

Trends in Training - The Evolution of a Pet Care Professional

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This article is a companion piece to a presentation of the same name which was given by the author on March 13th, 2008 at the American Boarding Kennel Association (ABKA) Pet Expo held at the Seelbach Hilton in Louisville, Kentucky.

I have been asked to provide you with an overview of my personal experiences as a dog owner, guardian, trainer, and behavior consultant, and to contrast these experiences with the many changes that have occurred in the dog training world over the last three decades. I will discuss how those changes have impacted my dogs, my business and my personal growth.

Many of the topics I am going to raise are subjects of some controversy and as such I do not expect that you will all agree with everything I'm going to say. While I would like to persuade you to my current line of thinking, I understand that we all have different paths that shape the human beings that we become. My ultimate goal is to simply motivate you to reflect upon your relationship with your dog, your place in and responsibility to the pet care profession, and how you might make changes that improve both.

My involvement with family pets probably began much later than it did for most of you. Likewise, companion animals did not become my profession until relatively late in my life. I spent seventeen years in various capacities in the medical device industry, the last several as a manager of Regulatory Affairs and Quality Assurance. While there seems to be no connection, a common thread of both careers has involved teaching others and assisting in helping disparate parties communicate. Whether it is serving as a conduit between engineers and clients, engineers and sales people, or animals and their people, the underlying job function has remained the same. It's all about communication.

Since October of 1995 my wife Paula and I have owned the Green Acres Kennel Shop in Bangor, Maine where we offer boarding, daycare, grooming, wholesome pet foods, quality supplies, educational seminars, behavior consultations and dog training classes. Green Acres' initial dog training program included a part-time trainer and an assistant, which were our Kennel Manager and me, offering two to four classes per week. We followed the training philosophy of "traditional trainers," believing that people needed to be dominant over their dog and that it was the dog's role to learn to simply obey. We taught people how to "properly" use choke collars to train their dogs and really did believe that the dogs would be better off if they always knew their place in the pack hierarchy. Essentially, we used the dominance theory to justify our training methods which, with all that I have learned since, I would now classify as abusive.



Today, I am proud to say that Green Acres' training staff consists of five Certified Pet Dog Trainers (CPDT), two lead instructors working towards their CPDT credentials, and four assistants. We currently offer as many as seventeen classes a week, ranging from puppy headstart to therapy dog training. Our curriculum stresses management, a positive relationship, acceptance, understanding of our dog's species specific needs, and the rewarding of desired behaviors with clicker training. We do not recommend, use, sell or allow the use of choke, prong, or shock collars in our classes or on our property.

During my thirty three years with dogs, I have traveled down many different paths to acquire knowledge and ex-

perience. I will now discuss this journey, which has not always progressed in a nice straight line, and included frequent backtracking. While the backtracking was not always beneficial to my dogs, my students or me, it was a necessary part of my evolution as a pet dog trainer.

For purposes of discussion, I have broken up my “experience” into the subsequent philosophical paths. They are:

- U Train it? – It’s a dog! (1900’s through the present)
- U Grrrrr! Pop! & Slam! –Chickens as Wolves as Dogs – Dominance and Alpha Rollovers (1970 through the present)
- U The Treat Slinging Weenies – Food Is Good! (1980’s through the present)
- U Click! - Dogs as Dolphins – Clickers, Treats & The Science of Behavior (1990’s through the present)
- U Dogs as Dogs – The Science of Behavior and Ethology, A Unified Understanding (1990’s through the present)
- U The Polarization of Dog Training - The “No Pain”/Pet Friendly Movement versus Shock!/The End Justifies the Means (1990’s through the present)
- U The Professionalization of Dog Training (late 1990’s through the present)
- U The Holistic Perspective - Nutrition and Healthcare (1999 through the present)

I will conclude by discussing some of the challenges and opportunities facing the dog training and behavior professionals of today.

In the Beginning....

I believe that our attitudes towards animals, and hence our choice in training paths, has been greatly influenced by certain historical events and texts. First I refer you to the first book of the Bible, which in Genesis 1:26 states: “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*” This phrase has for many established the premise that humans have a God given right to do with animals as they wish.

A second significant early influence was the French Philosopher and Mathematician René Descartes (1600’s). Descartes maintained that animals do not have a mind or a soul and thus they cannot reason, do not have emotions and do not feel pain. This belief set in motion the manner in which science and commerce have treated animals for centuries. It is only recently that pain management has been a routine part of veterinary post-surgical care and that agribusiness has concerned itself with the manner in which livestock is slaughtered. Less than ten years ago I had a conversation with a relatively young veterinarian who insisted that animals have no emotional life.

One of the greatest intellects of all time, Charles Darwin, took a much different stand when his book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* was published in 1872. Darwin’s book explores the similarities in the emotional life of humans and animals, especially the manner in which the emotions are shown through body language and facial expressions. A best seller when first published, Darwin’s work was then largely ignored for 100 years, possibly because it stated that emotions and their expressions were not unique to humans, rather they were part of the evolutionary process. For human beings, whom had considered themselves to be intellectually, emotionally and morally superior, Darwin’s findings were very frightening.

In 1922 Thorleif Schjelderup-Ebbe, a Norwegian zoologist who had a boyhood love of chickens, wrote a paper describing the concept of “pecking order.” This paper created the construct of dominance hierarchies, which were soon used to describe the behavior of several other animal species including wolves and dogs.

Concerned about animal welfare, the UK government formed the Brambell Commission in 1965 to investigate the welfare of farm animals. This resulted in the adoption of “The Five Freedoms,” a minimal standard of animal welfare. According to the Five Freedoms animals must be: 1) free from hunger, thirst and malnutrition, 2) free from discomfort, 3) free from pain, injury and disease, 4) free to express normal behaviors, and 5) free from fear and

distress.

While I may not have been aware of it at the time, all of the above events and individuals were woven into the fabric of my basic upbringing and have influenced the trainer I have become. Today, as a more aware human being, I can look back at these teachings and determine for myself their validity and the role that they will take in shaping my future.

Train it? – It's a dog! (1900's through the present)

Don's story: My First Dog, Mistakes, and Lessons

I started wanting a dog when I was about 5 years old. My first dog was a buff colored Cocker Spaniel named either



Buffy or Sandy; I honestly don't remember what the dog was named, probably because within about three days my parents decided it was not the right time for us to have a dog. We found Buffy/Sandy a wonderful new home with one of dad's co-workers, and it was not until twelve years later when my parents finally succumbed to my requests for a dog of my own. At that time I was a junior in high school; in retrospect, I now know what an unwise decision my parents made.

My first dog was a cute puff of black fur described as a Poodle/Keeshond and a "we never caught the father" mix. I named her Trivia, and while she was the center of my life for a bit, her name was sadly prophetic.

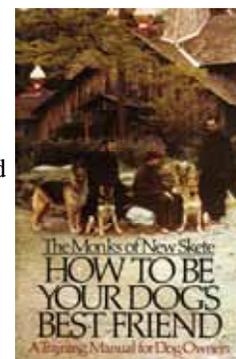
Triv-i-a [trivvee a] – unimportant things, a collection of insignificant or obscure items, details, or information

Trivia soon became less relevant to my life than school, friends, girls, and getting into college. Her life was not much different than that of many dogs whose owner's followed this path. Trivia had no training, spent far too much time in the basement or an outdoor pen, and was fed a relatively poor dog food. Like many mothers, mine took on the responsibility of taking care of a dog that she never really wanted, just as she and my father retired. Trivia lived with my parents and me, then my wife and me, and finally back with my parents for the 14+ years of her life. Fortunately we had integrated Trivia into the house as she aged into her senior years, but her life could have been so much better if I had more respect for her as a sentient being when she was younger.

Later in my life, that trivial dog became very significant because of the retrospective lessons she taught me; unfortunately it was too late for Trivia to benefit from what I belatedly learned. It saddens me, but the reality is that far too many dogs are still living this lifestyle today, particularly as we seem to be moving into a disposable world and with it the culture of the disposable dog.

Grrrrr! Pop! & Slam! – Chickens as Wolves as Dogs - Dominance and Alpha Rollovers (1970 thru the present)

The dominance hierarchy, as previously mentioned, was set into motion in 1922 by Thorleif Schjelderup-Ebbe, but really came into pet dog training when it was popularized by the Monks of New Skete. (It had always been used extensively with military and police dogs). This book takes the premise that if we want the best relationship with our dog then we should treat them like an adult wolf would treat a wolf puppy, at least according to the Monk's understanding of that scenario. Some key recommendations on disciplining a dog contained in *How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend* are:



- U *PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE UNDER THE CHIN* – How hard do you hit the dog? A good general rule is that if you did not get a response, a yelp or other sign, after the first hit, it wasn't hard enough.
- U *THE SHAKEDOWN* – Grasp the scruff of the dog's neck with both hands and lift it right off its front feet into the air. Look directly into the dog's face, and shake the dog back and forth in quick, firm motions, gradually lowering the dog.
- U *THE ALPHA-WOLF ROLL-OVER* – Use the Alpha-wolf roll-over especially in cases of aggression, chronic chasing of people or objects, fighting with other dogs, or predation.

Don's story:

How Much is that Dog in the Window?

Gus, Training, and the Alpha Roll-Over



After Trivia crossed the rainbow bridge, Paula and I were dog-less for 18 months. We had just settled into new jobs, bought a new house and decided it was time to add a dog to the family. This time we were determined to do everything right.

Paula was working for a veterinarian and as such had exposure to a wide variety of dog breeds. She spent much time talking to her boss about what breeds might be best for our situation. We started reading about different breeds, talking to people and finally decided that a Cairn Terrier would be at the top of our list. We talked to Cairn breeders and visited their kennels. We also made forays into pet stores, even though we knew we should get a dog from a

reputable breeder. Then one day we walked into a pet store and there was a little wheaten Cairn Terrier sitting in the window.

The clerk asked if we would like to play with the puppy and we could not resist. We were sequestered in a small puppy introduction room in the store and were soon on the floor playing with a terrier loaded with attitude. In a few minutes I had managed to name this little pup "Gus" because it just seemed to sum up his personality.

Somehow we managed to leave that day without buying Gus. We really wanted to get a Cairn from a breeder but could not find any that had a puppy immediately available. We were both impatient and the following week when we were back at the mall, we popped in the pet store for a quick look. Gus was still there. You know what happened. (Never name a dog you do not intend to take home.)

Paula and I were still determined to do everything else right so we not only left the store with Gus, but also with a crate, toys, a premium pet food, and copies of the two books that most dog people were raving about: *How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend* by the Monks of New Skete and *Mother Knows Best* by Carol Lea Benjamin.

Over the next few days we played with Gus, worked on housebreaking and started reading our books. The books told us that we could get Gus's respect and willing obedience by treating him just like two adult wolves would treat their pups.

Some of the clients at the clinic where Paula worked had recommended that we take Gus to a puppy class so we promptly enrolled in a class offered by the local AKC affiliated club. We proudly walked in with our new puppy and listened attentively as the "experts" reaffirmed much of what we had been reading in our new books.

It was the very first night of class and right away puppies were expected to start to sit on command. When Gus would not sit, the instructor told me I had to show him who was boss and make him sit, and if he still wouldn't do it, then I should alpha roll him. Well Gus wouldn't sit (I know now he had no clue what I was even asking for) and so I was told to "roll him!" I soon had a very frightened (unknown to or disregarded by everyone) Gus, restrained flat on his back, eyes rolling, body writhing, mouth growling and snapping at everything. The instructor was really adamant now: "We can't have that! Grab his muzzle and clamp it shut!" My instincts said "Whoa! That's not

safe!” but these people were the “experts” so I grabbed Gus’ muzzle in my hand. Instantly, I felt his canines puncture my palm as my blood started dripping on the floor. Gus broke free and moved as far away from me as he could. There is something to be said for listening to your gut instincts. Gus listened to his. I failed to listen to mine. Unbeknownst to me at the time, everything that I had read and been taught about the Alpha Wolf Roll-Over was based upon flawed knowledge. My puppy was fearing for his life.

I do not really remember much of what happened next other than being offered ice for my hand as Paula worked with Gus for the remainder of the class. In fact, Gus and I were rather wary of each other for quite some time and I let Paula take him to the rest of his classes for the next couple of years. Paula and Gus continued on into a basic obedience class where Gus was first introduced to a choke collar, heeling, stay and other traditional competitive obedience behaviors.

Over time and lots of games of tennis ball, Gus and I learned to trust one another again and started having fun. Paula and I tried to continue to follow the advice from the experts in the books and class, but occasionally allowed our common sense to overrule what we were being told.

For example, Gus loved stealing socks. After each successful theft, he would parade in front of us trying to initiate a game of chase. We always complied whereupon he would hide under the bed and growl and snarl to protect the socks. Understandably, we lost quite a few socks playing Gus’ game. None of the trainers we talked to ever suggested we just manage the situation and put the socks out of Gus’ reach, but they all suggested that Gus’ sock-stealing was an example of his attempt to demonstrate dominance. One day, without really knowing what we were doing we decided to just sacrifice the socks and ignore Gus’ behavior. Dismayed, Gus tried very hard to get us to engage but eventually spit out the sock and went to play with a toy. We did not realize it at the time, but we had just used one of the standard concepts of learning theory, ignore undesirable behavior and it will extinguish itself. Within a week our “sock problem” was solved, but we still did not understand the significance of what we had just learned.



Dominance: A Construct in Controversy

The dominance based theory of dog training is the oldest and longest methodology and is still the preferred path for many. Since the publication of *How to Be Your Dog’s Best Friend*, some key events are:

1996 - *The Culture Clash* by Jean Donaldson is published and the dominance construct and use of “strangle collars,” as Donaldson calls them, is seriously questioned.

2000 - L. David Mech publishes “*Alpha Status, Dominance, and Division of Labor in Wolf Packs*” This paper questions the significance of the dominance or pack hierarchy in wild wolves.

2001 - Ray and Lorna Coppinger publish *Dogs – A Startling New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior and Evolution* which suggests that feral dogs have no pack hierarchy and that dogs have evolved to be different than wolves. From an evolutionary biology perspective, the dog has also been much more successful than the wolf.

2002 – Our training program at Green Acres had rejected the dominance training model but we were still hearing from clients who had breeders or veterinarians that were telling them their dog was dominant and that they should alpha-roll the dog. I wrote an article entitled “*Dominance – Reality or Myth*” for the Green Acres newsletter, in which I said, - “*Undesirable behaviors in dogs that are attributed to “dominance” are not due to a pack driven instinct of the dog, but rather are due to our failure to take responsibility for the dog’s needs, and to properly, humanely train ourselves and our dog.*”

2004 – *The Dog Whisperer* with Cesar Millan premieres on the National Geographic Channel. This reality TV show, complete with the dramatic conflicts typical of the genre, brings “Mastering Leadership” (dominance) and projecting “calm assertive energy” to the masses.

2006 – Cesar Millan, “The Dog Whisper”, is criticized by many in the dog behavior and animal welfare community:

Dr. Dodman [veterinary behaviorist and director of the Animal Behavior Clinic at Tufts University] said: "My college thinks it [The Dog Whisperer – Cesar Millan] is a travesty. We've written to National Geographic Channel and told them they have put dog training back 20 years." - The New York Times - C'mon, Pooch, Get With the Program, By Anna Bahney February 23, 2006,

"Practices such as physically confronting aggressive dogs and using of choke collars for fearful dogs are outrageous by even the most diluted dog training standards. A profession that has been making steady gains in its professionalism, technical sophistication and humane standards has been greatly set back. I have long been deeply troubled by the popularity of Mr. Millan as so many will emulate him. To co-opt a word like 'whispering' for arcane, violent and technically unsound practice is unconscionable." —Jean Donaldson, Director, SPCA Academy for Dog Trainers, San Francisco.

2007 – The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) publishes a position statement on punishment - *The AVSAB's position is that punishment (e.g. choke chains, pinch collars, and electronic collars) should not be used as a first-line or early-use treatment for behavior problems. This is due to the potential adverse effects which include but are not limited to: inhibition of learning, increased fear-related and aggressive behaviors, and injury to animals and people interacting with animals.*

2008 – The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) circulates a draft position statement on the use of dominance theory in behavior modification -*The AVSAB's position is that dominance theory is generally not an appropriate theory for understanding aggression and misbehavior in pets or for guiding behavior modification programs involving pets. For decades, traditional animal training has relied on dominance theory, and has assumed that animals misbehave primarily because they are striving for higher rank, and that consequently force must be used to modify these undesirable behaviors. In the last several decades, our understanding of dominance theory and of behavior of domesticated animals and their wild counterparts has grown considerably leading to updated views.*

It is evident that the dominance construct used as the foundation for dog training for many years has become quite controversial. While it has been rejected by most behavioral and ethological professionals, it is still widely promulgated by many breeders, dog trainers, veterinarians and even some in academia. Hence, it is all too readily accepted by the general public. It is my hope that the major training and behavior organizations such as the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT), the Canadian Association of Professional Pet Dog Trainers (CAPPDT), the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC), the Animal Behavior Society (ABS) and the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (ACVB) endorse the AVSAB position statement so that together we can put this harmful path behind us once and for all and move into a kinder, more compassionate future.

The Treat Slinging Weenies Food Is Good! (1980's through the present)

Don's story: Shed, Sandy, Acceptance and Learning to Have Fun

Life with Gus continued to have its ups and downs and about six months after he joined our family it was suggested we adopt an older, experienced dog to “help us” keep him entertained. After a few visits to the



humane society, we came home with a five year old, female Border Collie mix named Shed. She had been surrendered because her original owner had passed away and after a year the sister who had taken her in found Shed and her new infant to be more than she could handle. (You are undoubtedly wondering about her name.....Shed was an abbreviation for “S!@! Head,” the name giver her by her original owner, which was shortened when her second owner had a child.)

Shed immediately fit in with the family and we enjoyed watching her and Gus as they would romp and play around the sofa in the middle of our living room. Even though Shed came to us already trained, knowing how to sit, down and rollover on command, after we had her for two years we decided it would be good for the four of us to do some training classes as a family.

This time we had more options available to us and enrolled in classes with noted trainer and behaviorist Dr. Patricia McConnell. Whereas our previous classes with Gus had been all about domination, choke collars and competitive obedience, Trish’s classes were all about rewarding behavior with tasty food treats and focusing on good manners for a family dog. Although not explicitly covered in class, she gave every student a copy of Karen Pryor’s *Don’t Shoot the Dog*. Paula read it and I unfortunately blew it off as a bunch of “self-help, psycho-babble and a waste of time.” Once again, a not-so brilliant move by me.

This time I handled Gus in class and Paula worked with Shed. In spite of my refusal to read the book, both dogs learned a great deal, as did Paula and I. Even more importantly we all had fun and actually looked forward to class. We completed several classes at Dr. McConnell’s training facility and would probably have continued to do so, but it was time for a major career and life change.

About the same time that we were having fun with the dogs in classes at Dog’s Best Friend Training, Paula and I started talking about having our own business. The fun in those classes had a major influence on our choice for a business. We considered a number of possibilities, but eventually zeroed in on starting a boarding kennel. We talked with other pet professionals in our community and with their encouragement went about searching for land and exploring zoning issues. After more than a year of frustration we gave up and decided to look at purchasing an existing facility. In the fall of 1995 we purchased the Green Acres Kennel Shop in Bangor, Maine, 1,400 miles away from McFarland, Wisconsin. We put our house on the market, packed up our belongings, along with the household contents of three elderly parents, and moved five people and three dogs to Maine.

We had about two days to unpack before we were thrust into the middle of running a well established business offering boarding, daycare, grooming, retail and a few dog training classes. We were very fortunate to have an experienced Kennel Manager (Kate) and Groomer (Shannan) stay with us and teach us the business. They and others on our staff have been instrumental in our success and growth.

Within ten weeks of arriving at Green Acres we had acquired another dog. Sandy was a Malamute-wolf hybrid that been a frequent boarder at Green Acres. She was big, powerful and was missing a chunk of her tongue from a fight with her sister when she lived in Alaska. My first experience with Sandy was over the Thanksgiving holiday when Kate asked Paula and me to do the scheduled playtimes. To be honest, I was very intimidated by Sandy; however, I put her on a leash, took her down to our play yard and we commenced to play. I soon learned there is no more joyous game than making snow angels with a Malamute.

Sandy and I had a blast – bonding almost instantaneously. I could not wait to take her out for play on the following days. When her guardian picked her up she asked if Sandy enjoyed her stay, I told her about the good times we had together. Beth was pleased and also surprised because it turns out Sandy was usually very hesitant towards new people, especially men.

It was only a few weeks later when Beth called to tell us that her parents were ill and that she was going to need to move south to be with them. She didn’t think Sandy would do well in the hotter climate and was concerned about having adequate time for her. Beth was looking to re-home



Sandy and said she thought Sandy would really enjoy living with me. So on December 20th, 1995, my birthday, Sandy moved in with us. In my mind, a perfect birthday gift.

In the midst of getting up to speed at Green Acres we immediately joined the American Boarding Kennel Association (ABKA) and the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT), recognizing the importance of continuing education and development in our new profession. At the time I read the APDT email list everyday learning all that I could.

I had intended to go away to a dog training school after we got settled in at Green Acres and looked for people on the APDT list for advice. They recommended that instead of going to a specific school that I read lots of books, attend as many seminars as I could afford and apprentice with someone who taught classes. Such began my e-mail list affiliation with a group of colleagues and friends that would become known, disparagingly by some, proudly by us, as the “Treat Slinging Wienies.” As for the books, for the next few months I read everything I could by Ian Dunbar.

In January, Green Acres launched a new series of dog training classes and this time I assisted our Kennel Manager Kate. Kate had learned to train the traditional way, with choke collars and without food. However, she also emphasized the need for understanding dogs as dogs and making sure classes were fun for both the dogs and people. Green Acres had never done classes in the winter previously because of indoor space constraints, but I wanted to get a training program launched so every Saturday afternoon we would move all of the racks in the store to make an area large enough to teach a class. Having a new Malamute, I promptly enrolled her in one of the classes.



Sandy and I did well in class and remained fast friends, but it was soon evident that she was not going to be able to stay with us. Things were fine for the first several weeks but then Sandy started attacking Shed, to the point where we became convinced she would kill her. You would have thought that after being bitten by a twelve week old, eight pound puppy when he was alpha rolled that I would have had the common sense not to do it with a 90 pound, adult Malamute... but alas, that was not to be. I still remember the last time Sandy attacked Shed. I responded by picking her up and throwing her on her back and pinning her. I was very lucky that Sandy liked me as much as she did, and that she had enough confidence not to fear me, because otherwise I probably wouldn't be here talking to you today.

As things worked out, Sandy's original guardian eventually moved back to Maine and was able to take her back. Sandy continued to board with us and we continued to have opportunities to play and make snow angels until she passed away at the age of fourteen. Sandy taught me how quickly we can bond with dogs and also the importance of having to accept that not every dog is always going to get along with every other dog no matter how badly we want that to happen. I accepted the fact that my first responsibility was to Shed, and thus Sandy could not remain with us.

Kate and I developed a well respected training program and successfully taught several classes together, having some students go on to pass the CGC and TDI tests. Our training work with Gus and Shed paid off early in 1996, as they were also both certified by Therapy Dogs International. In the interest of improving our skills and classes Kate and I traveled to Leslie Nielson's facility in Manchester, CT in the summer of 1996 to attend the first of Dr. Ian Dunbar's famous, "farewell tour" seminars. We learned a lot about the benefits of food rewards, the fun of Ian's K9 games, and came back to Green Acres committed to incorporating some of these ideas into the Green Acres program. We began to occasionally use low value treats (biscuits, etc.) as rewards, however we were still not doing any luring with food, because we were falling into that mindset of wondering how we would get the dogs away from the food. We did begin to move away from choke collars in our classes around this time, but continued to sell them in our retail shop. Kate and I both found the Dunbar seminar so valuable that we committed to attending at least one seminar every year. In the fall of 1996, I learned of the Volhard's Top Dog Training Camp for Instructors and signed up for the 1997 summer session.

Although Gus had passed his Canine Good Citizen test and had been certified as a therapy dog by Therapy Dogs International, he and I continued to train, enrolling in almost every advanced level class we offered at Green Acres. As my demo dog for classes, I expected him and I to be nothing less than perfect. It was late summer and we had just concluded a class by practicing distance recalls across our training field. Our performance was less than stellar. Gus came, but he didn't run, he didn't even walk, it was more of a meander which today I could identify as a calming signal. My frustration was undoubtedly evident which slowed him down even more. At the end of class Kate took me aside and suggested that Gus and I drop out of class and just spend some time having fun. Unlike me, she had noticed that we were both trying so hard neither of us was having fun any more. That was Gus' last formal class and from that point on we just had fun. It took me a few years to realize that having a happy dog is more important than perfection.

The "Treat Slinging Weenie" path of dog training was first blazed by Dr. Ian Dunbar in 1986 when he began his series of behavior and training lectures at dog clubs throughout the US. His promotion of the importance of puppy classes and the effectiveness of lure reward training has improved the lives of many dogs and their people. Many dog guardians and trainers still follow this gentle and efficient path. While I saw and enjoyed ample success with lure reward training in Trish McConnell's classes and at the Ian Dunbar seminar I attended, it never really made its way into the Green Acres curriculum, probably because I would discover clicker training just a few months later.

Dogs as Dolphins - Clickers, Treats & The Science of Behavior (1990's through the present)

Don's story: Tikken and Learning to Click



A Golden Retriever puppy, Tikken, joined our family in March of 1997, the same month I attended my first clicker training seminar. I had read a little about clicker training and was intrigued by what it might offer. I was very impressed by what I saw and came home with several books and videos to read and view when I had the time. Tikken's puppy training commenced with a mixture of benign traditional methods and food rewards, but initially no clicker. We were in the unique position of being able to take our puppy to work with us everyday, so she was extremely well socialized.

By early summer I had started playing with the clicker with Tikken and the other dogs. I taught Gus to spin and used it for the more rudimentary behaviors like sit and down with Tikken. I was far from an expert, and made my share of mistakes. For example, I unknowingly attached the verbal cue to her "down" behavior far too soon. It would be several weeks before I discovered that it would be easier just to teach her a new "drop" behavior, not attaching the cue until it was fast like I wanted it.

By now I was having mixed feelings about the Top Dog camp I had signed up for the previous year, but Tikken and I got in the car and drove to upstate New York determined to make the most of it. I took my clicker and treats along so we could continue to work, but when I mentioned them to the instructors I received a lot of headshaking and looks which suggested they thought I should have left them at home. It was clear that I was not to use them in the "formal" classes during the day.

One of the pivotal moments which put me on the path to towards reward based training was a lecture the first day of camp on how to fit a prong or choke collar, which was jokingly referred to as a "religious collar." At that point in my career I would have been comfortable using a choke on large dog, but when they demonstrated the fitting on a Yorkie and Min Pin I was really put off. I went through the motions during the rest of camp. Tikken and I managed to have fun and at night I'd pull out my clicker and treats and give some of the other students a different perspective on how to train a dog. By the end of camp I was clearly leaning more towards reward based and clicker training, but I was still conflicted. Somehow the instructors had convinced me to purchase a new nylon choke collar for Tikken because they claimed it be the only way I would ever teach her to heel.



In September of 1997 I traveled to Gail Fisher's All Dogs Gym in Manchester, NH and attended a two day clicker training seminar with Karen Pryor, Susan Garret, Carolyn Clark, Diana Hilliard, and Corally Burmaster. That was the seminar where Tikken and I first met Carolyn and learned that a dog could be taught to heel without a choke collar, but simply with a clicker and treats.

At the end of that seminar I was convinced. All of Tikken's training would be with the clicker and positive reinforcement. I finally read *Don't Shoot the Dog* and mentally kicked myself for not reading it when Trish McConnell first gave us the book in 1994. I even decided that Green Acres would offer a pilot clicker class starting in 1998, just to see if we could do it.

Having worked in marketing for years, I recognized the importance of promotion and promptly sent off a press release on the seminar I had just attended. Within days, the Bangor Daily News called to schedule an interview. They ran a lengthy article, along with a color photograph of Gus, expounding about this marvelous new training method now available at Green Acres. Now I was in the position of having to be able to deliver a pilot class immediately.

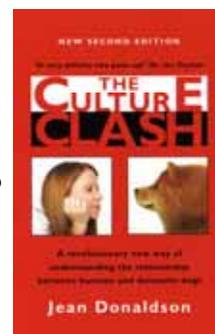
At the end of our first two clicker classes I had reached a point where I only wanted to teach with the clicker. I had seen it work with my dogs and the students in our pilot classes and wanted to make a clean break with punishment and corrections. I didn't know if clicker training would be accepted in Bangor, Maine, but I felt that I would rather teach a few classes with a method I believed in rather than teaching several classes with methods that I now felt to be unnecessary and counter-productive. I knew what Gail Fisher had done and thought if one of the developers of the Volhard method could make a clean break with traditional methods in favor of clicker training, then so could Green Acres.

In preparing this article/presentation I asked Gail Fisher when she knew that clicker training was going to be the right decision for her and her facility. Gail indicated that she had pretty much decided after hosting her first clicker seminar in 1996. Within a year she had required her staff to use clicker with their own dogs, telling them; "If you don't believe clicker training is the best method, you can't teach it. And if you believe it's the best, then it's best for your dog, too. Otherwise it's hypocritical."

Next I wanted to try and pull Kate on board the clicker band wagon. While she had learned to train the traditional way, she has always had an open mind. I showed Kate some of what I had learned but she had to try it for herself, so off she went with a clicker, some treats and her Plott hound mix, Jade. In a few days Kate had trained Jade to climb a ladder using the clicker (that and its after effects is a story in itself) and was convinced. Kate and Jade wrote an article for our December 1997 newsletter (Clicker Training – A Dog's Point of View) and in January of 1998 our training program became 100% clicker based.

Another pivotal moment in my development as a trainer came in January of 1998 when I finally read Jean Donaldson's *The Culture Clash*. The book sat on my shelf for months as the Treat Slinging Weenies kept telling me to read it, but I just could not find the time. In the end, *The Culture Clash* was the first book that for me really tied together the idea of understanding our dogs as dogs, that dominance was unnecessary, and the power of operant conditioning.

From this point on my involvement in training really began to accelerate. I attended more seminars, read more books and was now leading classes, as Kate was taking a break in order to go back to school and to recharge. I was recruiting and training new assistants and Green Acres was teaching more classes than we ever had before. We were teaching offsite at a community center and had started construction of our training room. In other words, clicker training in Bangor, Maine took off like a rocket!



I traveled to Pennsylvania for my first APDT conference in the fall 1998 and finally met in-person the Treat Slingshot Weenies (Joel Walton, Pat Miller, Laura Van Dyne, and others) that had befriended me on the APDT email list. There was a hotly contested APDT Board election that year and there was a concerted effort to influence the vote, complete with official “Treat Slingshot Weenie” t-shirts and buttons stating “Train with Your Brain, Not Pain” and “No Shock, Sherlock.” This was clearly one of the key moments which brought the growing polarization of the training community out in the open for the first time. The “weenies” and the “shock jocks” were both clearly trying to gain a majority on the APDT Board in an attempt to determine the official APDT position on the promotion of shock collars within the APDT.

The APDT conference was another pivotal event in my educational development. That was where I first heard about the BARF diet and the benefits of raw food from BARF pioneer, Dr. Ian Billinghurst. However, the highlight for me was participating in a chicken training demonstration presented by Bob and Marian Bailey. To get to work with these two pioneers in animal training, even though it was for less than an hour, so impressed me that I immediately enrolled in their week long operant conditioning seminar (chicken camp) for the summer of 1999.

In addition to the seminars at the Valley Forge conference, there were lots of meetings. Several people were involved with an effort put together by the American Humane Association and The Delta Society to develop humane guidelines for dog training. Valley Forge was also where Ian Dunbar recruited several trainers, I being one of them, to serve on the APDT Education committee. There was a great deal of talk at the conference about the need for certification and self-regulation of dog trainers, and the APDT Education Committee was charged with developing such a certification program.

Other events that have occurred on the “Dogs as Dolphins” path of dog training are:

1943 – Keller and Marian Breland clicker train a dog.

1984 - *Don't Shoot the Dog*, by Karen Pryor is published. As B.F. Skinner wrote, “*Karen Pryor has been a pioneer... anyone who wants to be more effective in rearing children, teaching, or managing his or her own behavior will find her book very useful*”. Published only six years after *How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend*, I often wonder how the evolution of dog training might have been different if this book had taken off with dog people like the Monk's book.

1992 – Karen Pryor and Gary Wilkes offer their first joint clicker training seminar

1995 – Bob and Marian Bailey begin offering their first chicken trainer seminars for dog trainers.

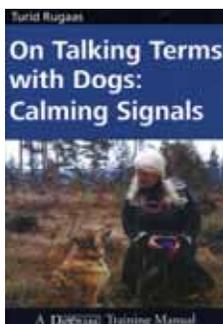
1996 – Gail Fisher's All Dogs Gym hosts its first clicker training seminar and Fisher decides to transition their entire training program to the clicker.

Bob Bailey on the Breland's and Dog Training

The Breland's first "clicker" trained dog was in 1943, and it was taught simple obedience. Keller Breland trained 6 field dogs (setters, pointers, and retrievers) from 1944 through 1946, using a whistle and a clicker. The dogs performed very well, both for hunting and for trials. The contemporary trainers would have none of it, calling it "bribing" the dog to work. In 1946 the Breland's abandoned pet and field dog training for advertising and made a lot more money. The Breland's went back to dog training for the public in 1952 to 1954 and developed a training "kit." They also made a film, called "Lucky Learns a Trick," featuring a chicken. However, it was the Breland's' plan to combine the dog training kit, including a manual, and a new film combining "Lucky" with another film with a dog named "Lucky." The Breland's tried to sell the film and the kit to the dog food companies, but the training advisory panel said that the training was "hokum" and the film done by trick photography. The dog food companies turned down the idea. In 1959 to 1962 the Breland's tried again but with much the same result. This time the kit had the name "Mastermind" and included a "clicker" mounted on a tool for feeding the soft dog food of the day. It was about then that the Breland's had so much business in the advertising and show business fields (including dolphins, whales, parrots, etc.) that they finally said "goodbye" to public dog training. I continued ABE's policy of not working with pet dog training until Marian and I retired and closed the company in 1990. Our dog training was always for show business, advertising, government, and the military.

Dogs as Dogs - The Science of Behavior and Ethology United (1999 through the present)

Don's Story: Many Seminars, Adopting Dulcie, Shaping a Sit



The next three years were filled with seminars. In March 1999 Paula and I traveled to Ottawa to attend our first Turid Rugaas seminar hosted by Carolyn Clark. Since then I have been recommending Turid's seminars, books and DVDs to anyone and everyone who works with dogs. What she has taught all of us about canine body language has made us better trainers. Turid's thoughts on how everyday stressor's impact dogs caused us to reexamine our daycare program and to provide the dogs with ample downtime. I know that Gail Fisher also changed her daycare program after attending the same seminar.

Anyone who works with dogs can learn a great deal from Rugaas and can make the dogs they are working with more comfortable! – Don Hanson, Menagerie Magazine, May 1999

In the heat of July, I was off to Hot Springs, Arkansas to attend my first of two chicken camps with operant conditioning pioneers Marian and Bob Bailey. Generally thought of as behaviorists first, the Baileys also emphasized the need to truly understand the species you are trying to train from an ethological point of view before you ever pickup a clicker. Marian and her first husband Keller Breland noted the importance of this in their article *The Misbehavior of Organisms*, published in November 1961.

I followed up chicken camp with an article of my own, *How I Trained A Chicken*, which appeared in the Nov/Dec 1999 issue of the APDT Newsletter. The key things I learned from Bob and Marian were:

- U I am bigger, stronger and occasionally smarter than the chicken,
- U Training is a mechanical skill – something we do not emphasize enough with our students,
- U Training is simple but not easy, and a well thought-out training plan ALWAYS makes it easier,
- U Timing, criteria and rate of reinforcement are critical - too often we and our students have bad timing, have vague or no criteria and are stingy with the reinforcements, and
- U Training is both a science and business – planning and record keeping prove the science and help keep the business profitable.

I came back from chicken camp thinking a great deal about criteria, lumping and splitting and realized that most of our students were lumping the whole process of training their dog into “If I attend a dog training class, my dog will have good manners”. They thought dog training was simply “Say sit, and the dog will sit.” In order to help our students better understand the process of training I decided that Green Acres program should have a formal definition for dog training program and came up with:

Dog training is a process where you motivate your dog, to do what you want, at your request.

I introduced our new definition at our next orientation session when out the mouth of a child came “Shouldn't it be fun too?” Since then our definition of dog training has been:

*Dog training is a process where you motivate your dog, to do what you want, at your request, **while having fun.***

I really believe that helping our students understand that training is a process in which they play a huge part, that dogs require motivation, that unlike Lassie, dogs do not do things “just to please us,” and that the training process should be fun for them and the dog, has made them better trainers and better guardians. It has helped them have more reasonable expectations and thus decreased their frustration while increasing their commitment.



In October of 1999 I was at the Bangor Humane Society for a board meeting when I saw one of the staff walking what appeared to be Cairn Terrier. After talking to Paula, she and I and the rest of the dogs visited with that Cairn whom we soon named Dulcie. She was approximately 5 years old and had been picked up as a stray before she joined our family.

I was determined that Dulcie would be my first all clicker trained dog. It was evident she had no previous formal training so I thought I'd just enroll in one of our classes being taught by my staff and we'd be set. I quickly learned that Dulcie came with some baggage. When I tried to lure her into a sit, like we did with almost all of the dogs in our classes, she backed away quite frightened. Dulcie was hand shy, especially around the head. No big deal, I thought, I'll just sit around and wait for her to sit on her own, click, treat and we'll be off and sitting. Dulcie stood, she walked, she ran, she lay down, she rolled on her back, but she never, ever sat when I was watching her.

Dulcie became my first data driven shaping project. I decided to train her to sit just like Bob and Marian had trained countless animals to do innumerable things. Armed with data tables, graphs, event counters, and a stop watch I shaped Dulcie to sit. We both learned a great deal in the process.

Most of our clients, and I would challenge most dog trainers; do the bulk of training by the "seat of the pants" because it works. However, I am convinced that Dulcie's training would have never progressed if I hadn't taken a more formal approach in teaching her to sit. She and I both would have become too frustrated, and since she really had no problem behaviors, I would have just given up. After being shaped to sit everything else came easy for Dulcie.

In May of 2000 Turid Rugaas was again presenting in Ottawa and this time I brought along several of my training staff so that they too could benefit from Turid's knowledge and inspirational presentation. Her message is so important that I wanted my staff to see and hear her for themselves. It is impossible to emphasize the degree to which Turid has impacted my ability and that of my staff in understanding canine body language. As humans, it is easy to forget that when we relate to our dogs we need to do so in a manner that they can understand and be comfortable with; that they are in fact dogs and as such have different communication skills than humans.

I followed up my original chicken camp experience in July of 2000 when I again traveled to Hot Springs to attend an Intermediate Operant Conditioning workshop with Marian Breland Bailey and Bob Bailey. Once again I was developing my dog training skills by training chickens. The basic lessons were similar; the tasks we taught the chickens were now more difficult for us – not the chickens.

The following summer it was time for more ethology in the mix, so I attended a six day Canine and Wolf Behavior workshop offered at Wolf Park, Indiana. Our instructors were Dr. Erich Klinghammer, Terry Ryan, Ray Coppinger, Ken McCort, Pat Goodman, and a cast of wolves including Marian, Tristan, Chetan, Orca and others.

The timing for this seminar could not have been better, as I had just started reading Dr. Coppinger's book, *Dogs – A Starling New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior and Evolution*. Much of the seminar was spent reviewing and discussing his data which suggested that while there are many similarities between dogs and wolves there are far more differences. He also challenged us to think about how we use and misuse dogs. Dr. Coppinger's book gave us more data we could use to help dispel the ever lingering "dominance/alpha roll" attitude that we were still seeing far too often.

All of the above seminars and my experience with Dulcie have had a tremendous influence on my evolution as a trainer. They helped me see that it is not all about operant conditioning, nor is it all about the dog as a wolf or a feral canine. It's only when we understand and use training and ethology together, combined with an understanding of the individual animal's personality, that we get the best results and the best relationship with our dog.

The Polarization of the Dog Training - No Pain vs. The End Justifies the Means (1980's through the present)

We all know the old joke, “If you put three trainers in a room with a dog the only thing two of them will agree on is what the one with the dog is doing wrong.” Sad, but true.

No one knows precisely when dog trainers started to divide into distinct camps, but I suspect it happened the first time someone appeared in front of a group of dog people and said that food works as well as, or even better than, a choke collar. From that moment on, many people started to follow one path or the other. Some in the audience were inspired and others were challenged and began to “dig in.”

With the advent of new technologies on each side (clickers and shock collars) the rift grew even wider, as evidenced by the contentious election for the APDT Board of Directors in 1998. At issue was the appropriateness of demonstrating the use of shock collars at the APDT conference and trade show. Many APDT members, myself included, felt that shock collars contradicted the APDT's avowed position that training should be “dog friendly.” There were several members who disagreed strongly, and in 1999 went on to found a competing organization, the International Association of Canine Professionals (IACP).



Even the task force on humane training guidelines, co-sponsored by the American Humane Association and the Delta Society, was a casualty of the divide. Each organization published its own version of the guidelines. The AHA version recommended against the use of choke and shock collars, while the Delta Society document took a more accepting stance on these tools.

One of my goals when I first ran for the APDT Board of Directors (BOD) in 2001 was to push for APDT to take a clearer stand on what constituted “dog-friendly.” It took two years, but finally in January of 2003 the APDT BOD approved a position statement defining the term “dog-friendly” as follows: *Dog-friendly training is training that utilizes primarily positive reinforcement; secondarily negative punishment, and only occasionally, rarely, and/or as a last resort includes positive punishment and/or negative reinforcement.* This ended up being a compromise as there were several Board members who were concerned that taking a stronger stand and listing certain tools, such as shock collars and choke collars, would offend potential members still using those tools.

I continued to follow my beliefs in my own business in this regard and first warned Green Acres' clients of the potential hazards of shock collars in our April 2004 newsletter with an article entitled *Ouch! The Shocking Truth About Electronic Collars*. By this time we had also discontinued our sale of all choke and prong collars, as well as any books or videos that encouraged the use of positive punishment or negative reinforcement. We even went so far as to offer discounts on dog-friendly items if our clients traded in choke collars, or certain training books.

It was the spring of 2006 when this issue again arose for me personally as well as for the APDT. As the owner of a kennel owners/managers email list, and as a participant in several training email lists, I became aware of daycare, boarding and training facilities that were routinely using shock collars on clients' dogs, often without the clients' knowledge. These tools were used because the dogs were barking and the people working in the facility would not tolerate the noise. We even had a kennel in our area do this to a dog I had seen for a behavior consultation. They took a very gentle dog with a past history of timidity and anxiety and set her back months, all because she was barking in the kennel.

To me the use of a shock collar in this manner was a tremendous violation of trust, which had potential to discredit the entire boarding/daycare/training industry. As a result Green Acres developed a formal “Pet-Friendly” position pledging to do everything we could to alleviate a pet's stress when in our care and to NEVER recommend or use devices that intentionally cause pain such as choke collars, prong collars and shock collars. Our new position was announced in the February 2006 issue of our newsletter, along with an updated article on shock collars (*No Shock – Train with Your Brain, Not Pain!*) both of which were well received by our clients.

In the spring of 2006, there were some new members of the APDT who were advertising shock collar seminars in the events sections of the APDT website, which was accessible to the general public. This concerned other APDT members who saw this as having the potential to be perceived as the APDT's tacit endorsement of the use of shock collars, which they felt was damaging to a "dog-friendly" organization. As these members talked among themselves, I being one of them, they decided to form a coalition (Truly Dog Friendly or TDF) which would eventually launch a website and email list which took the position that dog-friendly training was pain-free dog training. They then recruited and endorsed APDT members with a similar view to run for the APDT Board, in the hopes of getting the APDT to take a stronger position on advocating for dog-friendly training.

At that time I was a member of the APDT as well as the Vice President of the APDT Board. I was immediately chastised by some members for daring to have publicly shared an opinion that was "not approved" by the Board. My position then and now is that a Board member does not give up their rights to have opinions as members, and some issues are so important that one must take a stand.

Another group of APDT members, some who were also on the APDT Board, formed a group called the Trainer's Education Alliance (TEA). They endorsed their own candidates and took the position that APDT was an educational organization and should not advocate against or for certain training methodologies or tools. Ironically, some of these individuals were adamantly against the infiltration of shock collars into the APDT in 1998.

The result of the TDF/TEA feud was a very contentious election and a Board of Directors as divided as the membership itself on the appropriateness of APDT taking a position on the infliction of pain in dog training. The determination was that if the APDT continues to educate sooner or later everyone will eventually come around. Meanwhile, organizations other than the APDT in the US have and are taking a stand on these issues. Consider the following:

- U In 2000 the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals published an article condemning the use of choke and shock collars, stating *...dogs have the right to be trained and helped to fit into our society with the most gentle methods available. And that dogs have a right to be free from physical and mental punishment.*
- U In 2006 the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) in the United Kingdom took the position of supporting an Animal Welfare Bill before Parliament which would ban the use of shock collars. The APDT UK has a very strict code of conduct ensuring that dogs are trained only in a positive and humane way. Electric shock collars are totally at odds with this code, training dogs using pain and fear.
- U In January 2007, Dr. Karen Overall, a noted veterinarian and animal behaviorist, published an article in the Journal of Veterinary Behavior entitled *Why electric shock is not behavior modification*. Some of her key points were: (1) the use of shock is not treatment for pets with behavioral concerns; (2) the use of shock is not a way forward; (3) the use of shock does not bring dogs back from the brink of euthanasia; instead, it may send them there; and (4) such adversarial techniques have negative consequences that those promoting these techniques either dismiss or ignore.
- U Fall 2007 – The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB) published a position statement on punishment - *"The AVSAB's position is that punishment (e.g. choke chains, pinch collars, and electronic collars) should not be used as a first-line or early-use treatment for behavior problems. This is due to the potential adverse effects which include but are not limited to: inhibition of learning, increased fear-related and aggressive behaviors, and injury to animals and people interacting with animals."*
- U In February 2008 the APDT (Australia) adopted position statements which conclude that the use of prong and shock collars is not consistent with their Code of Ethics, which states that members will employ only humane, dog-friendly techniques in the training of dogs.

In the US the leaders of the dog training profession are still greatly divided on the issue of pain in dog training and the associated tools. Some say that if the APDT continues to educate, everyone will come around. Others state that those who can be educated have already learned and that we are just wasting our energies and risking burnout if we fight those who disagree. Personally, I do not believe that appeasement has ever been a winning strategy and it is my hope is that the APDT US will eventually follow the trail blazing organizations listed above who clearly do support dog-friendly training.

The Professionalization of Dog Training (1993 through the present)

Merriam-Webster's OnLine dictionary defines a profession as: *a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation.* Typically a profession also has

- U A professional organization that promotes members interests,
- U An accepted technical standard of knowledge,
- U A code of ethics,
- U Links to schools and universities that train individuals for the profession, and
- U Establishment as a financially viable, full-time occupation.

Based on the above criteria, I think it is safe to say that dog training took the first steps towards professionalization in 1993 when Ian Dunbar founded the Association of Pet Dog Trainers. With 6000+ members the APDT is clearly a well established organization.

The first step in the development of a technical standard of knowledge came with the APDT's establishment of an Education committee, which met for the first time at the APDT conference in Valley Forge in 1998. This group worked via email during the following year and had a second meeting in November of 1999 at the APDT conference in San Diego. The committee felt that support from other canine professionals would be critical to the success of certification, and so invited representatives from the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, the Animal Behavior Society, the National Animal Control Association and others to join them at a "stake holders" meeting. While these groups generally supported the concept of certification for dog trainers, it was also clear from the outset that there were going to be some turf wars. I remember one veterinarian exclaiming that trainers should be certified to teach things like sit, down and heel, but that only veterinary behaviorists should be allowed to offer help with issues like housetraining and bite inhibition.

The APDT Education Committee felt it was essential that certification be based on humane training processes and the latest scientific knowledge in our field. They identified five areas where a dog trainer needs to demonstrate competency:

- U Learning theory
- U Instructional skills
- U Husbandry
- U Ethology, and
- U Equipment.

At the time, the committee also recognized that in order for certification to be credible it needed to be standardized, available nationally and administered by an independent organization experienced in standardized testing.

After three years of work, the APDT Education Committee provided its recommendations to the APDT Board of Directors. As a result, the APDT established the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT) as an independent body charged with the administration and further development of certification for professional dog trainers. The CCPDT then contracted with Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) to provide the experience and independence necessary to establish a credible, psychometrically valid, standardized test. The first CPDT exam was ad-



ministered on September 28, 2001 at the APDT's annual conference in Ellenville, NY. Since then, the test has been administered three times each year and has gained international acceptance and recognition with 1,152 CPDT's in the US and 66 CPDT's in other countries.

Candidates for the CPDT exam are required to have at least 300 hours of experience in dog training within the last five years; a high school diploma or equivalent; and one reference from each of the following: a veterinarian, client, and professional colleague. Once certified, a CPDT must abide by the CCPDT Code of Ethics and recertify every three years with documentation indicating that they have acquired a minimum of 36 Continuing Education Units (CEU) of applicable education. While the current CPDT exam is not perfect, with many arguing it needs a practical component, I do believe it is the best option currently available for dog trainers.

It is my hope that eventually the CCPDT or perhaps even the APDT will expand levels of certification to include an economically viable practical component. It is evident that having certification established through an independent body, such as the CCPDT, is not really as important as the APDT was led to believe. Nor has it been very effective, as it is seven years later and the profession is still waiting for the CCPDT to move forward. It is quite common for most professions, whether lawyers and doctors, or massage therapists and kennel operators, to have some level of control over their credentialing programs. With 6,000 members the APDT is the largest organization of dog training and behavior professionals in the world. It would be quite logical, effective and appropriate for the APDT to develop their own credentialing program.

In 2003, the APDT met the code of ethics requirement for professionalization when they adopted a Code of Professional Conduct and Responsibility (CPCR). The Code contains both aspirations and obligations for members. All members must comply with the obligations and it is the hope that all strive to comply with the aspirations. The Board of Directors is charged with reviewing the Code annually and updating it as our profession continues to evolve. The Code can be viewed on the APDT Web site, www.apdt.com.

The APDT Education Task Force is currently in the process of determining the status of universities and technical schools with accredited, degree granting programs in dog training and behavior. While there are several dog training schools throughout the country, there is not a standardized curriculum, which would normally be present for a professional level program. The task force has identified some institutions that are interested in exploring the development of such a program.

The last criterion for professionalization, being a financially viable, full-time occupation, is one that has clearly not been met. A recent survey of APDT members revealed that the median respondents only spend about 10 hours/week training and make under \$10,000/year as a trainer. Even more alarming, only 52% of those responding felt it was significant or very important to make a living as a trainer.

Earlier surveys of the APDT membership had indicated a significant interest in professionalism, which the APDT BOD made a cornerstone of the strategic plan they adopted in 2007. A key piece of that plan was the establishment of a Professional Member category that would only be available to members that have demonstrated their professionalism by attaining certification and qualifying for at least one of ten accredited designations that are available from the following seven accrediting organizations listed in the table below.



Professional Designation	Accrediting Organization
CPDT - Certified Pet Dog Trainer	Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers
CAAAB - Certified Associate Applied Animal Behaviorist	Animal Behavior Society
CAAB - Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist	Animal Behavior Society
CABC - Certified Animal Behavior Consultant	International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants
CCAB - Certified Clinical Behavior Consultant	International Association for the Study of Animal Behavior
CDBC - Certified Dog Behavior Consultant	International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants
CDT - Certified Dog Trainer	International Association of Canine Professionals
CDTA - Certified Dog Trainer Advanced	International Association of Canine Professionals
DACVB – Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists	American College of Veterinary Behaviorists
NADOI – Endorsed Member	National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors, Inc

In the March/April 2008 *APDT Chronicle of the Dog*, APDT Executive Director Richard Spencer reports, “Roughly 4.5% of all dog trainers are certified by one of the 10 approved certification bodies, with the CPDT certification representing two-thirds of them. Approximately 15% of the APDT membership is certified by one of the approved certifying organizations and nearly 85% of those have chosen the Professional membership. Recognition of the importance and need for certification is rising among the dog training ranks.”

While dog training as a profession is in its infancy, there are very positive movements in that direction.

The Holistic Perspective - (1999 through the present)

Don’s story: Expanding Knowledge and Improved Pet Health

My experiences have not been limited to training and behavior. Nutrition and healthcare have also been key in my evolution and play a significant role in my approach to training and behavior.

When we purchased Green Acres both Paula and I were committed to quality veterinary care and feeding and selling premium pet food. At the same time I was learning about training and behavior, our Cairn Terrier Gus started leading Paula and I on a journey to better understand nutrition and health care. Later on our Golden Retriever Tiken would join Gus as a guide on what has been a most frustrating and occasionally terrifying but ultimately enlightening journey. The lessons learned about nutrition and healthcare are very applicable to training and behavior, hence their inclusion here.

Gus and the Unstable Whiz

With me working in the medical device industry and Paula working for an allopathic veterinarian, we were pretty conventional in our approaches to both nutrition and healthcare. That all begin to change in the summer of 1992 when Gus started having frequent urinary tract infections. Tests indicated the presence of both calcium oxalate and triple phosphate crystals in his urine. This was unusual in that calcium oxalate crystals typically occur in acidic urine and the triple phosphate crystals usually occur in alkaline urine. Further testing would reveal that the pH of Gus’ urine could swing between 5 and 8 in a 24 hour period.

Paula’s boss and Gus’s veterinarian thought his problem could be best resolved with an appropriate diet, so we soon started experimenting with different premium dog foods. We reached a point where we were mixing foods and counting individual kibbles in an attempt to “normalize” his urine. Gus had to have a bladder stone removed in March of 1994 and we continued to struggle with UTI’s and crystals. In the summer of 1994 Paula read Dr. Rich-

ard's Pitcairn's book, *Dr. Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs & Cats*, and based on recipes in the book, we started making a homemade diet for Gus. The crystals and UTI's continued and would do so after we moved to Maine.

It was our second summer owning Green Acres when a distributor came into the store trying to get us to add Wysong pet food to our offerings. We really weren't looking for another food and were just about ready to send him on his way when he started asking about our dogs. We then asked about his dogs, and in the course of our conversation found out that he had had a dog with a urinary problem very similar to Gus'; furthermore, his dogs' issues had been resolved by switching to Wysong. He ended up giving us enough Wysong food to feed Gus for six weeks, along with the appropriate Wysong supplements for his urinary problem. Within a month we had him back to tell us more about Wysong, as it had cleared up Gus' urinary tract problem. Wysong became the first of what are now several wholesome "holistic" foods we offer at Green Acres.

Gus + Thunderstorms = Psycho

While we loved him dearly, from a medical standpoint, Gus was a disaster. We should have realized what we were in for when we saw his breeder listed in the suspended column in the AKC Gazette. (That is what you get for buying a pet store puppy!)

Early in the summer of 1993, Gus became extremely reactive to thunderstorms. Long before we could hear the thunder, he'd be frantically racing through the house, barking and snarling in the direction of the coming storm. Other storm-phobic dogs that I had seen would just want to curl up and hide during a storm; Gus seemed to want to fully engage and "kill" the thunder. We had more storms than usual that summer, often in the middle of the night, and Paula, Shed and I were getting distressed with the sleep we were losing due to Gus' reactivity. Paula's boss first prescribed ACE, which I now know may have exacerbated the problem, and eventually Valium. Neither seemed to help, and we didn't like the potential for side effects from the drugs, so we just started trying to live with the problem.

Over time Gus' reactivity spread to airplanes, school buses, delivery trucks and the windshield wipers in the car. While we had far fewer thunderstorms when we moved to Maine, we now had at least one delivery truck in the driveway everyday. I finally got some control over this behavior at home by teaching Gus an Attention/Look behavior, which I learned at the seminar with Ian Dunbar. The flooding procedure in the vehicle, recommend by a veterinarian, only made him worse.

Gus – Epilepsy, Homeopathy & Acupuncture

Two days before Christmas in 1997, Gus had his first grand mal seizure. He was diagnosed with idiopathic epilepsy within a month and quickly was on a schedule of seizing about once every ten days. His treatment started off with Phenobarbital and then switched to Potassium Bromide when the amount of Phenobarbital he needed was having an adverse affect on his liver. We had slowly grown accustomed to his seizing, but were disappointed that more could not be done to stop them entirely. That is when Paula attended her first homeopathy seminar, and when Gus had his first homeopathic consultation.



In September of 1999, Paula signed us up to attend a four day veterinary homeopathy seminar with Dr. Charles Loops. Coming from an engineering background and having worked in the medical device industry. I was very skeptical of homeopathy. However, Dr. Loops took a very scientific approach to his subject and his linking it to quantum mechanics did convince me to listen. By the end of the seminar, Dr. Loops had me willing to explore homeopathy for Gus' continuing medical issues. While homeopathy was not greatly successful with Gus' epilepsy, I would later learn how powerful it could be as a result of events that would happen with Tikken.

We continued to treat Gus' epilepsy both traditionally and homeopathi-

cally. When his allopathic veterinarian qualified as a veterinary acupuncturist we decided to stop homeopathy and try acupuncture. At one point we went several weeks without a seizure and thought we had finally found a “cure.” At this point gold beads were installed at the relevant acupuncture points so that we could stop the weekly treatments. It seemed to work for awhile, but eventually the seizures returned. Gus was helped across the rainbow bridge in July of 2004 after a series of severe cluster seizures. While the acupuncture did not stop his seizures, Gus never reacted to a thunderstorm after he started acupuncture.

Tikken – The Rabies Booster, Cujo and a New Vaccine Policy

In April of 2000, Tikken went to her veterinarian for her annual examination and received a two-year rabies booster. At the time, Maine law required a rabies vaccination every two years even though the vaccine was labeled as effective for three years.

It was in July of 2000, when my sweet, cuddly Golden Retriever suddenly, and without warning or provocation, transformed from Tikken to Cujo, just like Dr. Jekyll turned into Mr. Hyde. One moment all of the dogs were lying calmly on the floor as Paula watched television. Suddenly Tikken just exploded and within seconds she had ravaged Crystal, our Pekinese, causing the loss of Crystal’s left eye.

While we had seen a few small signs of “irritability” over the past couple of months, the apparently unprovoked nature of this attack, and its severity, led us straight to our veterinarian for a thorough check-up, including a thyroid panel and behavioral assessment. Her thyroid was abnormal, but not in a manner which suggested the need for medical treatment. However, based on the advice of the veterinarian, we started Tikken on a course of Clomipramine. We also began a strict management protocol with the dogs, keeping Tikken separated from all but Shed.

We noticed increasingly anxious behaviors by Tikken. Now she became overly excited at mealtime, and became enraptured by any shadows or moving lights. These behaviors became so obsessive that I could not even distract her with fresh meat when she got caught up in a shadow or flickering light.

Seeing no improvement in Tikken’s behavior, our veterinarian recommended a consultation with Dr. Dodman at the behavioral clinic at Tufts. They recommended we put Tikken on a higher dose of Clomipramine, establish and maintain a dominance hierarchy, manage her environment, and institute a Nothing In Life Is Free (NILIF) program. We were already managing and doing NILIF and I had concerns about the hierarchal approach, so we were really hoping for the Clomipramine to work. What we ended up with was a dog that was so doped up that she seldom moved. She still became excited at mealtime and got caught up with shadows and light. She just moved slower. To us she seemed to have lost her will to do anything but lie around.

We were very concerned about Tikken’s quality of life, and with no changes after six months of the higher dose of Clomipramine, we contacted Dr. Patricia McConnell for another opinion. After reviewing Tikken’s history, Trish advised us that she had not had much success with dogs exhibiting Tikken’s issues using behavior modification, drugs or a combination of both. She did however indicate she had heard of some successes when treating with homeopathy. We immediately made an appointment with our homeopathic veterinarian, Dr. Herman.

Dr. Herman diagnosed Tikken with rabies miasm. A miasm is when the body/mind/emotions of an individual manifest signs of the disease without actually having the disease. Tikken was given a homeopathic remedy at the conclusion of the consultation and within eight weeks she was weaned off Clomipramine entirely. We were also seeing dramatic improvements in her symptoms. Tikken was treated two other times with the same homeopathic remedy over the next few months. We still managed the dogs closely, but Tikken eventually became reintegrated with the rest of the pets in the household. Homeopathy gave us our sweet, cuddly Golden back.

Since Dr. Herman felt that Tikken’s issues were the result of a reaction to her ra-



bies vaccine we evaluated our vaccination protocols with all of the dogs. We have been doing titer tests in lieu of vaccinations since that time, with the exception of the rabies vaccine. Tikken did receive two subsequent rabies vaccines under the guidance of Dr. Herman, followed by treatment homeopathically. When she developed a second immune mediated disorder (pigmentary uveitis) in 2004, we decided to stop any further rabies vaccines, and she now has a medical exemption which still allows her to be licensed.

Paula and I both started to read more about vaccines and become further educated about alternatives. We made the decision to allow our clients to also do titer tests in lieu of vaccines, as long as the tests were done under the direction of a veterinarian.

Paula and I felt so strongly about the vaccine issue that in April of 2002 I wrote *Rethinking Annual Vaccinations* for the Green Acres newsletter. In this article I disclosed that as early as 1992 veterinary textbooks were questioning annual vaccinations (*Current Veterinary Therapy*, volume XI, pp202-206: “A practice that was started many years ago and that lacks scientific validity or verification is annual revaccination. Almost without exception there is no immunological requirement for annual revaccination. Immunity to viruses persists for years in the life of the animal.” – Dr. Ronald Schultz, Veterinary Immunologist. In this article, I suggested that minimally clients talk with their veterinarian and ask if titer tests were an option. Needless to say, several veterinarians in our service area were not too happy with me, but I still believe I did the right thing. I felt somewhat vindicated a year later when the American Animal Hospital Association published their new vaccination guidelines which started a move away from annual vaccination.

The Move Towards a Raw Diet & Importance of Rotating Diets

We saw the affect a quality diet had on Gus’ problems with urinary crystals and continued to research pet food. We brought in more super premium lines (Eagle, Innova, Solid Gold, etc.) and since Dr. Billingham’s lecture had piqued our interest in raw diets, started looking for a commercial raw diet. We commenced with Wysong’s frozen raw diet, Tundra, in 2001, feeding it to our dogs to see how well we (and they) liked it. After a two month trial we decided to sell Tundra in the store and continued to feed it to our dogs for one meal a day, with the other meal being one of several dry foods. Steve’s Real Food for Pets was our second raw addition to our offerings and it was at this time when we actively promoted the benefits of raw to our clients. In May 2004, when Tikken was diagnosed with her second immune disorder, we decided to make the switch to 100% raw.

Dr. Wysong has always recommended that clients rotate through his diets instead of feeding the same formula day after day. Steve Brown of Steve’s Real Food for Pets went one step further, telling people feeding Steve’s that they should rotate through all of the Steve’s varieties for optimum nutrition. This had always seemed to be “common sense” to us, even though it went against what most food companies and veterinarians were saying, which was usually “Never change your dog’s diet.” In our May 2005 Green Acres’ newsletter our kennel manager wrote an article entitled *Alternating Your Dog’s Food Makes Sense*, which advocated that people with healthy dogs should rotate their dog’s diet, buying different formulas or even different brands of food. Once again, we irritated a few veterinarians and even a pet food manufacturer. However, it made perfect sense to many of our clients and they took our advice and three years later are still rotating diets. Even some of the veterinarians and the food company have since admitted that rotation is a sound and logical practice.

Through the years we have tried very hard to educate our clients about the differences in pet food and how to determine which foods are best and what the actual feeding cost of a food is instead of just looking at the cost per pound, which so many do. We’ve done this through seminars and newsletter articles and feel we have had good results in getting people to feed a healthy diet.

The Bach Flower Remedies & The Five Freedoms

Don’s story: A New Way to Help Pets and Their People

The homeopathy seminar that Paula and I had attended caused me to want to learn more about the Bach Flower Remedies. I was interested to see how they might work with behavioral problems with pets. I had read a few books, but had little application for the remedies until a client asked me to help with their dog and its separation anxiety issues. It quickly became evident that they did



not want to use the conventional drugs that their veterinarian would recommend, nor were they going to have the time to do what I would recommend from a behavior modification perspective. I ended up suggesting that they could try Rescue Remedy, explaining I only knew a little about it, and sent them off to the health food store to get a bottle. I could not believe it when they called a week later to tell me they had tried Rescue Remedy with tremendously positive results. I then committed myself to learning as much as I could about Dr. Bach and his remedies.

I was elated when my web search revealed that the Bach Foundation had a formal training program for people who desired to learn to use the Bach remedies with animals. After talking it over with Paula, I decided to enroll, even though it would involve at least three trips to England. I started my training in Boston in April of 2002 and completed it in England in February of 2003. I qualified as the first Bach Foundation Registered Practitioner animal specialist in the Americas in December of 2003. While my classes taught me about each of the 38 Bach Flower remedies, it also taught me a great deal about animal behavior and another way to look at an animals well being. During my first class in England I was exposed to Brambell's Five Freedoms. As I wrote earlier, this concept states that the most basic animal welfare program requires animals to be free:

1. from hunger, thirst and malnutrition,
2. from discomfort,
3. from pain, injury and disease,
4. to express normal behaviors, and
5. from fear and distress

This concept seems so simple. It is sad how few animals truly have these five basic freedoms. Considering a pet's access to the five freedoms is now a cornerstone of all my behavior evaluations and is also something we teach guardians about in our training classes.

Since the Bach Flower Remedies treat a human animal at an emotional level, learning about and teaching others about the rich emotional lives of animals has also become a key part of who I am. The modern world is finally starting to admit that animals have emotions and is talking about it in books like Dr. Patricia McConnell's *For the Love of a Dog – Understanding Emotion in Your Bets Friend* and Dr. Marc Bekoff's *The Emotional Lives of Animals*.

Challenges & Opportunities Facing the Dog Training/Behavior Profession

There are several issues currently challenging our profession. However, each of these concerns also presents us with many opportunities to learn and do something.

Changes in Society's View of Pets and Patience

There is no doubt that people look at pets differently than they do when I got my first dog. People tend to have more pets than they did in the past and yet at the same time, due to today's hectic lifestyles, they often have less time for those pets. Fortunately, many also seem to have more income allowing businesses like doggie daycare to thrive. While daycare is a great business opportunity for us, I believe that we also have an ethical obligation to educate our clients that if they become dependant on daycare for meeting most of their dogs social and stimulation needs, then perhaps they need to rethink having a dog as part of their family. We have an important responsibility to act as the advocate for two species; our human clients and our canine clients.

With less time, more pets and greater awareness there are also seem to be more dogs with behavioral issues such as aggression and anxiety. In the past a dog with "issues" would often have been unceremoniously euthanized, but fortunately today more people understand that dogs can also be burdened with emotional trauma which affects their behavior, and they are willing to seek help for their dog. Unfortunately, at the same time we are living in a world with a "drive-thru mentality" where sometimes these same people want problems solved in hours and days. And in some cases it's not that the dog has a problem behavior, but instead it's the guardian who has unrealistic expectations for their dog. One of our greatest duties is to educate our clients and to help them understand their dog is a dog and has its own species specific needs. We also need to help them find the patience they will need if they are truly going to help their dog.

Agendas and Acceptance

Clients and even dog trainers often get a dog and have certain expectations about how their dog's life will play out. Often the dog is not just a companion but becomes a tool in the humans own agenda for social interaction and ego gratification. They want a show champion dog or a trophy winning agility star but the dog does not have the required physical attributes or an emotional commitment to the goal. We need to help our clients understand that sometimes they need to accept their pet for who they are. I had to do this with Sandy, when she could not live with Shed, with Gus when he was not a "perfect" demo dog, and with Tikken when she showed no interest in agility. We need to help our clients understand that the best reason to bring a dog into the family is for companionship.

Words Matter

If we say "housebreaking" versus "housetraining" or "command" versus "cue," it affects our client's perception of their pet and what constitutes acceptable training and a reasonable expectation. We need to be conscious of and careful about how we say things.

The biggest word issue facing the pet services industry is the paranoia about substituting "guardian" for "owner." I am reasonably confident that most of us got into this business because we care deeply for our own pets. I doubt that any one of us consider our pets to be mere property. In fact, I hope that all of you would be deeply offended if another person suggested that your furry companion is "just a dog" and worth about as much as a lawnmower. Our best clients see their dog as a family member and we need to recognize that and stop worrying about being sued because we didn't do our job. If we are negligent, we deserve to be sued. I don't know if "guardian" is the right word, but I know that "owner" is wrong.

Pet Health Issues

The health of the pure-bred dog is in crisis. A quick scan of the Canine Inherited Disorder Database (<http://www.upei.ca/~cidd/intro.htm>) reveals a frighteningly long list of inherited diseases and disorders that are becoming more common in dogs. Considering that the dogs are all coming from a "closed" gene pool and that in many cases are bred primarily for appearance, we shouldn't be surprised.

While many breeders are working hard to screen their dogs for these diseases, when such tests are available, many backyard/ hobby breeders and puppy mills are not. We need to do whatever we can to educate our clients about the presence of these diseases, before they get a dog, so they know what questions to ask a breeder. If dogs don't start getting healthier, we may one day run out of clients.

The physical health of our canine companions is not my only concern. Sadly, I believe that there are some in the dog world that are intentionally, perhaps unknowingly, breeding dogs to have mental disease.

The normal dog is a pretty lazy and laid back individual not normally known for a strong work ethic. Given free choice most will eat, frolic and play and spend the bulk of their day and night sleeping. Even most working dogs default towards relaxation. I can recall Shep, my uncle's cow dog, who would bring the cows in twice a day, working at most for an hour. He spent most of the day happily snoozing under a big oak, occasionally romping and playing with us kids. Why do you think so many of us long for "a dog's life?"

Today it is not uncommon for some breeders to breed for excessive behaviors. For example; dogs that are so strung out they cannot break focus from a tennis ball, become unglued whenever they see an agility course, or are wound up so tight from field trials that they are condemned to spending their life in a kennel because they are "just to wild" to keep in the house. While dog sports can be fun for both dog and handler, in moderation and when they are done solely for fun, for many they become an addiction where the sole goal is another trophy or ribbon. We have a responsibility to ensure that we and our clients understand that when we do things with our dogs we have an obligation to make sure that the dog enjoys it and it is in their best interest. When it's not, we need to change our behavior even when we would rather not.

I am also concerned that there are many who believe and profess that dog sports are a cure for any and all behavior problems. More than once I've had a behavioral client who was compelled to get their challenged dog involved in

a dog sport because it was suggested by the breeder, another trainer or even a shelter. I have seen several dogs with various anxiety and aggression issues where participation in dog sports has exacerbated their behavioral issues. When their guardians stopped, the dogs became content and happy. Unfortunately, not all guardians, and in this case the word “owner” probably is more appropriate, because they purchased the dog to compete, insist on continuing no matter how the dog feels.

Competition for Services

Considering that most dogs never see a dog trainer, one could argue that competition should not be an issue. However, all that means is that competition for those clients who will seek out a trainer will become fiercer. Human nature dictates that most of us will take the simpler path of trying to recruit clients that are already interested in our service rather than proselytizing to the masses who have yet to be converted to the need for dog training. With 6000 members, even the Association of Pet Dog Trainers does not have the financial resources to wage a multi-media “train your dog” campaign to the general public. Those who suggest such an effort fail to understand that the annual cost of an effective marketing campaign could easily exceed one million dollars.

Our competition comes from a wide variety of sources; other trainers, some qualified and some not, books, the internet and television for those guardians who want to do things cheaply, and veterinarians. In January of 2007 the *Journal of Veterinary Behavior* published an article by three veterinary behaviorists (Andrew U. Luescher, Gerrard Flannigan, Diane Frank, Petra Mertens) entitled *The role and limitations of trainers in behavior treatment and therapy*. The gist of the article can be found in its final paragraph,

“The treatment of behavior problems in animals is a core part of the practice of veterinary medicine. Consequently, veterinarians are exclusively responsible for diagnosing behavioral disorders, for medical and behavioral differential diagnoses, and for the oversight of treatment. Treatment of behavioral disorders independent of a veterinarian is inappropriate for lay personnel even if no diagnosis is made. We should not encourage the practice of medicine without a license. Devising a treatment regimen for a problem means that an implicit, albeit possibly tentative, diagnosis has been made.”

Now not all veterinarians agree with what these three have outlined, but the limitations set forth would pretty much limit trainers to teaching things like sit and down. Dealing with housetraining issues, barking, growling, anxiety and aggression would only be under the purview of a veterinarian or a trainer employed by a veterinarian.

The laws regulating the veterinary profession in the individual states in the US typically give the veterinarian extremely broad authority over the treatment of animals as opposed to the laws governing human health practitioners which are much more open to the participation of non-physicians in the health care process. In December of 2002 some members of the American Veterinary Medical Association proposed changes to the Model Veterinary Practice Act, the template for most of the 50 states veterinary laws, that would have limited the practices of trainers and could possibly have been interpreted such that only a veterinarian could recommend specific dog foods. Fortunately, those changes were not implemented.

I have not spoken to the authors of the article cited or those who proposed a change in the Model Veterinary Practice Act so I do not know their specific motivations for their position. However I suspect part of it comes from a genuine and rationale concern about the quality of advice being given by some trainers and other lay people. However, I think we must also recognize that there is also probably an economic concern and maybe even other issues at play.

If we wish to be accepted by the veterinarians it is imperative that we continue to develop as a profession and to make every effort to work with them, both as a group and individually. I always ask for a veterinary referral when clients come to me with behavioral issues and make sure to keep the veterinarian informed of the protocol I recommend. I would encourage you to do likewise. On the other hand, I also think that if we are to become a true profession we must be willing to stand up for ourselves, when necessary, and not allow our future to be controlled by others.

Polarization of the Profession

Dog training is not the only profession where there has been a divide over a specific issue or issues. I suspect that

every profession has faced a similar type of challenge during the course of its existence. In my opinion the first step in bringing resolution to this issue is admitting it exists instead of burying our heads in the sand and hoping it will just go away. To me the crux of the issue is whether or not it is acceptable to use pain or methods and tools specifically designed to inflict pain, in dog training. To me, the answer is clearly no.

I would not be surprised if one of the reasons some in the veterinary profession have expressed concern about trainers is our inability or unwillingness to address this issue. It might also be why organizations such as the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior have developed their position papers on the use of punishment and dominance.

Equally important to bringing the dog training field together is the continuing emphasis on professionalization and further levels of certification. If we are to be accepted by other professions in the industry, such as veterinarians, then we must demonstrate that we have a base level of education/qualifications and equally important a commitment to continuing education.

Having an established certification program and a professional code of ethics will also work in our favor when some state eventually decides that the training profession should be regulated. When that happens, we need to be substantially organized as a profession so that we can be stakeholders and a respected voice of authority about what shape those regulations will take. Very few groups actively seek out or look forward to regulation, with good reason, but it is also often a mark of a professions reaching maturity. From the consumer side I suspect that we are all quite glad that physicians and veterinarians are subject to regulation. Our clients, especially those who have a bad experience with a trainer, will undoubtedly be in favor of regulation. Lastly, as someone who has worked as an intermediary between a regulated industry and regulating government agencies, I do believe regulation can be a good thing and is in the best interest of the public.

Why You Should Care About Dog Training

As a kennel/daycare operator you may or may not have a dog training program at your facility. If you don't, I can tell you that in my experience training clients usually become some of your best clients for every other service you offer. In fact, they usually become life long clients. Trained dogs are also usually better boarders and are easier to supervise during group plays. Qualified trainers, with their knowledge of behavior, can be a great asset to any facility offering group play as either part of boarding or daycare. A training program can give you a great way to build your business.

If you are thinking of adding training to your offerings, or if you already do so, please do it as a committed professional. Make sure your program is run by a Certified Pet Dog Trainer and that all of the training staff are working towards accreditation as a CPDT. Recognize that like any part of your business training will require an investment. Be prepared to invest in your staff's continuing education. One of the key components of the CPDT program is a requirement to accumulate 36 continuing education units every 3 years. Lastly, think long and hard before adding behavioral consultations to your offerings. Training definitely requires a qualified individual but qualifications become even more important when dealing with anxiety and aggression issues.

Final Words

"I don't want to strangle my dog." – Bart Simpson, Bart's Dog Gets An F, The Simpsons, The Complete Second Season

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." – Mahatma Gandhi

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity." - Dr. Roger Fouts quotes Ecclesiastes 3:19 at the 2007 APDT Conference

About the Author

Don and his wife Paula own the Green Acres Kennel Shop in Bangor, Maine where they offer boarding, daycare, grooming, wholesome foods, quality supplies, behavior consultations and training classes for people that share their lives with dogs and cats. While Don's wife Paula manages the day to day operations of Green Acres, Don focuses on marketing, which he enjoys, bookkeeping which he dreads, and behavior counseling and training, his real passion. He is a Certified Pet Dog Trainer (CPDT), Certified Dog Behavior Consultant (CDBC), certified therapy dog evaluator and a Bach Foundation Registered Practitioner (BFRP) animal specialist.

Don has presented seminars on pet behavior, the pet services business and Bach Flower Remedies in Canada, Japan, the Caribbean, and throughout the US. Since 2005 he has been the host of "The Woof-Meow" show, a weekly radio program on WVOM-FM.

A past President of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and the Bangor Humane Society (BHS), Don is also a member of the American Boarding Kennel Association (ABKA), the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC), the Dog Writer's Association of America (DWAA), Truly Dog Friendly and Rotary International. When he's not working, Don enjoys reading, watching movies, nature photography, and fine dining. His friends insist that he is snob when it comes to both beer and coffee.

Don and his wife Paula share their home with two dogs and three cats; Tikken (a Golden Retriever and retired therapy dog), Dulcie (a Cairn Terrier), Batman (a domestic short haired cat and crime fighting super hero) and Thelma and Louise (the Green Acres two domestic short haired cats and official mouse patrol).



Recommended Resources

Books

- American Humane Association's Guide to Humane Dog Training*, American Humane Association, 2001
- Dogs: A new Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior and Evolution*, Raymond and Lorna Coppinger, University of Chicago Press, 2001
- Dominance: Fact or Fiction*, Barry Eaton, 2002
- Dominance Theory and Dogs Version 1.0*, James O'Heare, DogPsych Publishing, 2003
- Don't Shoot the Dog - The New Art of Teaching and Training (2nd edition)*, Karen Pryor, Bantam Books, 1999
- Dr. Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats*, Richard Pitcairn, DVM and Susan Pitcairn, Rodale, 2005
- For the Love of A Dog Understanding Emotion in You and Your Best Friend*, Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D, Balantine Books, 2005, 2006
- Give Your Dog A Bone*, Ian Billinghurst, 1993
- Natural Nutrition for Dogs and Cats - The Ultimate Diet*, Kymmythy Schultze, Hay House, 1998
- On Talking Terms With Dogs: Calming Signals*, Turid Rugaas, Dogwise Publishing, 2006
- Professional Standards for Dog Trainers: Effective, Humane Principles*, The Delta Society, 2001
- See Spot Live Longer*, Steve Brown and Beth Taylor, Creekobear Press, 2004, <http://www.seespotlivelonger.com/download-form.html>
- Stress in Dogs*, Martina Scholz and Clarissa von Reinhardt, Dogwise Publishing, 2007
- The Culture Clash*, Jean Donaldson, James & Kenneth Publishers, 2005
- The Emotional Lives of Animals*, Marc Bekoff, New World Library, 2007
- The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Charles Darwin, Filiquarian, 2007

The Other End of the Leash – Why We Do What We Do Around Dogs, Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D, Ballantine Books, 2002

The Power of Positive Dog Training, Pat Miller, Howell Book House, 2001

The Truth About Pet Foods, R. L. Wysong, DVM, Wysong, 2004

Videos

Calming Signals: What Your Dog Tells You – Turid Rugaas, Dogwise Publishing, 2005

The Language of Dogs - Sarah Kalnajs, Blue Dog Training, 2006

Web Links

Alpha Status, Dominance, and Division of Labor in Wolf Packs, L. David Mech - <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/mammals/alstat/index.htm>

Alternating Your Dogs Food Makes Sense, Green Acres Kennel Shop - http://www.greenacreskennel.com/pages/Pet_Food/Alternating_Food_Makes_sense.html

APDT Code of Professional Conduct and Responsibility – APDT - <http://www.apdt.com/about/code.aspx>

Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) – www.apdt.com

AVSAB Position Statement on Punishment - http://www.avsabonline.org/avsabonline/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=117&Itemid=302

Bach Flower Remedies – www.bachflowersforpets.com

Bach Flower Remedies – Green Acres Kennel Shop - http://www.greenacreskennel.com/pages/articles/ART_An_Overview_of_the_Bach_Flower_Essence.html

Canine Body Language – Sarah Kalnajs - <http://www.bluedogtraining.com>

Canine Inherited Disorders Database - <http://www.upei.ca/~cidd/intro.htm>

Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT) - <http://www.ccpdt.org/>

Chicken Training Seminars – Legacy Canine - <http://www.legacycanine.com/>

Clicker Training – A Dogs Point of View – Green Acres Kennel Shop - http://www.greenacreskennel.com/pages/articles/ART_Clicker_Training_A_Dogs_POV.html

Defining “Dog Friendly” - APDT - http://www.apdt.com/about/ps/dog_friendly.aspx

Discovery Cove – Trainer for a Day – https://www.discoverycove.com/vi_trainer_day.aspx

Dominance: Reality or Myth, Green Acres Kennel Shop, - http://www.greenacreskennel.com/pages/articles/ART_Dominance.html

Gail Fisher’s All Dogs Gym & Inn – <http://www.alldogsgym.com/>

Green Acres Kennel Shop – www.greenacreskennel.com

How I Trained A Chicken – Green Acres Kennel Shop - http://www.greenacreskennel.com/pages/articles/ART_How_I_trained_A_Chicken.html

International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants - <http://www.iaabc.org/>

No Shock Collar Coalition - <http://www.baddogsinc.com/noshockcollarcoalition.html>

Ouch! The Shocking Truth About Electronic Collars – Green Acres Kennel Shop - http://www.greenacreskennel.com/pages/articles/ART_Ouch_The_Truth_About_Shock_Collars.html

Pet Friendly – Green Acres Kennel Shop - http://www.greenacreskennel.com/pages/articles/ART_On_Being_Pet_Friendly.html

Rethinking Annual vaccinations – Green Acres Kennel Shop - http://www.greenacreskennel.com/pages/articles/ART_Rethinking_Annual_Vaccines.html

See Spot Live Longer <http://www.seespotlivelonger.com/download-form.html>

The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals - http://darwin-online.org.uk/EditorialIntroductions/Freeman_TheExpressionoftheEmotions.html

The Misbehavior of Organisms - [www.ches.ua.edu/.../materials/articles/breland,%20breland%20\(1961\)%20-%20misbehavior%20of%20organisms.doc](http://www.ches.ua.edu/.../materials/articles/breland,%20breland%20(1961)%20-%20misbehavior%20of%20organisms.doc)

Truly Dog Friendly - <http://www.trulydogfriendly.com>

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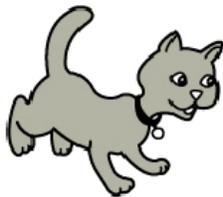
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