



Susquehanna Trail Dog Training Club

November 2009

Old Friends

by Connie Cuff



In an article published in TIME magazine, Brian Hare, an Assistant Professor at Duke University, has experimented with a schnauzer poodle mix. We all know the plastic cups and biscuit game, where you hide the treat under the cup for the dog to find. Instead of letting the dog sniff the biscuit he instead simply pointed to a certain cup, the dog looked at Hare's hand and followed the pointed finger, and when released walked over to the cup and retrieved the biscuit.

Understanding a pointed finger may seem easy, but consider this: while humans and canines can do it naturally, no other known species in the animal kingdom can. Consider all the mental work that goes into figuring out what a pointed finger means: paying close attention to a person, recognizing that a gesture reflects a thought.

Dogs have evolved a rich social intelligence as they've adapted to life with us. All the things we love about our dogs—the joy they seem to take in our presence, the many ways they integrate themselves into our lives.

In Hare's research with chimpanzees he found that they can follow the gaze of other chimps, but did badly on learning the meaning of a pointed finger.

While chimps and even wolves lack an ability to understand what pointing means, dogs come by the knowledge naturally. Even puppies understand, which means it can't be a skill they need to learn. "This is something that dogs just do", says Hare.

Deeper understanding of the mind of the dog will come with more testing, and Hare is planning it on a grand scale. They're designing new experiments to compare different breeds and to search for genes that were transformed as the animal's social intelligence evolved.

The biggest challenge of the experiment is dealing with anxious owners, "when a puppy does badly, people get upset. You have to emphasize this is not the SAT's".

Perhaps that's the most telling sign of just how evolved dogs are. They have us very well trained.

"You are here to enrich the world and you impoverish yourself if you forget that errand"

- words by Woodrow Wilson engraved over the entrance to New Cabell Hall at the University of Virginia.

Till next time,

Connie

Minutes (October 6, 2009)

submitted by Ginny Pentz

The meeting of the STDTC was called to order by Pres. Connie Cuff with 35 members present.

Report of President: Please pick up a newsletter. New members were introduced:

Amanda Ritschard with Dogue de Bordeaux, Selinsgrove
Sharon Novack with German Shepherd, Brandy of Danville
Sherri Hendershot with Bichon, Odie of Mifflinburg
Deb Yagel and Carly Reder with Lab Rtr, of Sunbury

Connie thanked everyone who came to our picnic. I hope more of you can join us next year. Our Christmas Party will be held Sunday, Dec 6th, at the Susquehanna Valley Country Club and I am hoping all can join us at that time.

Connie also recieved a letter from the Selinsgrove Center thanking us for our visit. We will star visiting residents from 6:30 to 7 PM on Tuesday evenings, there will be a sign up sheet at class for at least 2 people to go to a game room for the residents to visit with the dogs.

Report of Secretary: Minutes of the September meeting where approved as written in the October newsletter.

Report of Treasurer:

(Treasurer's Reports are unavailable in the online edition of the STDTC Newsletter.)

New Business: We will be participating in the Sunbury Halloween parade on Thurs. Oct 22. We have a float with the theme, Therapy Dogs. We will need people on the float which Kelly Pastuszek will provide. We will use reading to the dogs, prison visit, nursing home and Bucknell Univ. There is a sign up sheet on table at front of class.

We will start at the Shickallamy High School. Everyone should be there by 6:15 since it does get very busy with traffic. We move down 10th St to Maket and then down 4th St to Beiters. If anyone would like to have candy to pass out the club will purchase some . If you would like, have someone keep a car at the end of 5th St so you can leave from there to go home.

We recieved a call to do a demo at the Lewisburg Sr Action Center on Monday Nov 16th at 6:30 PM. It is located on N 2nd St, beyond the Temperance House. We will do a demo and square dance. There are usually about 50 people in attendance. There will be a sign up sheet at class.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ginny Pentz, Secretary

Breed of the Month

English Cocker Spaniel

submitted by Connie Cuff

Developed in Wales and southwestern England, the Cocker was first used to flush gamebirds from the dense brush found in bottomlands and marshy areas. Eventually the dogs natural talents were used to retrieve birds.

Spaniels have been hunting companions since the 14th Century. They were classified as either land or water spaniels. Springer and cocker-type spaniels were born into the same litters. The larger dogs were used to flush or “spring” game, the smaller ones hunted woodcocks, which were the name Cocker Spaniel is derived.

Though they enjoy working with their owner to flush birds, today most cockers are primarily a house dog. They are anxious to please and like being with people. The versatile cocker competes in obedience, agility, tracking, field trials and make terrific therapy dogs. We have with us Sara Fry’s Buddy who does a great job as a therapy dog.



Although a healthy breed, they can inherit an eye condition referred to as progressive retinal atrophy. Breeders also face kidney disease, deafness, and hip dysplasia.

Potential owners should understand that Cockers should be socialized early and get used to being handled. Regular grooming is essential, especially for the ears to prevent infection. The dog’s diet should be watched because English Cockers are “chow hounds and will eat until they explode.”

As Elizabeth Harrett Browning wrote about her faithful companion English Cocker “Flush” – “Loving friend ...Up he sprang in eager haste ... this dog was satisfied, if a pale thin hand would glide, down his dew-laps sloping ... his chin on the palm left open ... Therefore to this dog will I tenderly, not scornfully, render praise and favour... because he loves me so.”



Notes and Notices



Congratulations to the Hepners. Lily & Trico will grace the pages of a Toyota “Dog Days of Summer” 2010 calendar. They were chosen out of many entries. We do not know just what month they will be featured but they also won \$100.00 for their efforts-helps to pay the feed bill.

Congratulations to our Club for taking 1st place in the Sunbury Halloween Parade in one of the categories. Many thanks go to Kelly Pastuszek for coming up with our theme Therapy Dogs and for her and Joe in getting our flat bed and transporting us in the parade. For all those who helped decorate and participated a big THANK YOU! Check out our website for pictures.

We welcome a new member Diane Clark from Trevorton with her yellow lab.

We are taking a sign up for our Christmas party for Sunday, December 6th. The cost is \$17, the same as last year, and the time is 5:00 pm. It will be held at the Susquehanna Valley Country Club. Please bring an item for the gift exchange for dogs, if you wish, an item for the silent auction and a donation for the animal shelter.

If anyone has achieved 50 or more TDI visits, please let Connie know as soon as possible, including the dogs name.

Our sympathy to Karen Sodrnick who lost her Therapy Dog, Tibsy, a Springer Spaniel.

If anyone is interested in ordering a club shirt, please notify Connie. We would like to have everyone in our shirt for prison visits and other club activities.

We have started something new at class to help everyone recognize dogs who are in training. If your dog is not comfortable around people and other dogs until it has more training, we ask that you use a red scarf to let new people identify your dog. If your dog has become acquainted and is a little more socialized but cautious, we ask that you use a yellow scarf. Once the dog is comfortable and can be approached by both people and other dogs, you can use a blue scarf. By identifying our dogs, new people coming to class can be more comfortable knowing the personality of the dogs.



Notes and Notices



If anyone wishes to see pictures of “Reading to Dogs” at Chief Shikellamy, click on: <http://www.shikbraves.org/30437112615222/blank/browse.asp?A=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&C=51103> or go to the www.shikbraves.org, at top select school, Chief Shikellamy, click on faculty, click on K. Mertz and then click on “say it with pictures – therapy dogs”.

Baxter the Therapy Dog

(<http://www.pawnation.com/2009/10/23/baxter-the-therapy-dog-dies/>)

Baxter the Therapy Dog, a San-Diego-area Chow/Lab mix who spent years providing care and comfort to humans at the end of life, died last Friday at the age of 19.

After a puppyhood of abuse, Baxter grew up to become a certified therapy dog with Therapy Dogs International, and enjoyed fame and fans worldwide for his years of volunteer work at San Diego Hospice, where he spent time cuddling, licking faces, and providing smiles for people in hospice care. He even became the subject of an award-winning book: “Moments with Baxter: Comfort and Love From the World’s Best Therapy Dog.”

Many of those who knew Baxter believe that it was his own ailments that made him such a powerful companion to hospice patients. The arthritis that plagued him during the latter half of his life left him unable to walk. His owner, Melissa Joseph, helped him carry out his duties at the hospice by pulling him around in a cart and carrying him to patients’ beds.

UPCOMING TDI VISITS AND CLUB ACTIVITIES

Nov. 1 (Sun)	Turn your clocks back	
Nov. 3 (Tues)	ELECTION DAY!	
Nov. 4 (Wed)	Riverwoods Bucknell University (TDI only)	10:00am 6:00pm
Nov. 5 (Thurs)	Penn Lutheran Village Selinsgrove	6:45pm
Nov. 10 (Tues)	Allenwood Prison Max (Memo members)	12:30 pm
Nov. 11 (Wed)	Veterans Day Riverwoods	10:00 am
Nov. 12 (Thus)	Northwest Academy Life Geisinger Cancelled Shamokin Hospital Nottingham Village (Northumberland)	1:00 pm 2:30 pm 6:45pm
Nov. 16 (Mon)	Reading, Chief Shikellamy Lewisburg Sr. Action Center Demo 116 N. Second Street, Lewisburg	9:00 am 6:15 pm
Nov. 18 (Wed)	Riverwoods	10:00 am
Nov. 19 (Thurs)	Sunbury Community Hospital Mansion Nursing Home Sunshine Corners	1:00 pm 1:45 pm 2:15 pm
Nov. 23 (Mon)	*****Note Change***** Geisinger Rehab, Health South	2:00 pm
Nov. 25 (Wed)	Riverwoods	10:00 am

UPCOMING TDI VISITS AND CLUB ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Nov. 26 (Thurs)	HAPPY THANKSGIVING	
Dec. 3 (Thurs)	Elm Croft of Lewisburg Rt. 45	6:45 pm
Dec. 6 (Sun)	Christmas Party Susquehanna Valley Country Club	5:00 pm
Dec. 7 (Mon)	Reading, Chief Shikellamy	9:00 am
Dec. 15 (Tues)	NO CLASS	

November 2009

US Holidays

Susquehanna Trail Dog Training Club

October 2009

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3			
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2009

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29	30					

December 2009

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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Daylight Savings Time Ends	2	3 Election Day 6:15 PM Beginner Training 7:00 PM Advanced Training	4 10:00 AM Riverwoods 6:00 PM Bucknell University (TDI Only)	5 6:45 PM Penn Lutheran Village	6	7
8	9 12:30 PM Allenwood Prison Max (MEMOED ONLY) 6:15 PM Beginner Training 7:00 PM Advanced Training	10 Veteran's Day 10:00 AM Riverwoods	11 1:00 PM Northwestern Academy 2:30 PM Shamokin Hospital 6:45 PM Nottingham Village	12	13	14
15 9:00 AM Reading (Chief Shikellamy - TDI ONLY) 6:15 PM Lewisburg Sr. Action Center (Demo)	16 9:00 AM Reading (Chief Shikellamy - TDI ONLY) 6:15 PM Lewisburg Sr. Action Center (Demo)	17 6:15 PM Beginner Training 7:00 PM Advanced Training	18 10:00 AM Riverwoods	19 1:00 PM Sunbury Community Hospital 1:45 PM Mansion Nursing Home 2:15 PM Sunshine Corners	20	21
22 2:00 PM Geisinger Rehab-Health South	23 2:00 PM Geisinger Rehab-Health South	24 6:15 PM Beginner Training 7:00 PM Advanced Training	25 10:00 AM Riverwoods	26 Thanksgiving	27	28
29	30 6:15 PM Beginner Training 7:00 PM Advanced Training	1 6:15 PM Beginner Training 7:00 PM Advanced Training	2 10:00 AM Riverwoods	3 6:45 PM Elm Croft of Lewisburg	4	5