



THE SCOOP

Citizen Canine Dog Owners' Association Newsletter

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Fall 2008



From crazy to calm

by Sherry Antonishen

The image of the perfect family dog is varied--perhaps lying content at your feet, maybe lying on the porch or standing majestically by your side. Rarely do images of the perfect family dog involve digging, barking, jumping or chewing, and yet that is what the majority of young dogs do if left to their own devices. In fact many breeds were originally bred specifically to dig and bark (Terriers), put things in their mouths (Retrievers) or be agile athletic jumpers.

Sadly, many dogs that get returned to shelters or end up in rescues have nothing particularly wrong with them. Rather they are untrained and too stressed to exhibit calm behaviours. Owners often find them "too much"; creative-minded shelter folks might call them "high energy". Regardless of the label, these dogs are often destructive, impulsive dogs that dig, bark, chew and jump--in short, not a lot of fun to be around. However, with a little

direction these dogs can become a dearly loved, hard working and well-behaved companion.

And what about the sweet and carefully selected puppy that is getting into everything? This too can be expected, especially with breeds that may be icons of a perfect family pet such as Retrievers. Why has the dog destroyed the wainscoting rather than sitting sweetly at the owner's feet? Perhaps it's because the dog has never been shown what to do and it is simply being a dog. A well adjusted dog will know when it is time to relax, however some dogs may need management and training to learn calm behaviours.

Firstly, exercise is a must, both for mind and body. No dog was bred to wait 8 -10 hours for their physical and mental needs to be met. For those of us that work those long days we must get up early for exercise with the dog. An off-leash walk is ideal. Adolescent dogs are

rarely going to thrive with only one walk a day. Lunchtime and evening walks should also be part of the busy dog's everyday life..

Also leaving food puzzles for the dog to work on during the day are great way for the dog to exercise his brain while you are away. Classes that use positive reinforcement provide great mental stimulation and dog walkers or daycares can provide enrichment during the day while you are away.

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We welcome submission and letters to the editor. Please send material by e-mail to newsletter@citizencanine.org or by mail to the post office address below. Letters and submissions must have the author's name and phone number and may be edited for style and length. You can also comment on any of these articles at Citizen Canine's on-line forum at www.citizencanine.org

Citizen Canine Dog Owners Association is a registered society in British Columbia. Our goals are to promote and protect the interests of dog owners in the greater Victoria region through advocacy, education and community building.

To join Citizen Canine, complete a membership form on the back page of this publication or join on-line at www.citizencanine.org.

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October 2008

President's Message

Elections, elections, elections! Were you aware there are some elections happening this fall? Even some in this country! My point? Perhaps lost in the political maelstrom of this fall is that regional municipal elections loom in the not so distant future -- November 15th, to be precise.

So what could any of this have to do with dog owners and their furry friends? In a word: plenty. Regional mayors and councilors are responsible for important policies that affect how 'friendly' your city or town is to you and your dog. Everything from where dogs are allowed and not allowed, where and whether your dog can be walked off leash, to selection of pound keepers and the maintenance and budgets of pound facilities. The same elected officials comprise the CRD's board, driving decisions around parks and park access and bylaw enforcement with its purview. Much of what it means to be accepted or not accepted as a responsible dog owner in your community is driven by the policy parameters established by these elected officials.

This is why Citizen Canine will again be surveying regional candidates around dog-related topics. As we receive results, they will be posted on our website and ranked in order of dog/dog owner friendliness. We believe this initiative will be not only informative but may also increase interest and participation in the elections.

If you're like me, the position of elected officials on questions of dog owner access to civic park and green-space, participation in development of dog-related policies, and the importance of educating both non-dog owners and dog owners about responsible behavior with dogs, is very important. We intend to ask many of these questions. And we encourage you to take the time to do so yourself. To see the survey questions we are asking of candidates and the results, go to our website at www.citizencanine.org ... and don't forget to vote.

Colin Carson

President, Citizen Canine Dog Owners Association



THE SCOOP Bits

Canine Companions

We always love to get photos of your dogs so we can share them with readers of The Scoop. This issue we have a couple of gorgeous dogs to feature.

Kiran Gill sent us a photo of Roxy, at age 11 months. Roxy and Kiran have been out to a couple of our recent events, including our spring Everybody and Their Dog Walk.



And Paula Fuller shared some photos of her dog Cooper, a three-year-old "red nose" American Pit Bull Terrier.



To have your dog featured here, all you need to do is send a digital image of your dog with a little bit of identifying information to us at newsletter@citizencanine.org.

Citizen Canine's Annual General Meeting

We're holding our Annual General Meeting this year on Wednesday, November 19th in the lower auditorium of the Crystal Pool, 2275 Quadra Street. At this meeting we'll be reporting on achievements for 2008 and setting directions for next year. We will also be electing our executive for 2009. Anyone who is interested in our work on behalf of dogs and their owners in Greater Victoria is invited to attend. Come at 7:00 to socialize with other dog owners. The meeting begins at 7:30.

Vote for Dog Friendly Candidates

Do you wish your mayor and council were more dog friendly? Do you feel like you're getting a raw deal as a dog owner? Want to make a difference for your best friend? Here's an idea—vote in the municipal election and make it count. Citizen Canine believes that the municipal elections are the time to make local politicians aware that dog owners are a large group with needs that should be considered. We're surveying candidates in each municipality to see which ones are dog friendly. We've asked questions to determine their understanding of dog owners' concerns and based on their responses we'll compile a report card and post it on our website. Make a point to check the website www.citizencanine.org after November 7th to see what we've found

out. Then take a look at the candidates for your municipality and consider their attitude towards dogs and dog owners when casting your votes for mayor and council on November 15th

Desperately seeking... COUNCIL WATCHDOGS!

It's all in a good cause. Citizen Canine is aiming to set up a network of contacts across every municipality in the area to monitor the 'dog friendliness' of our soon-to-be elected officials. We are questioning all the candidates for the upcoming municipal elections on their stance on dog-related issues and we want to hold them to what they say. If you're interested in helping bring more off-leash parks, encouraging greater respect and tolerance between non-dog owners and dog owners and getting an all-round better deal for your canine pals then contact us at admin@citizencanine.org





...continued from cover page.

Once a dog has had basic physical and mental needs met, the next critical step is teaching a busy dog a calm behaviour. My favorite way is shaping the dog to lie on a mat. Pure shaping of animal behaviour is done with no prompting or luring but many pet dogs owners are used to prompts such as pointing or luring with food so a little is okay in this exercise. Just remember let your dog figure this game out as much as possible on their own. Start by holding the mat in front of the dog and then placing it on the floor. If the dog goes to it with no prompting say "yes" and give a treat. Coax the dog off the mat, then pick up the mat and place it down again. Do this until the dog can't wait for you to put the mat down, so they can go to it and get a treat. Many of them will throw in an automatic 'sit' as there are treats involved. Now you are ready to add reinforcements for settling. Depending on the personality of the dog the reinforcement schedule will vary. If it is a calm Mastiff that is likely to stay down once it is there, reinforce by giving a treat every 10-20 seconds for holding

either a 'sit' or a 'down'... If you have a Terrier that can't settle for more than a few seconds you will need to reinforce every few seconds for holding a sit. The key is to look for success and build slowly. The first time the dog lies down give them a series of treats one after another for 5 continuous seconds. This ups the odds that the dog will try to lie down again very soon. You do not need to say "stay"--you simply reinforce with a treat when it happens. The idea of shaping is that the dog starts to offer behaviours on its own. In this case, the calm relaxed behaviour of a 'down-stay' is offered freely for the chance to earn reinforcements.

Continue your work by adding distractions. If you don't like the dog getting into the dishwasher while you load it, get a 'down-stay' on the mat first with at least a minute duration. Then with the dog on the mat, open the dishwasher door and toss the dog a treat for staying on the mat... keep tossing treats every 15 seconds or so. If the dog gets up simply close the door say "uh-oh" and stop feeding treats. Very quickly your dog will learn the place to be for dishwasher loading. Slowly wean the dog off treats until they can hold a down stay through the entire loading for one treat.

Once a dog learns that it pays to lie on a mat quietly, he will begin to offer this behaviour more and more. Oddly enough some of the craziest of dogs, once well exercised and with a good understanding of the game will even start to get sleepy while waiting for rewards. This is how crazy to calm begins.

Tips for shaping a 'down-stay' on a mat

Shape only one aspect at a time such as duration of the stay or distance you are from the mat, OR distractions such as dishwasher loading.

Raise your expectations slowly so the dog has high probability of succeeding.

Pay attention and do not miss an opportunity to reinforce... It's best to set aside time to train mat stays rather than trying to watch TV at the same time.

Have one person-dog team work a specific behaviour... inconsistencies in shaping can be very difficult for a dog.

If the behaviour starts to deteriorate, go back to an earlier stage such as shorter durations or less distractions.

Always end on success... In other words quit while you are ahead.

Sherry Antonishen is a Victoria dog trainer. Her company, Smart Dog Training, is based on the science of animal learning and behaviour and uses brains and relationship over brawn. More information can be found at www.smartdogtraining.ca

DANCING

WITH YOUR DOG

by Joanna Pettit

I have to admit that when I tell people I dance with my dog I do get some very strange looks. But my reactive Border Collie Geordie and I are having a blast learning about canine freestyle dancing. I'd been looking for something that I could do for fun with him and this is the perfect activity. Unlike agility or flyball, freestyle dance doesn't have set courses or rules. Basically it involves teaching your dog a few moves and then creating a dance routine with your dog as a partner.

It's perfect for Geordie because it doesn't involve working around other dogs, which he hates. Also, we can practice it any time; we don't need equipment or a team or big open space. All we need is



the cd player and enough room to spin around a time or two.

I'd seen some of the videos of dogs and their humans doing dance routines and I thought it would be really hard to learn. But it's actually not. You teach your dog the moves much as you teach a trick (using food treats) and then you put them together to your favorite music. Geordie and I signed up for a class through Naughty Dogge and within six weeks we had developed a repertoire of enough moves to create a one-minute dance routine. It's fun for me—and Geordie loves it.

Now when I put on "the music" his ears perk up and he prances to the door to the garage where we practice. Our routine consists of some spins, some sits and downs, some backing up, some jumping and the standing weave where he does a figure eight around my feet. I created it using moves that he can do easily, and that I can remember. But this is only the beginning. There are lots of different moves that I can teach Geordie, including heeling to music, jumping over my leg, flipping, walking on his hind legs, and on and on. Because he's a Border Collie and he loves to work, he's pretty easy to train, but any dog can learn to do this. All your dog needs is the basic sit, down, and stay behaviours and a



certain degree of focus on you.

Lenore Baskin, who teaches the freestyle dance class in View Royal has been dancing with her dogs for more than four years now. She started it with her dog Buddy, a big, black dog with aggression issues that she rescued at the age of six months from the SPCA. Lenore says the dancing was the best thing she ever did for him. It helped him develop confidence and trust and they even entered some competitions. She's now working with Nahli, a Great Dane who was also a fearful dog but who has blossomed through the freestyle dance practice.

Check out some of the YouTube videos of canine freestyle dance and you'll see that any size or type of dog can do it—and any human partner too. It's as much fun as it looks, and it's a great way to develop a bond with your dog.

To find out more about upcoming canine freestyle dance classes, contact Lenore through www.naughtydogge.com

Dog Owners Can Be the Best Tenants

by Rita Hutchinson



Selecting the right tenant is a critical decision for property owners. It affects the value of the property-- positively if the tenants stay and take community living seriously, or negatively if they move out quickly causing wear and tear on the property and costing time and money. I have been a landlord and have experienced a variety of tenants. And surprising as it may seem, the ones I found to be the best were the ones who owned dogs.

My first experience with dog owners as tenants came when I needed to rent out my new, custom built home for two years while I pursued my career in another city. I advertised my home without considering the possibility that plausible tenants might have a dog. However, the couple that seemed to be the best fit for my home did indeed have a dog. This couple came with top-notch references had a reliable income and an excellent credit check. They were perfect candidates except, perhaps, for the dog.

Before I agreed to rent to them, I needed to assure myself that they were responsible dog owners and that the dog was well behaved. So I questioned them closely about the dog. In fact I insisted on meeting the dog before I made a commitment. It turned out that the dog was great and the family wonderful. These tenants not only stayed long term, paying the rent faithfully on the first of each month, but they actually took care of the yard and became involved in the neighbourhood. I regretted having to say goodbye when the time came to take back my dream home.

Sadly, it can be very difficult for people with dogs, even well behaved and well-trained ones, to find rental accommodation. Too many people simply say "no" automatically to the idea of renting to someone with a dog. By doing this they are eliminating a pool of extremely responsible, stable and reliable tenants. Because when people with a dog do find a decent

place to rent, they will bend over backwards to keep the landlord happy.

It takes a responsible person to properly care for a pet, and that responsibility extends to their taking care of the property. I've found that if the ground rules are laid out in advance, there has never been a problem. In fact I've found that dog owners make better tenants. All you need are capable, decent people who have provided you with the good references--for themselves and their dog. With those in hand, you can go ahead with confidence. You may think you're making a concession, but really you're doing yourself a favour.

Rita Hutchinson is on Citizen Canine's executive committee. She is working to develop a rental action group to improve responsible dog owners' access to rental accommodation. If you are interested in helping with this, contact Rita through our website at www.citizencanine.org.

H O W T O F I N D A P U P P Y W I T H O U T S U P P O R T I N G P U P P Y M I L L S

Wendy Thompson has a cause—to help put an end to the exploitation of dogs by irresponsible people who run puppy mills. It’s a sad fact that most of the puppies in pet stores come from puppy breeding factories with deplorable conditions. The dogs at these places live in cramped cages and are bred continually for years without ever experiencing human companionship or adequate veterinary care. The resulting puppies, often with serious behaviour and health problems, are then sent to pet stores to be sold.

Wendy first learned about the full extent of puppy mills when she saw a TV program showing the conditions and the lives of puppy mill dogs. “It was a shock to realize that the cute puppies in the pet stores come from mothers that have been kept in these horrific situations,” she says. “I couldn’t believe that people would treat animals that way and I was determined to do something to stop it.”

She began by joining the monthly peaceful protests that have been taking place at one of the two Victoria pet stores that sells puppies, at the corner of Blanshard and Bay Street. These protests have been organized by Victoria resident Angella Machholz to increase public awareness of the connection between pet store puppies and puppy mills. Angella also developed a website www.saynotopetstorepuppies.com to educate people about the situation.



Wendy Thompson poses in the garden with her two canine companions.

Education is the key, says Wendy. People who love dogs need to know where the cute puppies in pet stores come from. Puppy mills use certain avenues to sell their puppies, including newspaper ads, the Internet, and pet stores. If people know about these connections then hopefully they’ll stop buying puppies from pet stores or from poor backyard breeders. But there needs to be a way for people who want to find a puppy to go about it with confidence that the breeder is reputable and meets high standards of care.

So Wendy decided to set up a website to list qualified local breeders that have been approved through a Kennel Spot Check program and a thorough inspection of their facilities and practices. Local Veterinarians and breeders were surveyed to form a list of criteria that a reputable breeder

should have in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of the dogs. Breeders can be listed on the website free of charge if they fulfill the criteria. The list of local breeders is still being developed and Wendy is looking for some volunteers who will be trained to conduct inspections of prospective breeders. To learn more about the program, check out the website at www.howtofindapuppy.com

The peaceful protests against puppy mills take place every third Sunday of the month at the corner of Bay Street and Blanshard from 10:30 to 3:30. Upcoming dates are November 23, and December 28, 2008.

Donations of refund money from recyclables returned to the Bottle Depot on Quadra Street can be directed to the “HowtoFindaPuppy.com” website by letting the staff know.

Our goals are to:

Develop a strong community of responsible dog owners.

Advocate for inclusive public policy on access and acceptance of dog owners in Greater Victoria.

Promote responsible dog ownership and educate the public about dogs and their behaviour.

Citizen Canine Dog Owners Association incorporated as non-profit society in 2004

Since then we've developed an e-mail network of over 1,400 dog owners and a supporting member base of close to 100 people. We've organized many educational and community events and we continue advocating for inclusive public policies for citizens and their dogs.

As with any organization, the more members we have, the stronger our voice will be. By becoming a supporting member you can help us in our work, both through the membership fee and (if you choose) through active involvement in the organization.

Benefits of supporting membership include:

- Opportunities to participate in a local organization that actively protects the interests of dogs and their owners in our community
- Voting privileges at Citizen Canine General Meetings
- A Citizen Canine membership card entitling you to discounts at many local pet-related businesses (See our website www.citizencanine.org for details).
- The option of receiving mailed copies of our newsletter, The Scoop.

To become a supporting member of Citizen Canine, please complete the application below and mail it to us with the membership fee. If you don't want to be a supporting member, you can still join our e-mail network by registering at our website.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION — 2008

I hereby apply for membership in CITIZEN CANINE DOG OWNERS ASSOCIATION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____ Municipality _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Dog (s) Name (s) and Breed (s) _____

Date _____ Signature _____

Annual supporting membership fee is \$20.00.

Enclose a cheque or money order payable to Citizen Canine:

MAILING ADDRESS: CITIZEN CANINE, COOK STREET RO, PO BOX 23078
VICTORIA, BC V8V 4Z8