

Working Trials Association

Newsletter March

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Our first DJ Show has been and some came short with little mistakes and we hope you all have learned. Do remember that by entering our shows you are helping the club. A lot of our jumps have been pinched and new ones cost money. So do not get sorry having entered and lost out, this money is needed to make and repair our jumps. Another club is planning to put up jumping and so we need these for them to borrow. We had some disqualifications and some with a few faults. The star of the show was Eisen with Geraldine who managed a clear round. Eisen can now go up to DJ 1, or can win one more DJ 2 show. Good luck and congrats.

We also have had our AGM which took a record of 10 minutes to complete and afterwards our first Committee meeting with the oldies and a new member: Welcome aboard Heather.

Our Next Championship Show will be on 5 & 6 April with two Working Trials Shows. Kirsten Tshuma is coming from Bulawayo to judge these two shows. Enter your first [or otherwise] CD and see what fun it is to be in the open and enjoy an early breakfast catered by Gladys and helpers.

I need your entries yesterday, as I have to get everything prepared before I fly to Holland on 30 March. Will be back on 22 April.

The Effects of Stress on the Performance Dog [Last section]

Fatigue should also be avoided, as this is another cause of stress. It is important to stop training while the dog is still enjoying the behavior and the rate of response is high. (Donaldson, 1998)

Social pressure is yet another influence on dog behavior. Our dogs are classically conditioned to understand what our complicated body language means. Our body language and attitude have a colossal effect on our dog's stress level. When we suddenly transform into yelling, tense, and waving monsters while under our own pressures, the effects on our dogs are painfully obvious (Duford 2001). We must fix our own behavior before we can change the dogs.

Training style is a likely cause of increased stress in dogs. In a study on training tests by Scott and Fuller, results indicate that the expression of any one ability is highly dependent on the training method used (1965). Suzanne Clothier puts it well '...any method which incorporates fear, confusion, or aggression from the handler is not conducive to learning, curiosity, enjoyment, trust and cooperation (1996)'.

In a pioneer study on genetics and the social behavior of dogs, researchers found that different breed groups responded to training pressure in different ways. A link was also found between emotional, or stressed, behavior and heredity. Furthermore, different emotional behaviors were discovered to form a prominent part of the characteristic behavior of breeds and individuals. (Scott & Fuller, 1965)

About the author...Audrey Ferrel has been training animals since she was a child. She grew up around horses and dogs and began teaching riding and horsemanship at a very early age through the United States Pony Club. Audrey attended Virginia Tech where she earned a B.S. degree in Animal Science in 1997. (Go Hokies!) While still in school, I accepted a job training explosives detection dogs through Galaxy Scientific Corporation.

This marked the beginning of my dog-training career, and ever since I have been schooled in the art of reinforcement training. She found herself, and her passion, in the world of animal behavior.

Her behavior studies include attending multiple seminars and workshops as well as furthering my education in psychology at the University of South Carolina. In 1998 she became a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT), which is an organization that promotes continuing the education of trainers in humane and positive training techniques. 1998 also marks the inception of BBDT in Beaufort, SC. While there she treated many behavior problems referred by veterinarians including many types of aggression, anxiety issues, house training problems and various other general behavioral issues. She worked with Cloma Calm in co-operation with several local vets. On most weekdays and some weekends, you could find me conducting phone and email consultations, private and group sessions, or traveling all over the Low country seeing dogs of all shapes and sizes.

Salsa is my demo dog and her current competition agility dog. She has earned her Canine Good Citizen (CGC), Therapy Dog International (TDI) as well as the agility titles Master Agility Dog (MAD), Agility Excellent (AX), Open Agility Jumpers (OAJ), and Novice Agility (NAC, NADAC). She also qualified in Steeplechase, Grand Prix, and DAM team for 2001 (USDAA). If you are in The States, watch out for her in the Animal Planet Super Star Challenge which should air sometime this year!

Having had three AGM's this last Sunday I thought this would be quite appropriate to quote!!

From: C.G. Archer

Oh give me your pity, I'm on a committee
Which means that from morning to night
We attend, and amend, and contend, and defend
Without a conclusion in sight.

We confer and concur, we defer and demur
And reiterate all of our thoughts;
We revise the agenda with frequent addenda
And consider a load of reports.

We compose and propose, we suppose and oppose
And points of procedure are fun;
But though various notions are brought up as motions
There's terribly little gets done.

We resolve and absolve, but never dissolve,
Since it's out of the question for us!
What a shattering pity to end our committee,
Where else could we make such a fuss?