects. He also can be taught what things and places are out of bounds, like hot stoves, heaters, or anxious cats. However, you will still need to limit his access to dangerous places when you cannot supervise or instruct him.

Will "sit" immediately, simply because you say so. No matter what danger is imminent, a dog that is suddenly still is suddenly safe. And a dog that will "stay" in that position is even safer.

Understands his boundaries, knows what's expected of him and has few anxieties. Less stress means a healthier dog.

Till next time,

Connie

Minutes (July 6, 2005)

Submitted by: Lydia Storey

Our fifteenth monthly membership meeting was held on July 6, 2005 at approximately 7:45 PM at Shikellamy Marina State Park.

Connie Cuff, President, called the meeting to order.

Secretary's Report - Please read the minutes of the June meeting in the newsletter. If there are any additions or corrections please advise.

Treasurer's Report – Mary Lou Walsh gave the treasurer's report as follows:

(Treasurer's Reports are not available in online versions of the STDTC Newsletter.)

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report.

New business:

Therapy visits: Connie has ID card holders to use on TDI visits for \$1.00 each. The newsletter mistakenly said the July 7th visit to Nottingham Village was in Lewisburg but it is in Northumberland. The error was corrected on the website newsletter calendar.

Additional therapy visits are Shamokin Elementary in Shamokin on Tuesday, July 19, 11:00 AM, Emmanuel Center, Danville, on Thursday, July 21, 6:45 PM, Buffalo Valley, Lewisburg, Thursday, August 11, 6:45 PM, demo, Hawaiian Luau theme and Emmanuel Center, Danville, Thursday, Sept. 1, 6:45 PM.

Minutes (Continued)

We will have our table at the Sunbury Riverfest on Saturday, August 20th. We plan to sell dog biscuits and distribute therapy dog and bite prevention literature. Please sign up to bake dog biscuits or to help man the table for an hour.

Our club picnic will be on Sunday, September 11th at 1:00 PM at Pavilion 2 at the Marina. Everyone brings a covered dish and club will supply the hotdogs. Please sign up to help with the Chinese auction, games, food (making hotdogs), rally or sub-novice obedience.

For those who may be interested, there are upcoming dog shows in the area: July 22, 23 Nita Nee K.C., Center Hall Fair Grounds, July 31, Williamsport D.T.C., Lycoming Co. Fair Grounds, Aug. 12, 13, 14 Keystone Cluster, PA Farm Show, Harrisburg, August 27, 28, Mid Susquehanna K.C., Aug. 27, 28, Middleburg with Rally.

Also, you may enjoy the tractor square dancing at the Gratz Fair July 16 at 1 & 4 PM or at the Sunbury Riverfest on Aug. 20 at 12:15 and 2:15 behind Sunbury Textile Mill or on Sept. 17 at the Mifflinburg VFW Carnival Grounds at 12 & 4 PM.

Sara Fry, Marjean Krech, and Virginia Pentz have done an excellent job of training a group of dogs at the Goodwill Hose Co. Playground in Sunbury.

We will be training at the Selinsgrove Center starting in October on Wednesday nights.

The newsletter is now available on our club website at, stdtc.org, the website version won't include the treasurer's report. Printed copies of the newsletter will be available for those who are not on the internet.

We received a Thank you from the P.S.P.C.A. in Philadelphia for our \$130.00 donation for the Danville satellite shelter.

Please submit stories for the newsletter. Stories about you and your dog are welcome.

Sherry's Corner

Congratulations to Sherry Carpenter for being chosen by the Pennsylvania Veterinary Association to receive the Dr. A. Wayne Mountain Memorial Media Award for her articles highlighting the veterinary profession and important animal issues.

The Dr. A. Wayne Mountain Memorial Media Award, named for a former PVMA President and AVMA Delegate who passed away in 1985, is presented annually for excellence in communication veterinary medical contributions to animal and public health to the public.

Her award will be presented at the PVMA Annual Business Luncheon on Saturday, August 13, 2005, during their 123rd Annual Scientific Meeting at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, in Hershey, PA.

**Congratulations to Kevin Bitenbender for becoming
TDI certified with his Leonberger, Marco!**

**Welcome to Martha McMonagle from Lewisburg with
her Rhodesian Redgeback Mix, Meggie!**

Dogs and Thunderstorm Phobia

Does your pooch bury his head into your side every time it thunders out? Does he dive under the bed whenever rain starts to fall. From your point of view, this may seem like cute and endearing behavior, but it's a sign that your dog is terrified of storms. Some owners are willing to simply put up with symptoms of storm phobias like hiding, trembling, whining, drooling, and pacing. In more severe cases, however, panicking dogs have been known to chew furniture, tear drapes, break windows, and more during thunderstorms. In either case, the behavior is a sign of a terrified, unhappy dog.

Causes

Storm phobias are one of the most common behavioral problems dog owners face, but their cause is not entirely clear. Behaviorists are not yet sure what part of the storm frightens dogs most, whether they're reacting to lightning flashes, the sound of thunder, wind blowing around the house, or the sound of rain on the roof. Some dogs even start to pace and whine half an hour or more before a storm. They may be reacting to a sudden drop in air pressure or the electrical charge of the air.

Nature or nurture?

An article in the July/August 2001 issue of the *Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association* describes an Internet survey of the owners of storm-phobic dogs. The authors discovered that some breeds may be predisposed to a fear of storms. Herding dogs, such as collies and German shepherds, and hounds, such as beagles and basset hounds, seem to be more likely to develop a storm phobia than other dogs. The phobia is also common in sporting and working breeds. The study suggests that this tendency may be explained in terms of the dogs' genetics. For example, herding dogs have been bred to react quickly to stimuli, such as a calf wandering away from the herd, but not to be aggressive. It could be that herding dogs have a strong reaction to the startling noises and flashes of a storm, but they repress any aggressive response to it, causing anxiety.

The *JAAHA* study also showed that rescued dogs--dogs adopted from shelters or rescue organizations--may also be more likely to develop storm phobias. The article suggested that these dogs are more likely to have had unpleasant, scary experiences prior to being adopted. They may have been abused or abandoned by a former owner, or they may not have been well socialized or exposed to a wide variety of sights and sounds. These kinds of early-life experiences can make dogs more anxious and prone to all kinds of phobias.

What to do

Your best bet for helping your pup overcome his thunderstorm fears is to talk to your veterinarian. He or she can help you develop a program to gradually retrain your scaredy dog by gradually, gently helping him adjust to storms through behavior modification. Technically called "systematic desensitization," this involves exposing the storm-phobic dog to some gentle reminders of a thunderstorm, such as a very soft tape recording of thunder or a flashing light, and rewarding the dog with lots of treats, attention, and other positive reinforcement only if there's no evidence of anxiety. Over time, the intensity of the stimulus is increased, and only calm behavior rewarded. You should get professional guidance, either from a veterinarian or a veterinary behavior specialist, before you begin this process, however. If you introduce frightening stimuli too quickly or don't see signs of fear your dog may be showing, you could possibly end up making the phobia worse.

If gentle, patient retraining doesn't help your pooch, there are some prescriptions that can. Your veterinarian can prescribe one of several anti-anxiety or antidepressant medications to help your dog remain calm during storms. You can also make sure your dog has a warm, safe "den" to retreat to when the weather gets too scary. You can try padding a crate with blankets or clearing a space underneath your bed. Just make sure that it's somewhere your pup can get out of whenever he wants. A panicked dog can do a lot of damage to his crate and himself if he's confined.

Most important, though, is that you treat your dog gently and kindly when he is afraid. Don't cuddle and reassure him, because that will reward his scaredy-dog behavior, but definitely don't punish him for it either. Instead, just be calm and provide him with a safe, familiar place where he can feel secure and ride out the storm.

UPCOMING TDI VISITS AND CLUB ACTIVITIES

Aug 4 (Thurs)	Grandview Danville	6:45pm
Aug 11 (Thurs)	Buffalo Valley Lewisburg Hawaiian Luau	6:45pm
Sept 1 (Thurs)	Emmanuel Center Danville	6:45pm
Sept 11 (Sun)	Club Picnic Marina	1:00pm
Sept 18 (Sun)	PA Pet Walk Marina	10:00am—4:00pm
Sept 22 (Thurs)	Vintage Knolls Danville	6:45pm
<u>Every Wednesday</u>	Riverwoods Lewisburg, PA	10:00am
<u>3rd Thursday</u>	Sunbury Community Hospital Mansion Nursing Home, Market St. Sunbury	1:00-1:30pm 1:45pm
<u>Last Thursday</u>	Geisinger Rehab—Health South	2:00-3:00pm

TDI visit information and directions, recipes, newsletters, the club calendar, and more are available online at <http://www.stdtc.org>.

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E-mail: BrandonP63@gmail.com

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Riverwoods (Lewisbury) 10am	4 Grandview (Danville) 6:45pm	5	6
7	8	9	10 Riverwoods (Lewisbury) 10am	11 Buffalo Valley (Lewisbury) 6:45pm (Hawaiian Theme)	12	13
14	15	16	17 Riverwoods (Lewisbury) 10am	18 Sunbury Hospital (Sunbury) 1pm - 1:30pm Mansion Nursing Home (Sunbury) 1:45pm	19	20 Riverfest (Sunbury)
21	22	23	24 Riverwoods (Lewisbury) 10am	25 Health South (Danville) 2pm	26	27
28	29	30	31 Riverwoods (Lewisbury) 10am			